



Ombersley & Doverdale Parish Magazine



May 2020

allaboutombersley.com

This on-line edition replaces the hard copy, which we have reluctantly had to cancel due to the current coronavirus crisis.

We shall inform you when it is possible to return to hard copy, but for the next few months, we intend to post a magazine on-line.

Please retain your March issue for advertisements!

The editors would be happy to consider publishing articles of local interest in forthcoming on-line magazines. See last page for editors' contact details.

The Parishes of Ombersley and Doverdale are two of The Worcestershire Severn Parishes comprising Elmley Lovett, Hampton Lovett, Elmbridge, Rushock, Hartlebury, Ombersley and Doverdale, a family of Church of England parishes in the Diocese of Worcester working together to share the love of God in each of their local communities.

Rector

Revd Stephen Winter

07773 760899

mail@stephenwinter.net

Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers)

James Homer 07766 625388 ajfhomer@btinternet.com	Richard Jeynes 01905 620441 richardajeynes@hotmail.co.uk
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**The Parish of St. Andrew Ombersley
with St. Mary Doverdale**

Churchwardens (St. Andrew's)

Andrew Horn Tel: 620259

Fiona Davies Tel: 621176

Churchwarden (St. Mary's)

Mr R Coppini Tel: 620963

Seven Parishes Administrator

Nick Wright Tel: 01905 622464

Email: parishes7@btinternet.com

Opening hours: Tuesday 10.00am – 12 noon

Thursday 10.00am – 12 noon

**If you would like to receive the Parish Magazine please contact one of
the Editorial Team. (Details at the back!)**

Benefice Viewpoint

Some Reflections on Our Experience of Coronavirus

I have to write my contribution to the Parish Magazines in Hartlebury, Ombersley and Doverdale, and Elmley Lovett, Hampton Lovett, Elmbridge and Rushock by about the 6th or 7th day of the month and so by the time you read this thing will have moved on rapidly. Many more people will have contracted the virus and, sadly, some people will have died. I am not going to attempt to talk about the virus itself. I agree with Jürgen Klopp that football managers have little intelligence to add to our knowledge of how viruses work (what an intelligent answer to a silly question!) and I don't think that most clergy can offer any more than football managers. And having been married to a doctor for over 25 years I hope that I have learned the difference between knowledge based upon personal experience and a little bit of reading and knowledge based upon years of daily practice and study. My wife really knows her medicine and I don't.

What I do want to reflect upon is how we react in a crisis. The very word, crisis, comes from the Greek meaning *judgement*. In other words, every crisis is a mini day of judgment. It shows us who we really are and if we are prepared to face this reality then a crisis can be a wonderful opportunity for personal growth.

What the crisis of Coronavirus will reveal is what the really important things are in our own lives. People who thought that they could rely on us sadly might discover that we are not much use. I do hope not. Or it might be that they get a pleasant surprise. I do hope that they will. We might be revealed as someone who is really good in a crisis. Even as you read this you might be reflecting on what you have learned recently about others and about yourself.

There is a marvellous passage on this at the beginning of the First Letter of Peter in the New Testament. It talks about how experience of trials and tribulations is like the process in which gold is refined. It may be that all kinds of stuff that seemed to be important will have to go in order to arrive at the real thing, the gold that the refiner has been looking for. That gold, our best and truest self, is there in every one of us if we are prepared to allow the divine refiner to do his work. Who

knows just how much gold will be revealed in us and in our communities in the next few weeks and months?

And, dear readers, as I conclude this, may I send you all my warmest and most heartfelt greetings at this Eastertide. We will have to say our Easter Thanksgivings as this terrible pandemic rages around us but actually that is the whole point. We won't be able to carry the Easter Candle into church this year but we can do so in our hearts and perhaps we can all light a candle in our homes early in the morning on Easter Day, declaring as we do so that Love is stronger than death. Hallelujah!

Stephen Winter

Ombersley and Doverdale Parish Council

Good neighbour Network – People make Place

**Helpline for anyone in need of help during the pandemic
01905 621123**

The line will be open 9.00am – 5.00pm every day
and will be manned by volunteers
Please also visit the websites:

allaboutombersley.com
or the parish council site: <https://www.odpc.co.uk>

THE PARISH OF ST ANDREW'S OMBERSLEY
Parish News

What a strange and disconcerting Easter this has been. A time when we would usually join together and joyfully celebrate Christ's resurrection with an early morning bonfire, followed by a communion service, then a substantial breakfast. Later in the morning a Family service with an excellent Easter egg hunt for the young and young at heart. This all changed! Perhaps now, as then, we need to rethink how our lives are lived?

Sadly, our church buildings have to remain locked for the foreseeable future, but the life of the Church continues through various media. Our vicar, Rev. Stephen Winter, has been very proactive setting up Zoom services through Holy Week and an ever-increasing number of us throughout the Severn Parishes have been able to join together in worship, and have had the joy of 'seeing' each other, which has also been reassuring. We have now reached the point, with the help of Louise and Howard Robinson, of being able to sing along with hymns too.

If you are not already on the emailing list from the Parish Office, or on Liz Hooper's list please let them know and you will have the link to the services and other information helpful to the village. Nicolas Wright on parishes7@btinternet.com or Liz Hooper on lizhooper127@btinternet.com.

Hearing all the stories of different groups, neighbours and businesses who are doing their very best to help and support each other during this time has been heartwarming. We are very grateful as well to the Parish Council for setting up a helpline (01905 621123) for those who need to ask for help or support.

For some people this is a time of rest and reflection, and for other a time of fear and isolation.

Please do let us know of anyone who would benefit from a person to speak to.

Your Churchwardens
Andrew Horn (01905 620259) and
Fiona Davies (01905 621176)

PRAYING THE PARISH

If you have a particular need or things to be grateful for, please let us know

Rev Stephen Winter 07773 760899 or mail@stephenwinter.net

Angie Randle 01905 620753 angierandle@hotmail.com

or James Homer 01299 851637 ajfhomer@btinternet.com [lay reader with pastoral responsibility for the Worcestershire Severn Parishes]



THE PARISH OF ST MARY, DOVERDALE

Parish News

The celebration of the festival of Easter, an important event in the church's calendar, is one of joyous hope and expectation; a concept difficult to embrace in these difficult times.

The period of lockdown and self-isolation has proved very testing for everyone. More so, of course, for those who live alone. However, Revd. Stephen Winter, with the help of technology, has been keeping in touch and inviting us to join him for prayers and contemplation. Not only do we see and speak to Stephen, but we also meet other members of the congregation across the Benefice and exchange greetings. A truly inspiring and uplifting time in the course of our daily self-isolation. During Holy Week, Stephen held services twice daily with a service of Holy Communion on Good Friday and culminating in a joyous celebration on Easter Sunday with hymns and readings.

Thank you to our Church Warden, Robert Coppini, who took the time and trouble over Easter to ring members of St. Mary's congregation to check on their well-being.

Also, a big "Thank you" to all those in our community who have been offering support to the vulnerable and housebound in so many different ways.

Acts of kindness and compassion are being shown in various ways in communities all over the country. This is illustrated by a recent article spotted in a daily newspaper highlighting the nation's paperboys and girls. These unsung heroes of the early morning are providing a life-line to families unable to venture out and also to those

who have heeded the government advice to cut down on unnecessary trips.

The Scout Association is also playing its part. While members can no longer enjoy the outdoors, they have come up with an ingenious list of 150 activities to do at home. They are calling the project "The Great Indoors". The activities include dozens of craft projects, quizzes and science experiments. While some are intended for pure amusement, others are aimed at helping children cope with the challenges ahead in these unprecedented times.

The full list can be found at www.scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors. You can always rely on the scouts to be prepared and now is no exception!

GENERAL VILLAGE NEWS

Ombersley Church and School Fete

The Fete was to have been on Saturday 20th June this year but we cannot, at the moment, say whether or not it will be able to take place on that date. We hope there will be an opportunity to gather as a community at some time later on... Watch this space.

Ombersley Endowed First School

Our teachers at school managed to get an Easter Break as the key workers' children that we look after were able to make other arrangements. They will be open again for the summer term for key workers children and are also continuing to provide education and guidance for all those children

not in school and their parents how are now home schooling. Worcestershire council is providing guidance.

One piece of great news is that we have been told we will have 28 children joining us in September for our reception class.

Jane Hill, Chair of Governors

Ombersley Book Exchange in St Andrews Church

This has had to move! We now have a box with a selection of books on the bench in the Lychgate please do use it as a 'bookshelf' we will bring more out from the church as needed, but we are happy for exchanges or donations of books. There is a jar for donations of money as well. Enjoy this time for extra reading.

Freedom

She's free to roam, she comes
and goes,
Keeps social distance? - no
one knows,
She doesn't shop, she's not
employed,
Her freedom could make me
annoyed,
'Cos while we're all in
isolation,
For our sake and for the
nation,
She cocks her head as if to
say,
"Hope you have a pleasant
day,
I've had some food, I've had a
nap,
And now I'm off through the cat
flap "

Iris Checketts

Sanctuary

A sleepless night impels me
to write about something that
is worrying me...

I remember the Archbishop
saying at the beginning of this
pandemic that although there
would be no church services,
places of worship would be
open for private prayer. As a
result, I did early on, pop into
our church here in Ombersley
for a moment of quiet
communion and sanctuary
away from the stories of
catastrophe that fill our TV

screens and blurt out of our
radios.

For me churches have
always been a place of refuge.
As a child during World War 2
my Mother took my brother
and I to church when things
were really bad. When I was
working as a secretary in
London as young woman, I
would often pop into a nearby
church during my lunch break
for a moment apart to be still
and think and pray. And I
remember how churches are
always full of people when
there is a national emergency
of some sort. Remember the
death of Diana...?

For the daily walk we have
been recommended, I have
been going to pick up my
newspaper between 8 and
8.30, giving anyone, I see a
wide berth while calling a
greeting or waving to them.
However, on Sundays I don't
normally have a newspaper,
so last Sunday I decided to
walk round our churchyard and
go into the Church briefly for a
moment of sanctuary -
something I then found that I
couldn't do as the Church was
locked. I thought that perhaps
something had prevented it
from being opened on that
day, but then I heard of
another friend who similarly
thought it was open trying and
failing to get into the Church
for the same reason as me.

We can't have been paying attention when we were told that all such buildings now have to be locked in case of cross infection from the handles and so on.

Now I was sad that my proposed visit to the Church was not possible but then in the depths of the night I thought of the folk who have lost their loved ones to the virus, very often without being able to be with them at the end or to say goodbye. They will, no doubt, be quite desperate that the one place of sanctuary they can cling to, where they can try to come to terms with what has happened, is now denied them.

However, we still have our churchyard open and I am immensely grateful for this. It too could be a place of sanctuary for grieving folk, especially if we try to make a special place there – perhaps at the Lychgate, or where there are chairs against the Church wall, or near the old Village Cross? There folk could bring a candle in a jam-jar, as we did at our World War 1 Remembrance Evening, and sit or stand to pray for a moment, pouring out to the God they love their grief at what has happened to the person they have lost. Maybe it could be a place where there are some prayers

visible or where they could leave their prayer requests? They could also be encouraged either to place some flowers there or to plant something special in remembrance of a loved one in their own gardens or even in a window box. We have all seen wayside shrines in France. Ours could be a Churchyard Sanctuary...

Claire Gathercole

Ombersley and Doverdale Parish Council

Details of future meetings, together with agendas and minutes from Parish Council meetings and a series of other useful information can be found on the Parish Council's website – www.odpc.co.uk The Clerk's contact details are also provided should you need to contact him.

Here is a poem written by an Irish Poet, Kathleen O'Meara in 1869- after a plague devastated Ireland in the late 1860's- How appropriate for today.

SOMETHING LOVELY

And people stayed home
and read books and listened
and rested and exercised
and made art and played
and learned new ways of being
and were still
and listened more deeply
someone meditated
someone prayed
someone danced
someone met their own shadow
and people started thinking
differently----

And people healed...

And in the absence of people
who lived in ignorant ways
dangerous, mindless, and
heartless....

The earth began to heal---

And when the danger ended
and people found themselves...

They grieved for the dead
and they made new choices
and dreamed of new visions
and created new ways to live
and heal the earth fully
just as they had been healed.

Kathleen O ' Meara (1869)

THE JOHN (NOT JASON) BOURNE MYSTERY

I am the current Chair in a long history of Chairs of the Church Houses Trust. The Trust owns seven properties and some land mainly located in the old medieval part of Ombersley. The Trustees are appointed by the Parochial Church Council of St. Andrews Church and have, one way or another, been so appointed for some three hundred years.

Ten years ago, I was invited to become a Trustee and on joining was told that the root of the Trust was a Will drawn up by one John Bourne in 1690 under which he had provided the resources, whether funds or properties, that were the essence of the current Estate. I was also told that the Will passed responsibility for administration of its terms to the Established Church - St Andrews – who were to ensure that its resources were applied to provide accommodation for “the poor and needy” at an economic rent. Any surplus could be applied to meet the cost of repairs to the church itself.

However, there was a problem or two. First, the John Bourne Will had been lost to the mists of time and thus we had no formal Constitution. Our “raison d’etre” was in effect derived entirely from word of mouth handed down over the generations. Second, we had no Deeds of Title to any of the properties/land we owned and ran.

The current Trustees considered these matters and agreed that it was absolutely right to continue to run the Trust in accordance with the word of mouth principles, but resolved that we needed to take steps, with the help of lawyers, to Register the land and properties in the Trust’s name. That was accomplished several years ago.

And so we sailed our ship on the ocean blue until

In December 2019 we had call to visit the Hive in Worcester on another matter and there met Dr. Adrian Gregson, the Diocesan Archivist. We told him of the Church Houses Trust and its basis, the long-lost John Bourne Will of 1690. A few days later I was stunned to receive an e-mail from Dr. Gregson to the effect that he had located the Will. It was not in Ombersley; not in the Sandys Papers; not even in the Hive, but in the Archive of the Central Library in Birmingham.

A visit to Birmingham was obviously called for, but first we consulted local historian Rob Shipley for any easily available information on the Bourne family. Rob told us that the family had lived at Acton Manor at that time and were clearly people of Seventeenth Century substance. On 12th February we inspected the Bourne Will in Birmingham. We were able to establish that John Bourne was, indeed, a wealthy man – he, for example, bequeathed one thousand seventeenth century pounds to his daughter Elizabeth - and then right at the bottom there was our legacy!

The Will read *“I leave £5 for the benefit of the village poor through the clergy”!*

No inflation accounting method that I know of can turn five seventeenth century pounds into seven properties plus land.

This gives rise to a number of questions to which we would like to have answers. On the basis of such a small gift how did this become known as the John Bourne Trust? Was there perhaps a second or third unidentified donation from the Bourne Family that merited the attribution? If the Bournes actually played a more minor part in the foundation than might have been expected, how were the properties accumulated and who were the donors? We know from an 1859 document in our possession that the properties owned at that time by the Trust were essentially those of today, but we have nothing from the one hundred and fifty years before that.

So, do you know more than we do? Is there a Marple or a Morse out there who can solve the mystery for us? If so please contact me, Stuart Larnder, at stuart.larnder1@btinternet.com.

I await your response.

Stuart Larnder

Ombersley History Group

Ombersley History Group is a small group of local residents with an interest in the history of Ombersley and Doverdale. We wanted to launch a sixteen-page booklet entitled “Ombersley – Historical Snippets” at the film show organised for March. Unfortunately, coronavirus intervened. Hopefully the launch will happen when we can next show the film of *Life in Ombersley*, made in 1953, along with a selection of Arthur Turner’s slides from “Ombersley: Then and Now”.

The booklet contains an eclectic selection of historical facts about Ombersley: life, Church, trade, the Sandys family and village built environment. Just for interest, here are some of the “snippets” that didn’t make it into the booklet.

Did you know.....?

Ombersley (or Ambresledge as it was then) is mentioned in The Domesday Book of 1086. It was one of the 20% largest communities recorded, with 30 villagers, 12 smallholders, 2 priests and 12 others. In the Middle Ages, the woods around the village were infested with wolves and Henry 2nd, in about 1200, employed an official “Wolf Hunter”.

The oldest building in the village is probably what is now “the kitchen shop”. This may have been built originally as “The Priests House” when the Abbot of Evesham appointed a Vicar to the village in 1327. The Kings Arms pub dates back to 1411, although may have been a drinking establishment well before that. Both it and the Crown and Sandys pub (built in the 1600s) reflect the strong Royalist connections with the Sandys family. The Cross Keys pub opened in 1830 and may be the only original surviving “beer shop” in the area. The name “The Cross Keys” refers to the religious symbol of St Peter, one of the Disciples who was the first leader of Jesus’s followers following his death.

In 1848, Thomas May a fruiterer or fruit grower, was allowed to convert a room in his cottage into a small bar. The Fruiterers Arms remains in the May family to this day. A microbrewery known as The Canon Royall used to produce "Arrowhead" brew there, which was a guest ale in the House of Commons in 2006.

Another political connection for Ombersley is Senator Hilary Clinton, whose eight times great grandfather Thomas Cottrell was married in Ombersley in 1678.

The English Civil War was a difficult time for families with divided loyalties. Samuel Sandys commanded a troop of Royalists at the initial conflict at Powick Bridge, whilst his cousin Edwin, was the deputy commander of the Roundheads. Edwin died from injuries received that day and is buried in Worcester Cathedral. Samuel Sandys went on to further glory during the conflict, but was captured during the final Battle of the war at Worcester (see article by Howard Robinson). Imprisoned, he lost all his land holdings. However during the restoration, he regained his land and position as an MP. Ombersley has celebrated Oak Apple Day ever since – until the 1960s (see From the Archive).

Life in Ombersley was dangerous in the late 18th century: an association of concerned locals was created in 1791. From the Articles of Association, published in 1817: "Whereas the many and frequent robberies and other disorders that happen in the Parish of Ombersley, have induced the inhabitants to enter into an association for the preservation of good order". A local tax or tithe was levelled on each householder to pay for "the preservation of good order, for the detecting apprehending and prosecuting, at their joint expense, all felons and rogues, of every denomination and description, committing depredations upon any or either persons or properties" By 1814, the Church building was in a parlous and unsafe condition. An Act of Parliament was passed allowing for the demolition of the Church and the building of a new Church and a Poor House. The Marchioness of Downshire agreed to cover the cost of the new

building subject to her keeping the old Chancel as a family mausoleum and the rate payers of the parish paying her £7000 in instalments until the new Church was completed in 1829. The incumbent, a Rev. Sockett, appointed by the Marchioness, objected to his paying this rate on his glebe properties. The disagreement with his parishioners was so severe that eventually both sides approached a QC for his legal position. The outcome was that he decided it was too much in the balance for him to decide and that it should be put to a jury. A decision for which he charged 5 guineas! The glebe properties in dispute may have eventually formed the Church Houses Trust – a charity which exists to this day.

The eldest son of William Gladstone, the Victorian Prime Minister was also called William (1840-1892). He represented East Worcestershire as a MP for five years. During that time, he wrote a hymn tune called “Ombersley”. This is a typically Victorian, rather worthy and high minded tune. It is hoped that the Ombersley Handbell Ringers will play an arrangement of this at one of our meetings.

In more modern times, an interesting conflict might have happened during World War 2. There is a local legend that Hitler had identified Ombersley Court, with its prime central location, as the HQ for the German Army if Operation Sea Lion, his plans for the invasion of Britain, had succeeded. If the invasion happened, the British Government was to be relocated to Croome Court and the Royal family moved to Madresfield Court. Ombersley Court is about equidistant between them!

Alan Turing, the war time Bletchley Park Enigma code breaker, has a connection with Ombersley and Parsonage Lane. More is explained in the Ombersley Historical Snippets booklet. There is another less well known inhabitant of The Parsonage on Parsonage Lane - the originator of the expression “keeping up with the Jones”*. Arthur Jones inherited Abberley Court (now Abberley School). His wife disliked the house intensely, so they rented The Parsonage and lived

there for many years. During his time at Abberley however, he designed and had built Abberley Tower, which looked down over the Earl of Dudley's house at Whitley Court. Always social competitors, but with Arthur having come up from trade, it was said that building the Tower was to snub the Earl – hence the expression meaning to do better than your neighbours. *At this point, it should be said that there are a number of other possible origins of this expression, but I prefer this one!

One last snippet about the origins of Parsonage Lane and “The Old Parsonage”. There was never a parsonage on the lane. However a John Parsons is recorded in the Manorial records, as living here by the 14th century. The Old Parsonage was always a simple yeoman's farmhouse, similar to Whitneys Farm House next door. In the mid 19th century, the owners had become wealthy, as lawyers in London, and extended the house to what we see today. In the process, the name “The Old Parsonage” became attached: perhaps a case of keeping up with the Jones!

Most of these snippets are true, but any disputes of fact will be greatly appreciated.

David Collier

FROM THE PRESS: CRIME, PUNISHMENT AND SOMETHING LIGHTER

- On Monday the 13th inst. The Assize for Worcestershire was opened at Worcester, when . . . Thomas Neale, for breaking open a House at Ombersley . . . was capitally convicted, and received Sentence of Death. (*Derby Mercury 16 March 1786*)
- One of those vexatious species of plunder – the despoiling of horses of their manes and tails for the trifling value the hair will produce – was committed on the night of Tuesday last, upon the farm of Mr William Crane of Boreley in the parish of Ombersley . .

. (*Worcestershire Chronicle*, 17 June 1840) Robert Wilson, 40, sentenced to seven years' transportation at the next Worcester Assize and was transported to Australia on the *Eden* on 7 March 1842.

- William Fox, of Ombersley, labourer, was convicted of riding on his wagon in Doverdale Lane without a driver and without reins. Mr Fox had also taken the liberty to assault a witness who proved the offence, for which manifold offences he was fined 10s, with 15s costs. (*Worcester Herald*, 15 April 1843 10s is equivalent to about £50 today)
- On Saturday last, Edward Cook, Henry Watkins and Edward Williams, three Ombersley men were taken before the Hon. and Rev. WWC Talbot [magistrate], charged by Thomas Edwards, gamekeeper to Lord Sandys, with poaching on the lands of his Lordship at Ombersley, early that morning; and the offence having been clearly proved, they were respectively sentenced, Cook to two months', Watkins to six weeks', and Williams to one month's imprisonment, with hard labour. (*Worcester Journal*, 31 October 1850)
- The park railings of Sir John Pakington, near the city of Worcester, being much dilapidated, a number of deer made their escape, committing various depredations on the adjoining farms, by which the occupiers were considerably injured. Mr Hollington, proprietor of a farm in the adjacent parish of Ombersley, thinking it necessary to diminish the evil, went out in pursuit, and found a small herd on his land, and as they came within range of his single barrel, he took aim at the best doe and fired, when he found not only this, but another doe and a buck had fallen. On going up, he discovered that the bullet had passed through the *head of each*, and that he had actually killed three head of deer at one shot. (*Hereford Journal*, 21 December 1825)
- A polyanthus, bearing no less than 165 petals upon a single stem only, was gathered last week in the garden of Mr Yarrington, of Ombersley. (*Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 27 May 1835)

- First stanza of On hearing the First Peal Rang on OMBERSLEY BELLS after some part of them had been Re-cast, by James Hatton of Ombersley, 1830

Again my Native Village Bells,
 Once more I hear in merry peal,
 Echoing in the shelter'd dells,
 Vibrating softly on the gale:
 I feel for him, who far from home,
 An outcast or an exile dwells;
 While I at liberty can roam,
 And hear my native Village bells.

Pat Niner, Ombersley History Group

PEAPOD

Oliver Cromwell and the Battle of Worcester 1651



To this day, Cromwell still divides opinion 400 years after he came to power in 1653. Rather like **Marmite** you either **love him** or **hate him!** **Why is this?**

His family, of minor landed gentry stock, originally came from Huntingdon. His father, being the second son, did not inherit the big house nearby, Hinchinbrooke, but a slightly smaller house (still there) in Friar Street. Oliver had no brothers, just sisters, so he was the one going to inherit the estate.

In the late 16th century **Puritanism** was a religious reform movement which sought to 'purify' the Church of England. The Cromwells were mild adherents. But it was at the Grammar School (still there) that Oliver was inculcated by his teacher, Dr Thomas Beard, an ardent Puritan, who'd written a book entitled: The Theatre of God's Judgement. In it he proposed that God's judgement was for all people whatever their status; i.e. no-one, not even royalty, was above the law.

In 1616, Oliver went to Cambridge to Sydney Sussex College, one founded on a Puritan ethos 20 years earlier. He was only there for a year when his father died. So, he returned home to sort out the family estate. A year later he went to London to study Law at the Inns of Court off the Strand. Three years later, when he was 21, he married Elizabeth Bourchier, the daughter of a wealthy London Fur Merchant and they returned to Huntingdon to start their family. They were eventually to have four sons and four daughters.

Oliver, being on the local council, was already beginning to 'enjoy' politics. In 1628, aged 29, he was elected as the MP for Huntingdon and so went to London. Here, he experienced the political tug-of-war between Parliament and King Charles who only called Parliament when he wanted to raise taxes to fight a war. He had largely ruled without Parliament since he came to the throne in 1625. Within a year of Cromwell entering Parliament, Charles dismissed it and ruled for a further 11 years without it.

On returning to Huntingdon, Cromwell was infuriated when he was dismissed from the Council. So, in a fit of pique, he sold his house in Friar Street for £1,800 (£1.5 million in today's money) and moved to S^t Ives in Cambridgeshire where he became a tenant farmer; to all intents and purposes well away from politics.

All might have continued this way for the rest of his life except that, in 1637, Oliver's maternal uncle died without having had any children, and so he inherited considerable estates in & around Ely. He moved there with his family to live in a house (still there) not far from the cathedral. He was soon back into politics and when Charles recalled Parliament in 1640, Oliver was selected MP for Cambridge. Ferment inside Parliament was increasing so much so that Charles felt compelled to enter the House of Commons with a troop of musketeers to arrest its FIVE leading members. Cromwell was NOT one of them! Charles had to leave empty-handed and never again has any monarch ever set foot in the House of Commons.

Two years later, in 1642, Civil War was declared **by** Charles when he raised his standard at Nottingham against Parliament. For the next 6 years there was much fighting with various sieges & battles around the country ... Cromwell was NOT in charge. With Charles refusing to

accept any reduction in his powers, a Council of State, NOT including Cromwell, called for him to be tried for **Treason against the People**. Cromwell at this time argued in favour of retaining the king “**Let us restore the king to his throne, and let the king in future agree to govern with the consent of Parliament**” until it became obvious that nothing would be gained by this. So, sadly the king was tried & then executed on 30th January 1649.

The **Battle of Worcester** 1651 came about when Charles’ son, later Charles II, attempted to regain the throne. Two armies: a largely Scottish Army of 15,000 led by Charles & the Duke of Hamilton and a Parliamentary Army of 27,000 led by Cromwell, both marched down from Scotland and met in and around the city of Worcester in late August. The Royalist army believed they were safe inside the city walls protected by the River Severn to the west. Cromwell had other ideas and, by constructing Bridges of Boats across the Rivers Severn and Teme below Worcester, was able to divide his army into two parts and execute a brilliant pincer action on the Royalists. One part fought their way across the Powick Hams; through Wicks Fields; up into S^t John’s; and across the Tybridge from the SW ... whilst the other part fought their way from Perry Wood in the NE to take Fort Royal and turn the Royalist guns on the retreating Royalist Army. Approximately 3000 Scottish soldiers were killed cf. about 250 Parliamentarians ... it was a rout! Charles desperately rode north out of the city, maybe via Ombersley, to Moseley Old Hall & Boscobel where he hid in an oak tree for one day to avoid capture. From there he escaped to the Continent and was ‘**merrily**’ restored in 1660 after 7 years of Protectorate Rule. Cromwell had died two years earlier in 1658.

PS. *Contrary to popular belief, Cromwell neither banned Christmas, nor closed the theatres. These things were effected in 1642 when Cromwell was a mere back-bench MP. NB. Christmas even then was deemed to be too commercial!*

Book Review

Larchfield by Polly Clark

Larchfield is Polly Clark's first novel and is, in part, a fictional account of WH Auden's time living and working at Larchfield Academy (Helensburgh, Scotland) where he was a schoolmaster in the early 1930s. The other major character in the book is Dora, a poet, who has moved from Oxford to Helensburgh with her new husband.

I enjoyed Larchfield for the most part and the theme of isolation seems particularly apt at the moment. I'm sure we can all relate to Dora's feeling of loneliness as a new mum in a new place. How does that compare with our current situation?

I enjoyed reading Wystan's story too. Again, he was isolated in an unwelcoming place as well as being a homosexual when that was against the law.

I was unsure about the coming together of Dora and Wystan. This happened when Dora found a bottle on the beach which contained a message from W.H. Auden. This was a life changing moment for Dora, resulting as it did with meetings with the poet she so admired.

Having brought Dora away from the life she had in Oxford, I felt that Kit, her husband, was surprisingly unsympathetic to Dora's problems. She'd had a difficult birth, had nightmare neighbours and seemed on the verge of a breakdown. He should have shown more understanding.

A beautifully written book that demonstrates that isolation and hardship are not a new phenomenon.

Hope this gets you going,
Jo Sanderson

If anyone would like to submit a book review for June, please email it to the editors.

From the Parish Magazine Archive: May 1960

Seventy years ago, Oak Apple Day was celebrated in Ombersley. Oak Apple Day (29th May) commemorates the return of the exiled King Charles 2nd and the restoration of the Monarchy and the Church.

Oak Apple Day: Tercentenary 1660-1960

Programme starts at 2.30 at Ombersley Court. In the grounds; Maypole, Classic and Country dancing, Highland and Morris Dancing etc. In the house; Restoration Period Dances by the distinguished artiste Ludmila Mlada, Songs and Madrigals by the Napier Singers. Tour of rooms with period scenes.

To be followed by a procession of Choirs and people at 6.15 pm from the Court to the Parish Church for the Thanksgiving Service at 6.30 pm.



The Mockingbird Ball 2020

IS POSTPONED AND WILL BECOME

The Mockingbird Ball 2021 on Saturday 26th June 2021

A very special event to raise money for local charity, The Anna Wilkinson Mockingbird Trust

Held in the prestigious grounds of Ombersley Court, Ombersley, Worcestershire.

To buy a table of 10 tickets (£110 pp) for this very special event contact Wendy on 07873 350699 or visit our website:
theannawilkinsonmockingbirdtrust.co.uk

Magazine Editorial Team

Lynne Larnder Tel: 620322 Stuart.larnder1@btinternet.com	Maureen Callow Tel: 620392 maureen.callow@icloud.com
Valerie Harris Tel: 620515 valchrisharris@btinternet.com	

From the Editors

Please note that from now on, content should be sent by email to BOTH Lynne and Maureen. Items that cannot be sent by email should be delivered to either Lynne or Maureen. Judy Baer will still be part of the editorial team.

Lynne Larnder, Uttbridge House, Ombersley. Tel: 01905 620322; or
stuart.larnder1@btinternet.com

Maureen Callow, Linden Lea, Uphampton. Tel 01905 620392; 0748
4834 351; or maureen.callow@icloud.com