



# St Lawrence Church

# SPRING MUSIC

**2nd May 11.00am**

Parmiter's School Big Band  
and other Musicians  
Retiring collection



**9th May 11.00am**

Organ Recital  
Stephen Wilcox  
Retiring collection

**16th May 11.00am**

Southern/Stratton Family  
Retiring collection

**23rd May 11.00am**

The Cassio String Quartet  
(Vicky Iveson)  
Retiring Collection

**30th May 11.00am**

Choir Morning  
(Choir TBC)  
Retiring Collection

Refreshments will be served from 10.30am  
[www.abbotsLangley.org.uk](http://www.abbotsLangley.org.uk)

# CONCERTS

Deadline for all content for June Outlook is Thursday 18th June



*Robin Mitchell*

# Outlook

May 2026

Abbots Langley  
and Bedmond  
Parish  
Magazine



*Robin Mitchell*

50p

## News from the Pews

**Confirmations:** it was brilliant to present SEVEN (!) candidates for confirmation (and in one case, baptism) at the Cathedral by Bishop Richard on Easter Eve. Warmest congratulations to: **Michael Davis** (baptised and confirmed); **Sam Waddell**; **Teresa Fitzgibbon**; **Craig French**; **Anthony Batchelor**; **Ed Johnson**, and **Terry Chiles**. It was, as one of them said, an awesome experience! There will probably be another opportunity to be confirmed later this year – speak to Peter if you're interested.



Congratulations to **Roland Maxted** who was awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission with merit from the University of Durham at the Eastern Region Ministry Course in Cambridge on 20th March.

Congratulations to **Carol Higgs** who last month was given an award by the Abbots Langley Parish Council for her services to the community.



Well done to all those who walked (with two legs or four!) to St Albans Cathedral on Easter Monday – those walking for the first time and those walking for more years than they care to remember!



## Save the Lychgate

The lychgate which stands at the main entrance to the churchyard of St Lawrence Church was commissioned as a memorial to Queen Victoria in 1901 and paid for by donations from the people of the parish.

It was designed by Architect Fredrick Kinnier-Tarte of St Albans and constructed by a local tradesman Edwin Glenister. The construction was carried out over three months during the summer of 1902.

The construction is primarily an oak timber-framed structure with traditional mortice and tenon joints to the upper sections and with metal dowels and through bolts to the balustrade, posts and ground sill.

After one hundred and twenty four years of providing a focal point in the village, a fitting entrance to the churchyard and shelter for all who need it, it is now in need of specialist restoration.

**The cost of this work is £15,000.00**  
**and once again we need the help of all who live in the village,**  
**use the facility or value its importance to help us restore it**  
**for generations to come.**

**PLEASE DONATE**  
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## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The APCM happens on Thursday 21st May at 8.00pm in the church hall. This is a really important meeting at which we approve the parish accounts for 2025, get an overview of the church's year, and crucially elect those who will govern the church for the next year. We're looking for a new churchwarden and deputy

churchwarden, for up to eight (!) PCC members and three Deanery Synod members (the latter, crucially, forming the electorate for this year's national General Synod elections). If you've ever thought the church could be run better ... we want to hear from you!! Get involved. Speak to Peter or the wardens if you'd like to know more.

## Bedmond Bells Women's Institute

It has been lovely to see the bluebells out in force about the woods and hedgerows. A sure sign that Spring is definitely here.

We held a successful Community Café in the Tin Church at the end of March, with plenty of chat over an enjoyable soup, filled roll and cake lunch. We usually hold these through the winter months, with a break over the summer, but by popular request we will be holding a Community Café Afternoon Tea in the Tin Church on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May from 2pm to 3.30pm. Do come along for sandwiches, scones and jam, cake and a hot drink – and good company.

At our April meeting we had an interesting talk about Bletchley Park. Our speaker was very knowledgeable and filled us in on many aspects of the work that went on there during World War 2. The monthly competition was

'an item of World War 2 memorabilia', and we had a wonderful display of family heirlooms – medals, models, a recipe book among them – all so interesting with their stories attached.

Our next meeting in May will be our AGM, when we will elect the committee for the coming year, and agree on the WI resolutions to be taken forward to the National AGM in June. I am sure we will have some fun activities after the business is over, and, of course, tea and cake.

For further information, our contact details are:

**Carol Paley** (President) – 07932 007353

**Moira Bunting** – 01923 262242

[bedmondbellswi@gmail.com](mailto:bedmondbellswi@gmail.com)

Our meetings are on the second Friday each month (except August) in Bedmond Village Hall at 7.30pm – visitors are welcome.



### REGULAR SERVICE TIMETABLE

#### Sunday

8am Eucharist  
at St Lawrence

9.30am Eucharist  
at St Lawrence

11.30am Eucharist  
at the Church of the  
Ascension

#### Wednesday

12.00 noon Eucharist

Monday to Saturday  
9.15am Morning Prayer

### WEEKLY EVENTS

Weekly events do not  
happen on a Bank Holiday

#### Monday

10.00am Coffee Morning  
Breakspear Room

#### Tuesday

10.30am Tiny Tots  
Breakspear Room  
(Term time only)

#### Thursday

8.00pm Friends & Faith  
Breakspear Room

#### Friday

10.00am Bedmond Bells  
Craft and Chat  
The Church of the  
Ascension

2.00pm Craft and  
Conversation  
Breakspear Room

## May Calendar



### OTHER EVENTS

#### Saturday 2nd

9.30am Churchyard  
Working Party  
St Lawrence Churchyard

11am Spring Concert  
St Lawrence Church

#### Sunday 3rd

5pm Breathing Space  
St Lawrence Church

6.30pm Nameless Youth  
Group  
St Lawrence Hall

#### Tuesday 5th

8pm Blokes  
Breakspear Room

#### Wednesday 6th

10am Coffee Morning  
The Church of the  
Ascension

2pm Compassionate  
Café  
Breakspear Room

#### Saturday 9th

11am Spring Concert  
St Lawrence Church

#### Sunday 10th

5.00pm Choral  
Evensong  
St Lawrence Church

#### Wednesday 13th

11am Mothers' Union  
Breakspear Room

3.30pm Messy Church  
Methodist Church

#### Thursday 14th

8pm Ascension Day  
Service  
Church of the Ascension

#### Saturday 16th

11am Spring Concert  
St Lawrence Church

#### Sunday 17th

1pm Sunday Lunch  
St Lawrence Church Hall

5.00pm Taizé Service  
St Lawrence Church

6.30pm Nameless Youth  
Group  
St Lawrence Hall

#### Thursday 21st

APCM  
St Lawrence Hall

#### Saturday 23rd

11am Spring Concert  
St Lawrence Church

#### Sunday 24th

3.30pm The Spark  
Service  
St Lawrence Church

#### Saturday 30th

11am Spring Concert  
St Lawrence Church

7.30pm Disco for  
Malawi Project  
St Lawrence Hall



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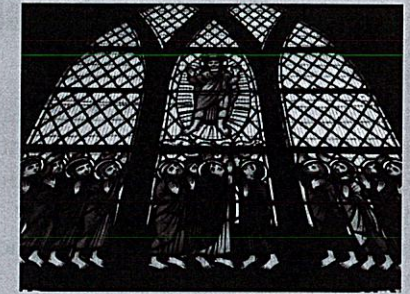
## citizens advice **Three Rivers**

Your local office gives advice on a wide range of topics including debt, employment,

relationship breakdown, benefits, consumer & housing issues. Current opening times as below. Please see our website for email enquiries and full details of our service:  
[www.threeriverscab.org.uk](http://www.threeriverscab.org.uk)  
Abbots Langley: 01923 271707  
Monday 10-4, Tuesday & Thursday 10-3, Wednesday & Friday 10-1  
Rickmansworth: 01923 293136  
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 10-3.30, Wednesday & Friday 10-12.30  
South Oxhey: 0208 515 8321  
Monday to Friday 10-4  
Countywide Adviceline: 0800 144 8848, Monday to Friday 9-5. This number also uses Relay UK: type in 18001 then 0800 144 8848



**Ascension Day  
Thursday 14th May  
8.00pm  
Eucharist  
in the Tin Church**



Please join the congregation and choir at the Tin Church for their **Patronal Festival** followed by refreshments

## QR Codes

If you would like to access the website for either St Lawrence and the Church of the Ascension or for St Albans Cathedral, you can do so by scanning the QR codes below.

QR code for St Lawrence Church and The Church of the Ascension



QR code for St Albans Cathedral



### Churchwardens

Richard Baldwin  
churchwarden1@abbotslangley.org.uk

Tom Betteridge  
churchwarden2@abbotslangley.org.uk

St Lawrence Church Abbots Langley and  
The Tin Church Bedmond



### Contacts

**Vicar:** The Revd Dr Peter Waddell  
01923 263013  
vicar@abbotslangley.org.uk

### The Church Office

High Street  
Abbots Langley  
WD5 0AS  
01923 261795  
adminstlawrence@abbotslangley.org.uk  
[www.abbotslangley.org.uk](http://www.abbotslangley.org.uk)

To submit an article for Outlook, please contact the Church office.

## Churchyard in May



The trees are all coming into leaf in the churchyard. It never seemed to stop raining in February and then March was quite a dry month. You may have heard the

saying: Ash before the oak you are in for a soak, but oak before the ash you are in for a splash? We have several oaks but no ash trees so it is difficult to use this method to predict the weather.

Anyway moving on, there are three plants I want to highlight this month. One of them is associated with the arrival of the cuckoo and the other two plants smell of garlic.

In the churchyard in April and May we have the cuckoo flower (*Cardamine pratensis*). You may have seen a cluster of these under the flowering cherry not far from the porch. They are also known as Lady's smock. The shape of the flowers are said to resemble small smocks or aprons. They have other names too - milkmaids, mayflower, meadow dress, fairy flower, cuckoo bread and pigeon's eye. We do not have a vast number of these flowers in the churchyard but when they appear they are always a joy. They are a key food plant for the orange tip butterfly. We are lucky to have seen several pairs of orange tip butterflies in the churchyard.

The other food plant that is

important to the orange tip butterfly is garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). This is a biennial herb known for its heart shaped leaves which when crushed smell like garlic. It has white flowers which come out in April but will still be flowering in May. This is more plentiful in the churchyard and it flowers from April to July. It has a deep taproot which has a horseradish-like scent. I have not actually dug any up to verify this. It thrives in shady, moist, nitrogen rich soils and



along the edges of paths. As it is biennial it forms a rosette in the first year and then in the second year sets seeds and then dies. We are careful in the churchyard not to mow out all our garlic mustard.

The other plants in the churchyard smelling of garlic are the ramsons (*Allium ursinum*), a woodland plant with glossy green leaves and white star-shaped flowers. Walking through the churchyard the smell of these plants is unmistakable and we have several large areas along the footpath through the lime trees especially. It is a perennial bulb that thrives in our churchyard forming the carpets that can be clearly seen and smelt particularly along the edges of the path as you walk down the lime avenue.



Carol Higgs

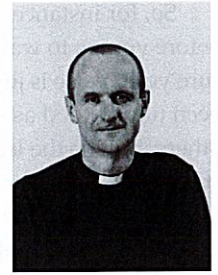
## From the Vicar

The sixteen year old me would, I think, be quite shocked by the fifty (something) year old me's failure over the last two months to say anything from the pulpit about the war in the Middle East. The Gospel involves politics, my younger self would say. How can you *not* talk about the mass slaughter, the economic catastrophe, the ecological disaster, the hubris and the hatred? Remember what Desmond Tutu said, 'when people tell me not to mix faith and politics, I ask them what Bible they've been reading...'

Now, I'm not so sure. It's quite boring, listening to vicars talking about politics. What can they say that hasn't been said better by a million pundits before? And what they *do* say often sounds not much more than a reheated mush of standard 'nice' conventional opinion. Actually, the most interesting things vicars have to say *are* about God, and the Bible and the stuff secular commentators aren't interested in. So maybe my opinions about the war should stay just that - my private opinions, of no more value or relevance to the rest of you than anyone else's. After all, it's not even our war: we didn't start it, and it's obvious to everyone that our Government would much rather the Americans and Israelis hadn't either. This war, at one level, isn't our business and isn't our problem.

And yet... it is *Christianity's* problem to some extent - if only because people like Pete Hesgeth, the US Defence Secretary, have been so keen to conscript God and Jesus. This, they say, is the great battle of good against evil, of the cause of

Christ against radical Islamism. They get very upset when the Church fails to cheer them on, with newbie Catholic Vice-President JD Vance taking it upon himself to chide the Pope's lack of enthusiasm for war and his amateurish theology. Apparently, Leo should stick to 'matters of morality', and leave big questions like war and peace alone.



The degree of ignorance required to think that making war is *not* a matter of morality would be hilarious if it wasn't so dark. All of the great Christian teachers, right back to our Lord Himself, thought that such questions were about as central to morality as could be. Few questions have had more serious moral thinking done about them, and it is remarkable how little the most recent Christian warriors seem to know or care about that tradition.

So, for instance, it's a given of all Christian thinking about war that it is always a disaster, for everyone involved. It is never to be rejoiced in, never embraced. At the very best, it is sometimes a grimly necessary measure to prevent terrible evil. Yes, the Church did launch the Crusades and has been responsible for much bloodshed - but you'll find precious few Christian leaders today who regard that as anything other than cause for the deepest shame and repentance. Indeed, it has taught us to be deeply sceptical about ourselves when we feel that urge towards violence, and to pose some very sharp questions.

So, for instance, the Church teaches: before you go to war, *firstly*: are you quite sure your cause is just? That's normally been understood as self-defence, or saving others. Maybe the Iran conflict meets that criterion, but it is far from certain. The undoubted suffering of the Iranian people under their brutal masters has been invoked by the war-makers – but hardly seems their top priority. *Secondly*: Is your authority legitimate – it might be argued that this one is complicated, but certainly the most obvious reading of what's going on now is that legitimacy, in the form of international law, counts for very little in the minds of the war-makers. I don't need international law, says President Trump, I have my 'instincts'. *Thirdly*, was warfare the last resort – had all other means been tried and tested to exhaustion? In this case, fairly obviously not. *Fourthly*, is the violence employed proportionate to the threat faced? That will depend on the assessment of the threat that was faced – but given that we were told that Iran's nuclear capability had been 'obliterated' in the bombing raids of Summer 2025, it's hard to see what justified the scale of killing we've seen in the last few weeks. *Fifthly*, is there a reasonable chance of success? It's wrong to kill people while not even achieving the end you're doing it for. Well, opinions will vary, but right now – to put it mildly - it's hard to see the US-Israeli operation as an unqualified success and there are very strong reasons for thinking it has made the world much more dangerous. What's more, this was perfectly foreseeable – and foreseen by many - before the fighting started.

Opinions will indeed vary. These are matters of judgement, and it will be

possible for good and (perhaps?) wise people to come to different views about them. That said, we each have to make a decision – and my view, on the basis of the traditional tests, is that this is clearly not a just war.

It's not our war, though, so not our problem. Perhaps, up to a point. It does though have at least two implications for us.

Number one, as a direct consequence of this war, our neighbours – our *actual* neighbours, here in this parish – will go hungry. Food inflation has already been more than 25% in the last four years (with many of the basic foodstuffs seeing even sharper rises). This war will see it rise once again, and that means the demand on the foodbank will grow yet again. If you give already, give more if you can. If you don't give yet, please start doing so now.

Number two, vicars of course shouldn't tell people how to vote. It is legitimate, though, for them to point out the factors a Christian should weigh in making that decision. It is equally legitimate for you, of course, to think I'm talking nonsense, and to say so. That caveat duly entered, here's what I think. The men that launched this war are deluded, arrogant, utterly reckless, and without reverence for human life – and all of this in catastrophic proportions. And that's leaving on one side the warmaker-in-chief's unhinged, blasphemous self-depictions as Jesus. If any of *our* leaders continue to see these people as worthy role-models then – to put it very mildly – they raise profoundly serious questions about their own fitness for government.

Peter

## PARISH DIRECTORY

The code 01923 precedes all the telephone numbers unless stated otherwise

Abbeyfield (West Herts) Society	11 Greenways (263541)
Bedmond Bells WI	Carol Paley (07932 007353) or Moira Bunting (262242)
Bedmond Village Carpet Bowls	Margaret Forrest (670989)
Bedmond Village Hall	Simon Smith (07401 331302)
Bell Ringing	Phill Higgs (07973 265666)
Bowling Club	off Langley Road (alongside the Scout HQ)
Breakspeare Community Pre-School	(by Tannerswood School) (274483)
Brownies, Rainbows and Guides	<a href="http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested">www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested</a>
A/L Carers and Former Carers Support Group	Brenda Southorn (07933 144117)
Churches Together	Brenda Southorn (07933 144117)
Citizens Advice	(271707), see advertisement on page 4
Community Centre	(to hire 07530 266293)
Cricket Club	<a href="http://www.abbotscchitsports.com">www.abbotscchitsports.com</a>
Evergreen Youth FC	Ian Turner (266640)
Family Planning	Garston Clinic (234525) Mon & Wed 6.00 – 8.00 pm
Flower Arrangement Society	Sylvia Clinton (262678)
Friends of St Lawrence	Wendy Meldrum (07710 688633)
Friends of The Tin Church	Church Office (261795)
Gardening Society	Jane Lay (447281)
Gilbert & Sullivan Society	Brenda Southorn (07933 144117)
Hillside Residents Association	School Mead (261734)
Home Start (Helping Families Under Stress)	(248010)
Infant Welfare Clinic	St Saviour's Hall - Monday 1.30 to 3.00 pm (264639)
Jo Jingles	Mags Bilson (222529)
Library	Open: Mon & Thu 1.00pm-6.00pm; Tue & Fri 9.30am-6.00pm Sat 9.30am - 1.00pm; Wed & Sun closed all day
Little Fawns Pre School	(07852 146857, <a href="mailto:abbotslangley@littlefawnspreschool.co.uk">abbotslangley@littlefawnspreschool.co.uk</a> or visit <a href="http://www.littlefawnspreschool.co.uk">www.littlefawnspreschool.co.uk</a> )
Local History Society	Delva O'Reagan (267585)
Mothers' Union	Pam Rastall ( <a href="mailto:pamrastall@live.co.uk">pamrastall@live.co.uk</a> )
Orchestra (ALO)	Penny Abbot (01442 873205)
Parent & Toddler Group	Community Centre; Tue, Wed & Friday 9.15-11.15 am
Parish Council and Halls	Council Office, Langley Road (265139)
Players (ALP)	Jean James (461549)
Royal British Legion	Secretary: Chris Driscoll (675563)
St Lawrence Church Hall	Church Office (261795)
St Lawrence Church Flower Arrangers	Church Office (261795)
Scouts:1st Abbots Langley (3rd North Watford)	Chair: Richard Gabriel ( <a href="mailto:chair@abbotslangleyscouts.co.uk">chair@abbotslangleyscouts.co.uk</a> )
Langleybury Scout Group	(5thnwscoats@gmail.com)
Youth FC	Tim Denyer (270563)

### Andrew O'Brien

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**Church of the Ascension** (basic kitchen facilities)



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This year once again there are five Saturdays in May so we have a wonderfully varied programme for you to enjoy.

**2nd May – Parmiters School** return to entertain us but this year with their Big Band, the first time that it has performed in St Lawrence. In addition there will be other musical items from the pupils.

**9th May – Stephen Wilcox** will give an organ recital. Stephen has recently become one of the regular organists at St Lawrence Church. This will be a wonderful opportunity to meet him properly.

**16th May – The Southorn/Stratton family** will bring their usual mixture of vocal and instrumental music, from classical to musical theatre. We are delighted that Lizzie Hood will be the accompanist this year. This will be Tobi Southorn's last family concert as he is off to the Royal College of Music to study clarinet for four years.

**23rd May – Vicky Iveson** returns to St Lawrence with the Cassio String Quartet. Vicky was a member of the congregation here with her parents Mary and John who were prominent members of the church before moving to Cumbria. Their programme is string quartets through the ages from Pachelbel to Jazz.

**30th May – Members of the Quorum Choir** from St Albans will entertain us with their singing. This choir performs extensively for charitable causes. They come highly recommended.

## Spring Concerts

All the performers this year are giving their services without charging fees which is very generous of them. The money raised from donations given at the concerts will go towards the repairing of the Lych Gate, a well-known sight in Abbots Langley which is badly in need of attention.

Please come and support the concerts to hear our wonderful musicians and raise money for part of our heritage.

*Brenda Southorn*

## Mothers' UNION

Our April meeting was a quiet one, it being just after Easter and following a busy March. We thank our members and friends who came along to make approximately 200 Palm Crosses prior to Palm Sunday – it's a fun morning as well as an important preparation for the coming festival. Thanks too, to one of our members, Doreen, who again made the cake for Mothering Sunday for the parish.

We meet this month on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 11.00am for coffee, chat and a discussion – still to be arranged at the time of writing. We will then join the Communion service at 12.00noon.

All our meetings are open to anyone to join us.

*Pam Rastall*  
[pamrastall@live.co.uk](mailto:pamrastall@live.co.uk)

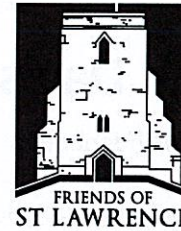


We are holding another Music and Disco Night - this time it is a.... **BACK TO BAILEYS DISCO** and will include 60/70s and also 80s music, with dancing, 'beat the intro game' and the opportunity to dress for the 60/70 or 80s. Come along, bring friends and family to enjoy the sounds of the 60s, 70s and 80s and dance the night away!

Tickets are £12.50pp to include **chicken in the basket!!** BYO drinks.

Contact Wendy Meldrum:  
[wendymeldrum@gmail.com](mailto:wendymeldrum@gmail.com) or  
the Church Office on 01923 261795

**THE M LAWI PROJECT**  
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**Tours of St Lawrence Church,  
Exhibition of Wedding Dresses  
and Marriage Registers**

**Saturday 4th July**

10am – 4.30pm

**Sunday 5th July**

11.30am – 4pm

Were you married at St Lawrence?  
If you were married at St Lawrence, do  
you still have your wedding dress?  
Would you be happy to lend us your  
dress to be put on display?

If the answer to all of these  
questions is yes, then the Friends of  
St Lawrence would love to hear from  
you. Please get in touch with us via  
[wendymeldrum@gmail.com](mailto:wendymeldrum@gmail.com) or  
Church Office (01923 261795).

We will have a limited number of  
dresses that we can display so please  
do not delay in getting in contact if  
you are interested. This exhibition  
created so much interest when we



offered this two years ago that many  
people asked us to repeat it.

On these two days we will also  
have several marriage registers on  
display which we collect and then  
return to the Hertfordshire County  
Records Office. These records are not  
kept at St Lawrence so this is an ideal  
opportunity to look at them without  
having to go to Hertford. Perhaps  
look up your own wedding entry or  
that of other family members.

We will also be offering guided  
tours of the church. You will be able to  
do a self-guided tour or have one of  
our experts take you around. There  
will also most certainly be something  
that you did not know about our  
church which we can share with you.

*Carol Higgs*

**Breathing Space**

5.00pm in St Lawrence Church

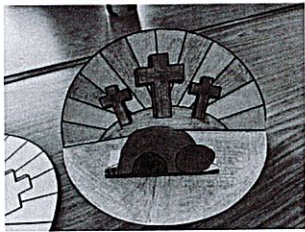
**Sunday 3rd May** - How can we find  
peace in a noisy world?

**Sunday 7th June** - Are there limits to  
forgiveness?

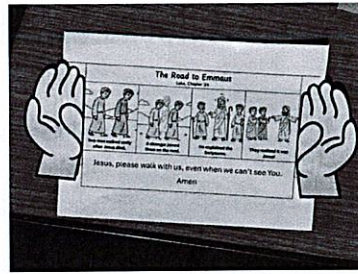
**Sunday 5th July** - Can a bad person be  
a good leader?



We all had great fun at our Easter Messy Church at St Lawrence in April. Dennis told us the story of Jesus appearing to the disciples on their way to Emmaus, then the children set off on an Easter trail around the Churchyard.



The weather was glorious and the children had a wonderful afternoon in the Churchyard looking for clues to their Easter Treasure Hunt. Once completed, everyone made their way to the church hall following an Easter



Egg trail to find their well-deserved 'treasure'!

The afternoon continued in the church hall with lots of Easter related crafts and activities followed by an Easter party tea for everyone. It was a lovely afternoon and good to catch up with some families who can't always make the term time Messy Church due to school commitments. We all enjoyed a fun and messy time together!



**Our next Messy Church is on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May at the usual time of 3.30pm - 5.45pm at the Methodist Church.**

We look forward to seeing you there for fun, worship and a meal together ... all free, though donations welcome. Please contact Wendy Meldrum to let us know you are coming on [wendymeldrum@gmail.com](mailto:wendymeldrum@gmail.com) or the Church Office on 01923 261795

## Parish People

### Major John Hughes Drake OBE MC

Born August 1883; died 28<sup>th</sup> September 1970; educated at Eton College.

Married Muriel Rosdew Raffles-Flint, daughter of the Venerable Stamford Raffles-Flint on 17th June 1908.

Became Master of the Worshipful Company of Grocers in 1925.

Supposedly a descendant of Sir Francis Drake (*The Spanish Armada*).

The last occupant of the Manor House Abbots Langley, which stood on Gallows Hill Lane opposite Kitters Green, from c.1640-1953.

John's father, John Ramsay Drake, Mayor of Hemel Hempstead in 1910, was a gentleman, landowner, public figure and leader in the British sugar trade.

John's mother, Evangeline Lockhart Hughes was a daughter of Sir Alfred Hughes, 9th Baronet of East Bergholt.

John had four brothers and a sister. Sadly, his second youngest brother, Lieutenant Robert Flint Drake

of the 10th Hussars, died in November 1914 towards the end of the first Battle of Ypres.

After Eton, John joined the Northumberland Hussars, transferring to the Hertfordshire Yeomanry at the beginning of WW1, and serving in Egypt and France. Three times mentioned in despatches while a Captain, he was awarded the Military Cross in 1917 and promoted to Major.



John Hughes Drake and his wife Muriel

After WW1 John returned home to his wife Muriel and their three children: John born 1909, Jenny born 1912, and Patricia born 1917 at 'The Bury' in Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead.

#### Abbots Langley

In 1922 the family left the 'The Bury' and moved to the Manor House in Abbots Langley where two more children were born: Anne born 1923 and Stamford Robert born 1927.

To accompany all the family, John also brought with him his batman and comrade in arms, William James Crush, William's wife Linda and their son Billy Crush, then aged two, who moved into one of the tied cottages

which still stand across the road on Kitters Green. William was John's groom and chauffeur in Abbots Langley. Amongst William's many duties he taught all the Major's children to drive.

Quoting Billy, "John was known to everyone as 'Major Drake' and recognised as Lord of the Manor". With this elevated (and entirely unofficial) title came the responsibility to support many of the village activities both by joining and through substantial financial support.

St Lawrence Church was a significant recipient of his largesse. In 1930 the new incumbent, the Revd William Verner Gordon White, had found the church in very poor condition, and with the help of the Major, rallied everyone to help find the money needed to restore the church, through concerts, fetes, house-to-house collections and donations.

The Cricket Club, the Bowls Club and the Abbots Langley Fire Brigade were further beneficiaries of the Major's generosity.

Cricket had been played on the Manor House grounds since the late 1800s through permission of previous occupants. The Major, who enjoyed a game of cricket himself, carried on the tradition, and indeed was elected the club's president in 1925.

Early in the 1920s a tennis court in a Trowley Rise garden was used for bowls practice. The game had become one of the activities out of the social

club formed after WW1 and again the Major allowed his grounds to be used for practising matches. On occasions, when guest matches were played, the Manor House lawn terrace was used. In 1933 it was decided that a proper club house was required. Land was found on Langley Road. Five trustees paid £12 each to make up the required £60. The green was opened by Major and Mrs J H Drake on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1935 where they were both invited to 'Roll the first Wood', and again John being elected the Bowling Club president!

In 1934 some local villagers met and formed a local Fire Brigade, with only a small hand cart, a length of hose, a standpipe and key. The equipment was housed in a shed next to the two cottages which stood on the main road close by the old village school where the library stands today.

In 1936 a fully equipped fire engine was bought at a cost of £795.00 which village subscription paid for. The new fire station built in The Crescent was on land acquired by the Parish Council from Major Drake.

At the end of WW2 Major John Hughes Drake left Abbots Langley and an empty Manor House (which had stood at the south end of the village for around four hundred years) after about twenty five years in the village, moving to his Scottish residence, Inshriach, in Aviemore, permanently.

*contd opposite >*

## A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips - May



Support pollinators. Nothing says Spring like the buzz of a bee! But

these precious pollinators are declining due to habitat loss, climate change and agricultural intensification.

Wednesday 20th May is World Bee Day, so look around to see how you can improve habitats for bees and other pollinators.

Read more about bees, butterflies and

habitats that support them in A Rocha's Target 25 resources at [arochoa.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25](http://arochoa.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25).

Sow a pollinator friendly seed mix, make or buy a bee hotel, let some wild flowers grow in your garden, and don't use pesticides. Pray that our pollinator populations will increase.

For more about World Bee Day visit: [awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/world-bee-day/](http://awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/world-bee-day/)



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*Today the Abbots Langley Bowls Club still meet and play their games in Langley Road, and the Cricket Club still meet and play their games at the Manor House Grounds, although today this is a public park purchased by the Abbots Langley Parish Council in 1952 for all to enjoy and play on the green open space.*

More information about Major John Hughes Drake and his military siblings can be found here.

<https://horsepowermuseum.co.uk/the-drake-family-and-the-first-world-war/>

*Lesley Brooks  
Abbots Langley  
Local History Society*

### From the Parish Registers

#### Christenings

Rose and Vincent Course  
Cody William Foley



#### Confirmations

Teresa Fitzgibbon  
Edward Johnston  
Craig French  
Anthony Batchelor  
Terry Chiles  
Mike Davis  
Sam Waddell



#### Wedding

Stephanie Jacques and  
Daniele Denyer

