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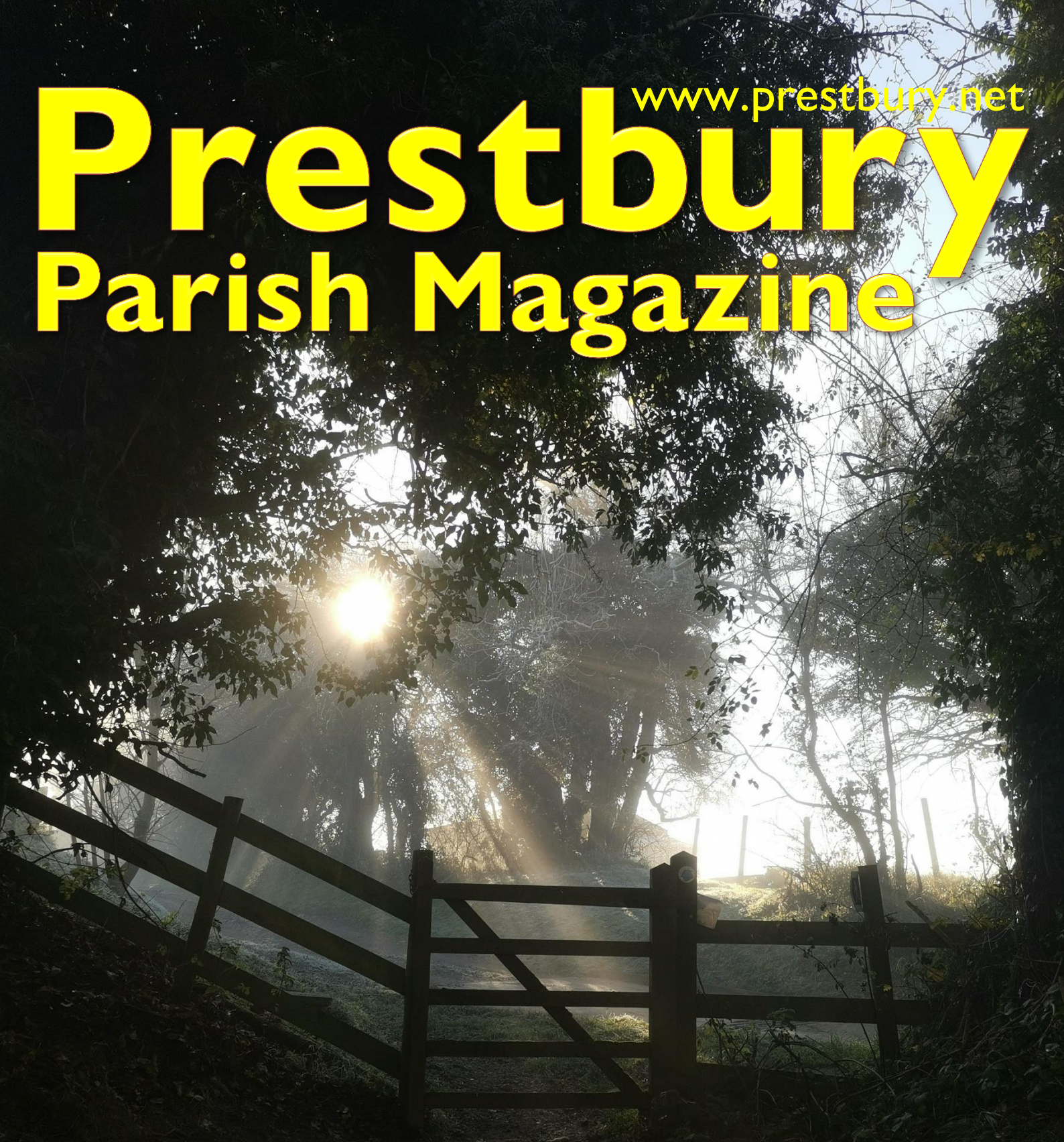
Prestbury Parish Magazine



North Cheltenham Team Ministry

August 2024

£1

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When the office is unattended please leave a message on the answerphone

Baptisms (Christenings) & Weddings

may be arranged with the Team Office *(contact details above)*

Other Pastoral Matters & Reconciliation (Confession)

please contact one of the clergy *(telephone numbers above)*

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editors, the Clergy, the Parochial Church Council, or of any authoritative body of the Church of England

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary and St Nicolas Prestbury Cheltenham - Registered Charity No 1130933

continued inside back cover

Cover Picture:
by Helen Mann
From the rising of the sun unto its setting, the Lord's name is to be praised.
Psalm 113 : 3

SAINT JOHN'S CHAPEL, WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Empty space now:
nine chairs against the walls, and three prie dieus,
an altar here, clearly unused,
with painted reredos, bright crucifixion scene.

Empty, but not unused.
At the west end a door, 'Private, staff only',
bright red fire hose, volunteers' drop off point
and notice board.

Built as a place of prayer,
for priests to offer mass, spiritual nourishment,
now criss-crossed by busy feet of vergers,
volunteers, going about their business,
and, at large services, used as a dumping ground
for vestment bags, a robing room.

Cathedral, also built for worship,
for monks to chant, bishops to celebrate,
faithful to receive spiritual nourishment.
Has that now become an empty space,
place of historic interest, tourist trap?
While those responsible for watering flowers,
conducting guided tours, raising the needed funds,
go purposefully about their business utilitarian.

'You shall see angels of God ascending
and descending on the son of man.'
The answer – Incarnation.
Jesus is the place, the meeting place of God and man,
worship and daily life,
communion and collection box,
all meet in Him as in this place.

Joan Copeland
Worcester Cathedral July 2013

Advertisements

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Kite Flying at Pentecost

A number of us had an energetic afternoon playing games and kite flying on Cleeve Common to mark Pentecost on 29th May.

Helen Mann

The History of Charlton House

I was 15 when I first set eyes on this derelict building that was Charlton House and the year was 1945. I had been summoned for an interview for the job of "draughtsman with the ability to sketch", What I saw before me as I dismounted from my bike at the top of the drive which led down to the house was the shell of a building, bleak and menacing, covered in ivy and closely surrounded by fir trees, the branches of which scraped the walls of the house. Not liking what I was saw, I was about to turn my bike around and abandon the interview when something stopped me from doing so.

Making my way down the drive, I skirted the semi-circular edge of the lawn covered in builders' rubble and broken masonry, propped my bicycle against the portico and went inside. Loose mosaic tiles, cobwebs and dirt made me turn to open the door through which I had just entered and escape. Before I could do so the heel of a ladies' shoe bounced down the spiral staircase and landed at my feet. This was followed by a pretty girl who was a complete contrast to my dingy surroundings. As I picked up the heel I was summoned in for the interview. I find it somewhat uncanny that it should have been part of a shoe that was instrumental in securing my "job for life" for if that incident had not happened at that moment, I'd have been on my bike and away. Remember, both my great and great-great grandfather and also my great uncle was shoemakers in villages a few miles along the road.

Charlton House dates from 1706 but was later demolished and rebuilt. In 1825 it became an up-market school for young ladies. That lasted for eight years after which it was rented out to a variety of tenants, one of the more recent, and more interesting to me was E Boyce-Podmore, son of the Rector of Cowfold in Sussex. He had been appointed Master of the Cotswold Hounds and moved in with his wife and son Robert in 1903. At that time my paternal grandfather was engaged in carving the chancel screens in St Mary's church, Charlton Kings, where Podmore became a stalwart member of the choir. It is recorded that he had a splendid voice.

E Boyce-Podmore was a director of the ship-builders, Vickers, Sons, and Maxim Ltd of Barrow-in-Furness who were engaged in building the battleship, KATORI, for the Imperial Japanese Navy. When nearing completion, Podmore invited its officers and members of the Japanese Embassy to Charlton House where among other delights, they were entertained to an exhibition of horsemanship by his son "Bob" who was now a pupil of Cheltenham College.

The Japanese took a liking to Bob and, in return for his father's hospitality, invited him onto KATORI for its gun-trials. Then 117 years ago, on the 14th of August 1907, Bob met with an accident in the grounds of Charlton House. It is thought he was kicked in the head by his horse. He was carried into the house by the "outdoor staff" where he died of convultions. His father, who was away, hurried home, to find his son dead, a shock from which he never recovered. No longer could he bear to live at Charlton House so he gave up his Mastership and returned to Cowfold.

The Japanese officers had a memorial window to Bob made to a design by his father. It was installed above Podmore Snr's seat in the choir by R L Boulton and Son, the employers of both my grandfather and father. Bob was buried with great ceremony in Charlton Kings churchyard – very close to where that window post was to be installed.

When Podmore died in 1925 his body was brought back to St Mary's where on a dark and rainy evening it was met by the vicar and the choir. Taken into church it lay overnight under the screens and rood carved by my grandfather. He was buried with his son in Charlton Kings churchyard next day .

During the 1914-18 war, Charlton House was requisitioned to house German prisoners-of-war and in 1919 was purchased for the vicar of Holy Apostles who was also Rural Dean. He used Charlton House as his vicarage, for Girl Guide gatherings, various fundraising events and for meetings. In 1934 the house and its acreage was sold to local builders A C Billings and Son, some of which was divided into 40 plots, creating what is now Charlton Drive.

One day, while researching I noticed that one of those houses was named Roman Hackle. This was a horse I was familiar with as I'd seen it win the Cheltenham Gold Cup in 1940. Further research told me that this house was purchased by seven-times champion jockey, Gerry Wilson, who named his new home after the horse on which he had won races. Wilson also bought a piece of ground at the bottom of his garden which was accessed by a wooden footbridge over the River Chelt which divided the gardens in Charlton Drive from Charlton House property. On this he built a tennis court and surrounded it with high wire-netting. When World War II came along he converted it into a chicken run. As the war neared its end, Wilson moved to Andoversford and took out a license to train racehorses. The chicken-run fell into the same derelict estate as Charlton House.

As Spirax rapidly grew more prosperous, Lionel Northcroft, the Managing Director, reclaimed the chicken run to convert back into a tennis court for use by his staff. It was on this court that I taught my children to play tennis. Northcroft then had built next to the court a training centre. When in 1987 that facility was rebuilt and updated it was officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal. A marquee was erected over the court for this purpose. Plans were made to welcome the Princess, and because we knew each other I was given the task of choosing a suitable gift for her and making the presentation. It seemed to me that a portrait photo of her new horse, Cnoc-na-Cuille, would fit the bill so I arranged with her trainer, David Nicholson, to visit his stables with my camera. The presentation went like this: "Hello, what are you doing here?" "I work here, Ma'am," I replied "and would like you to accept this picture of Cnoc-na-Cuille on behalf of the directors and staff of Spirax-Sarco. We hope you win some races on him." A month or two later it carried her to victory in a steeplechase at Worcester. Wouldn't Gerry Wilson have been interested?

In the summer of 1942 Charlton House was occupied by the US Army and used as their Advocate General's Department for European Operations, a Top-Secret establishment, of which there were many around the country. Staff were billeted out with local residents of which my Uncle Will was one. I used to play card-games with the officers who resided with him in their off-duty hours, none of whom were allowed to say where they worked or what they did. Most were from the US Signal Corps, this I knew because they signed my autograph book with a message, their name, rank and unit. One, however, wrote in my book so: "Here's wishing you the best of everything in life, and hoping that when you grow up, this old world will be full of peace, then and forever more. – 2nd Lt. Floyd H. Taylor AGD, Army of the United States".

It was not until many years later that I discovered that 2nd Lt Taylor worked in the Adjutant General's Department (AGD) at Charlton House. Those officers of the Signal

Corps probably worked at the old Horse Repository in Winchcombe Street, another Top-Secret building that produced all the maps for D-Day.

Charlton House was the place US Military offenders were brought to justice, sometimes they were Court-Martialled and in extreme cases hanged. The US Army was very strict with its servicemen abroad, and the penalty for rape was hanging. Two Black US soldiers were found guilty of raping a Bishop's Cleeve girl and were sent to Shepton Mallet Jail and hung. Their trial took place, I'm pretty certain, in the room in which my job interview took place and I wonder if Lloyd Taylor was involved? I would not be at all surprised if he were.

The two American GIs were part of a skeleton staff at Homelands Farm, between Bishop's Cleeve and Gotherington, which had been a munitions store but was now abandoned. Like many more around the UK the ammo was moved closer to the coast in preparation for D-Day.

We schoolboys had learned that Homelands Farm was no longer a camp and that there were piles of very stout, empty ammunition boxes, heaped up and waiting to be burned. Those, if rescued from the flames, would make very good tool-boxes. Entering the now desolate camp with a pal we were about to claim a couple of boxes from the pile when we were pounced upon by two fully-armed Black American GIs who pointed their rifles and threatened to shoot. Then having had their fun, laughed and told us to "scram". We were allowed to keep the boxes in which for many years I kept my spanners and wrenches etc. Were those two American GIs the ones who frightened we boys at the Homelands Farm camp? The rounds of ammunition that had been stored in those boxes would have been used by US troops as they stormed Utah and Omaha beaches. Quite a thought.

After D-Day and a foothold on mainland Europe secured, the AGD moved over to France and Charlton House, once again became derelict. Then, in October 1945, Spirax moved in and that included me, the youngest of them all. With the country now at peace servicemen were being demobbed rapidly. All wanted employment and Northcroft recruited many. I had the privilege of growing up with ex-service people, some of whom were war heroes decorated for their bravery and, without exception, all were mad as hatters and great fun.

When the "Yanks" vacated Charlton House they left behind them a wooden hut sited in the grounds. This we spent weekends and summer evenings restoring, turning it into a social club. It was large enough to stage dances and now, six months after the end of the war and with Glenn Miller music blaring out and more-gentle Noël Cowerd renderings on a piano with a few keys missing and pints of beer splashing about on its lid, it was all outrageously funny and very, very active!

To have seen the staff of Charlton House which numbered a couple of dozen with its factory work force of about eighty grow to be world leaders of industry employing over 7500 personnel has been a fascinating experience. And all thanks to the heel of a shoe!

Oh, and the house is without any doubt haunted – but that is another story not for these pages.

Bernard Parkin

Churches Count on Nature Week

Churches Count on Nature Week at St Mary's churchyard in June. A lovely group of parents and children came along to sample the nature trail and nature crafts. Activities included grave planting, bird box decorating, making bug hotels and planting seeds. Also, sixty Year-3 children visited from St Mary's school and enjoyed the above plus nature rubbings (which are on display in the Dearly Pre-loved shop) and created a prayer avenue. A great time was had by all and a huge thank you is due to the hardworking helpers who so cheerfully made it all happen.

Helen Mann

LIVING IN THE PAST

The Wilton Diptych c.1395 -1399 Richard II kneels before the Virgin Mary. A rare survival of a panel painting from the period. (National Gallery)

'To remain ignorant of what happened before you were born is to remain always a child.' Cicero

At school back in the 1950s, History seemed to be Greeks and Romans, Tudors and Stuarts, Roman Britain, the Norman Conquest and the Spanish Armada. British Empire and the 'Year of Victories', Nelson, Wellington, Napoleon and G.A.Henty and his stirring tales. One antidote to all this was *1066 and All That* and another was the memorably mis-spelt commentaries of Nigel Molesworth, the curse of st custards, in *Down with Skool!* (1953):

'History started badly and hav been geting steadily worse.'

'Noone hav ever found a way of avoiding history it is upon us and around us all.'

Like many people, I enjoy learning more about the past and trying to see things in their contexts. But as I progressed through (Britannocentric) Ordinary Level History to A Level Ancient History, I started to see how complicated it all becomes with its rigorous emphasis on evidence and primary sources, rather than good stories. Was true history to be found in anecdotes from Herodotus or in the supposedly eye-witness accounts of Thucydides? 'History is all angles,' or so said one history teacher I later knew. 'It is impossible to write ancient history because we do not have enough sources, and impossible to write modern history because we have far too many,' wrote Charles Péguy in *Clio* (1909 to 1912).

That word 'history' means both the past and the study of the past. What historians do for us is to examine and re-examine the plausible evidence to create in words a picture and often a narrative of times past. Does it help to dwell on the past of the human race in this way? The philosopher and essayist A.C. Grayling certainly thinks so. 'If we pride ourselves on learning from experience, then the experience of humankind is a required source of instruction. For although what happens in the world rarely imitates its antecedents exactly, the present's resemblances to the past tend to be uncanny. We know the price of not knowing history is to repeat its worst mistakes; the benefit of knowing history is that we can have some understanding, at least, of the mistakes currently being made – and we might occasionally be able to avoid them. Reading history should be a standard part of everyone's week.' Lord Acton put it another way: 'Resist your time - take a foothold outside it.'

Most areas of serious human endeavour and culture have their histories. Art, literature, music, religions and the sciences all have their unfolding histories and can be better understood in relation to their past and current perspectives. The forces at work in the present are often difficult to determine precisely because we lack the necessary breadth of vision which the passage of time can bring or accentuate. As R.L.Stevenson said, 'The obscurest epoch is today.'

However, one feature of modern life which irritates me is the current ploy much used by contemporary historians, often on telly, as if they were commenting on current affairs.

Then Hitler blows his top. Stalin cracks the whip. And Mussolini pushes his luck in Abyssinia.

(Re)writing or talking about history in the dramatic present seems to be used as a transparent attempt to dramatize the past as if it had not already happened. So Napoleon wonders whether it is worth invading Britain when we all now know full well that he didn't, he can't and he won't. He's dead. You can even visit his tomb.

The whole point of history is that it's in the past. We all have to make decisions by calculating in the present what may happen in the future and that's one reason why hindsight is so much more knowing than foresight. As Lee Simonson said, 'Any event, once it has occurred, can be made to appear inevitable by a competent historian.' History provides us with often complex events and multiple causes and so a sense of the continuum and thus what can alter and disrupt it.

Once asked what I thought of Noah Harari's books *Sapiens* and *Homo Deus*, I said I thought he was much better on the past than on the future, because there is more evidence. In *Notes from the Underground* (1864), Dostoevsky chillingly observed: 'Everything which could possibly enter into the most disordered of imaginations might well be said of the history of the world.' Here we are for a relatively brief period of time with our limited chances to make a small aspect of the world a somewhat better place. Meanwhile, as that celebrated last sentence of *The Great Gatsby* puts it, 'And so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.'

Duncan Forbes

Advertisements

Marle Hill WI

Marle Hill WI met on Monday 1 July 2024, which was our Birthday Party meeting and we had invited members from WIs in the area. Members brought plates of food and it always amazes me how everyone seems to bring a variety of food and nothing is duplicated. We were entertained by Lizzie who sang songs from the musicals, and we all had to guess which one. It was certainly a different kind of musical quiz.

We are looking forward to two events over the summer. One being a trip to Javelin Park, the incinerator that you see if you go south on the M5. There are a lot of do and don'ts for this trip like covering your legs and arms, no mobile and we have to wear high-vis jackets and a hard hat. I will be taking pictures for our scrap book. Our other trip is to the Wye Valley with a cream tea at Tintern.

We continue to enjoy our Book Club, Knit & Natter, walks, workshops, meals out and social events.

Our next meeting is on Monday 2 September 2024 and we meet at St Nicolas Church Hall at 7:30pm.

Our speaker for this meeting is Dorothy Cook with her tales of being a midwife. I have heard her talk and it is hilarious.

Do come as a visitor and you will be warmly welcomed.

If you wish for any more information contact Sara Jefferies.

Sue Davies

Forthcoming Events

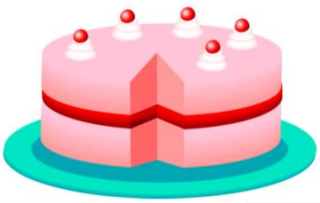
Bereavement Friendship Group

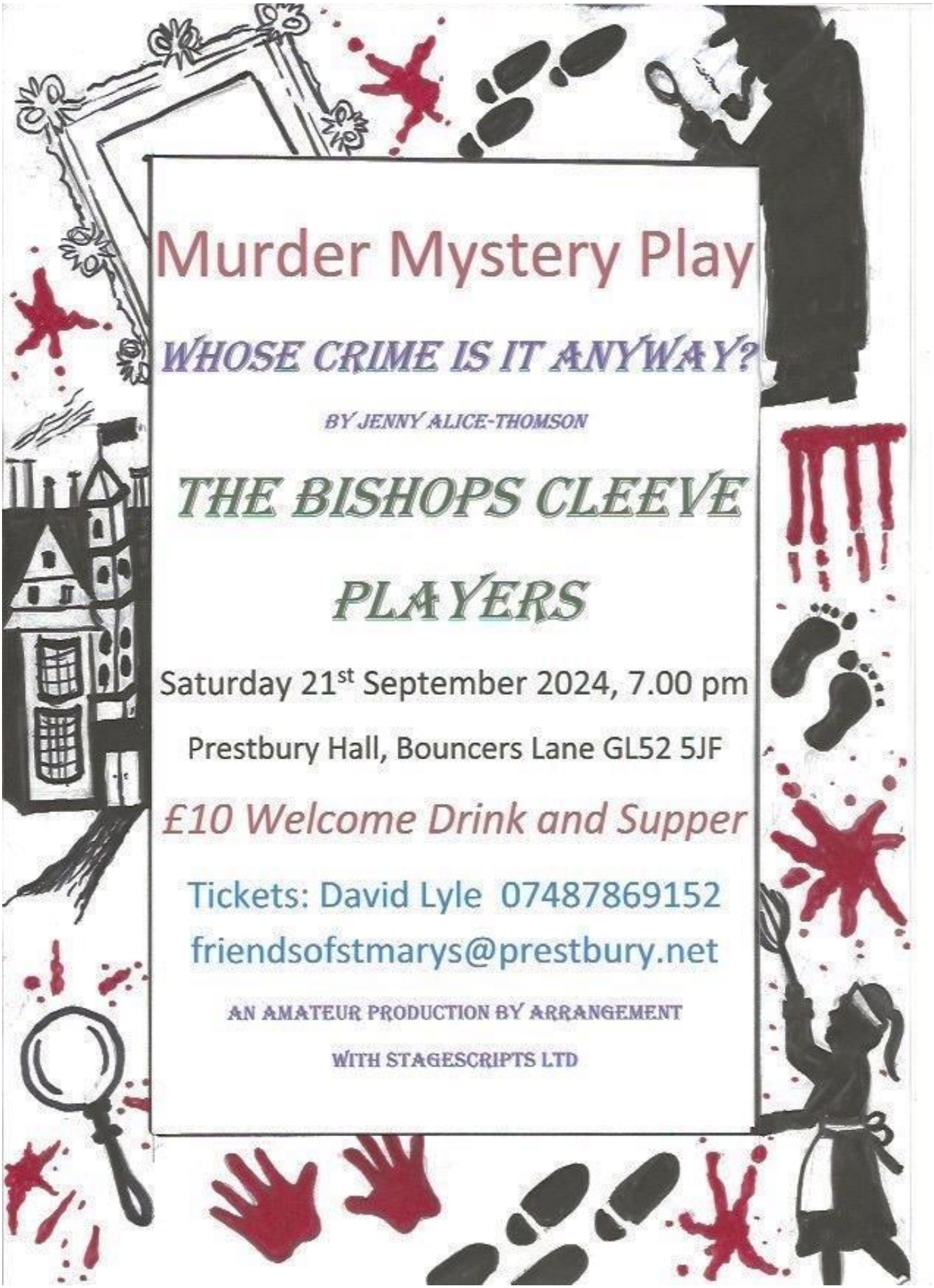
is not meeting in August.

Marion Povey

Welcome on Wednesday

Wednesday, 21 August at **2.30pm in the St Nicolas Room**. There will be home-made cakes, tea or coffee for £2 and the chance to meet friends and have a friendly chat. So please come along, maybe bringing a neighbour?

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TIMES OF REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

St Mary's Church, Prestbury

Sunday		0800	Said Eucharist
	1st Sunday	0930	Breakfast Celebrate! – All-age worship
	Other Sundays	0900	Breakfast Celebrate! at Infant School
		1100	Sung Eucharist
	1st Sunday	1830	Evening Prayer at Capel Court
	2nd Sunday	1830	Benediction
	Other Sundays	1830	Evening Prayer
Thursday		1030	Said Eucharist

St Nicolas Church, Prestbury

Sunday		0930	Sung Eucharist
Tuesday		1000	Said Eucharist

All Saints Church, Pittville

Sunday		0800	Said Mass
		1030	Sung Mass
	1st & 3rd Sunday	1730	Choral Evensong and Benediction
	Other Sundays	1730	Evening Prayer and Benediction
Wednesday		1830	Said Mass
Thursday		1115	Said Mass
Friday		1200	Said Mass
Saturday	1st Saturday	1000	Said Mass for Our Lady of Walsingham

St Lawrence Church, Swindon Village

Sunday	1st Sunday	1030	Together @ 1030
		1830	Holy Communion
	2nd Sunday	0915	BCP Holy Communion
		1830	Evening Prayer
	Other Sundays	0915	Holy Communion
		1830	Evening Prayer

St Mary Magdalene Church, Elmstone Hardwicke

Sunday	1st Sunday	1045	Holy Communion
	2nd Sunday	1045	Family Service (no communion)
	3rd Sunday	1045	BCP Holy Communion
	4th Sunday	1045	Holy Communion
	5th Sunday	1045	Holy Communion
Wednesday	2nd Wednesday	1900	Celtic Communion
Thursday	4th Thursday	1900	Celtic Communion

A Sunday Service is streamed on the internet
from St Nicolas at 09:30 or from All Saints at 10:30.
These and other services are recorded so may be accessed later on
the Team's YouTube page -
https://www.youtube.com/NorthCheltenhamTeamMinistry/streams

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Copy Dates and Themes for Future Magazines 2024

Issue	Copy Date	Theme
September	Sunday 11 August	Party
October	Sunday 15 September	Comedy
November	Sunday 13 October	Folly
December	Sunday 10 November	Excitements

Prestbury Parish Magazine is usually published on the last Sunday of the month. The copy date is usually the Sunday 2 weeks before this, but there may be scope for some flexibility.

Copy may be sent in a clearly marked envelope to 'Prestbury Parish Magazine'
2 Honeysuckle Close, Prestbury, Cheltenham, GL52 5LN
or preferably by email to **magazine@prestbury.net**

September 2024 Magazine Theme: Party

Please send copy by Sunday 11 August 2024 or soon after

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