



# DUNCHURCH VILLAGE MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 28



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## Welcome

**T**hank you for the kind comments we have received about our June special edition magazine. It clearly stirred some forgotten memories about WWII and if anyone has any other historical information about Dunchurch that would be of interest to our readers, please do get in touch at [fodnews1@gmail.com](mailto:fodnews1@gmail.com). It would be useful to keep recording as much as we can for those people who follow in our footsteps.



*Bryan and June, two stars of the VE Day event, gave a wonderful question and answer session about living in Dunchurch during the war*

continued until August 1945, and it is important to remember people were still losing their lives. This was recognised with an early August display of poppies on the memorial green to commemorate VJ Day 2025.

VE Day 80 was not the only social event this summer. The annual fete organised by the Dunchurch Festival Group was another resounding success and the fact that it was the groups 50th founding year seemed

Without doubt, the VE Day event, funded and organised by the Parish Council was a tremendous success. DPC are to be congratulated for providing such a wonderful social occasion for the village and you can read a full report of the day on page 4 written by Cllr Ian Grogan (aka Chief Warden Hodges) who 'led the charge' so well!

Of course, while VE Day was a monumental occasion, the war in the Pacific

to slightly slip under the radar. However, because of Covid and a missed year, we can look forward to celebrating the 50th fete in 2026 and that surely warrants a huge celebration. Congratulations to all those DFG committee members past and present who have given up their time to organise the fete (and other fundraising social events throughout the year). We send our thanks to the DFG

team for supporting other village groups with the profits raised. Thank you for your generosity of money and spirit.

Art in Dunchurch started the same weekend and has grown over several years providing a great platform for local artists to display their work. We are pleased to be starting a new feature in this edition and over the next few magazines, will be highlighting the work and stories of some of the wonderful artists we have here in Dunchurch.

More artistic talent is on display on our front cover, this time in the form of a photograph taken by David Bray of the Dunchurch Photographic Society who captured the Red Arrows at one of their displays. Over the past few weeks, their distinctive red planes have flown over Dunchurch twice, albeit with considerably less aerobatics than in the photograph but still creating quite a spectacle.

Speaking of talent, it is so pleasing when we hear of young people who have achieved great things. Look out for the article about Charlotte who is representing GB in the Deaflympics in Tokyo.



*Clowning around at the fete*

What a wonderful achievement. We look forward to cheering her on and following her progress with interest.

We are also delighted to 'shine a light' on Rory, the Dunchurch Youth Ambassador and his efforts to collect toys for children in hospital. Well done Rory. Such a lovely gesture and a great example to us all.

These are just some of the examples of the excellent community spirit we have here in Dunchurch and it is always a joy to welcome new people to the village who will contribute to that ethos.

With that in mind, we welcome the new vicar of St Peter's Church, Rev Ian Sweeney and Mrs Darragh the new Headteacher at Dunchurch Boughton C of E Junior Academy. For both, we hope that this is just the beginning of a long and fruitful association with our village.

Finally, we hope you enjoy your autumn edition of the village magazine and if you have any Dunchurch related stories you would like us to cover in our December edition, please do get in touch at [fodnews1@gmail.com](mailto:fodnews1@gmail.com).

## VE Day 2025 – Dunchurch remembered and celebrated in equal measure

*By Parish Councillors Ian Grogan, Matt Vaughan and Gary Sly*



**O**n a day not to be forgotten, the village came together on a scale we will long remember.

In theory, it was just another Saturday but it felt very different for the intrepid small group of helpers who arrived at Dunchurch Square, 6am sharp on the 10th of May. The sun was rising and it turned out to be a glorious day in all senses of the word. This was the culmination of ten months of non-stop planning for an event in our main square that the whole village could celebrate and enjoy.



Led by the Dunchurch Parish Councillors named above, we'd had a seed of an idea at a meeting back in July last year which was to turn into something we could never have imagined. As the project grew and gained momentum, so many organisations and people came

to help us and the working group quickly escalated to include Friends of Dunchurch, the WI, Dunchurch Festival Group and many individuals who we haven't the space to name individually here. Theo Classen also came in to support as our representative for the fallen Canadian Halifax bomber and how brilliant it was to see Canadian families from the original

crew members coming all this way to light our beacon on the actual VE Day, Thursday 8th May and then, attend the celebrations on the Saturday with Maple Leaf flags flying proudly next to our Union Jacks. I know from speaking to them how moved they were and how much it meant to them. It was a privilege to welcome them to Dunchurch.

What had first started out as a Dun-





church street party, rapidly metamorphosed into a substantial event which aimed to turn Dunchurch back in time to 1945. We hope everyone feels we achieved that and it was down to the efforts of so many people. As the hours passed (thank you to Number One the Square for our coffees!) and the sun had risen, it felt like



at pace to hit the deadline. The Bren carrier arrived, then the SAS Jeep, the WW2 artillery, the Willeys Jeep and the American half-track and the village began to look like a WW2 military zone. Tents went up, outside stalls emerged and then the big build of the stage. I'm not sure Dunchurch Square has ever seen scenes

like this before or ever will again – what a set up! Our sincere thanks to Andy and Tom for all they did for our village, totally for free. What an effort!

Suddenly 12.45pm had arrived and right on cue the church bells chimed out gloriously for 15 minutes to herald the start of the event at 1pm. It was a pleasure



we were running out of time for our 1pm start. Led by the excellent Andy Baker and Tom Dove (masters of putting on tank and war shows), we worked





to welcome  
Simon Ward  
the then Mayor  
of Rugby onto

and enjoy a truly community event.

the stage to start proceedings, followed  
by Malcolm and Alistair from our two  
churches who gave the blessing. Then,  
without further ado it was time to start  
the show that was eight months in the  
making, and Pipe Major Vincent Deery's  
pipes stirred all who were present.

The code breakers talk with Nicky Lowe  
in the social club was standing room  
only; meeting Bryan and June, Dunchurch  
residents from 1945, in the library was  
so well received; and the children from  
Dunchurch Junior School did us proud  
with such fantastic artwork displayed  
on the library walls along with art cre-  
ated by the Scouts. Then children from  
the village dancing around the maypole  
and using it for what it was originally  
designed for was a delight. We have a  
huge debt of thanks to pay here as Sue  
Protheroe from FODS did such a bril-  
liant job in organising all of this whilst  
running the history sessions and appear-

At the same time our local businesses  
were doing an incredible job providing  
excellent food and drink and we thank  
them all. The Huntsmen Carvery ran  
out of baps within 90 minutes, the fish  
and chip shop sold chips in replica 1945  
newspaper, the Social Club had  
never run such a successful  
bar and the WI had brilliantly  
turned the thatched bus shel-  
ter into a tea and cake stall  
which had people queuing off  
the green. The ice-cream van  
had queues to the library and  
everyone was enjoying the sun,  
the show, the events and the  
opportunity to meet people

ing with Dunchurch Voices,  
thank you Sue! An ex-para  
was also doing an incred-  
ible story-telling session,  
with all the original WW2  
weapons and the flight





simulator of the Halifax Bomber adding further gloss.



Mainwaring was brilliantly recreated by Gary Sly and Private Pike, Warden Hodges, Corporal Jones and so many other characters rose to their fleeting moment of fame.

On the main stage, Dunchurch Voices, Sam Diesch and The Dunchurch Brass Band were in full flow and boy were they doing us proud. We truly had gone back in time and the 1940's sound echoed around the village. However, the main show lasting nearly 25 minutes (repeated twice) seemed to just capture the whole mood of the day and was the brainchild of Sophie Mack who delivered something quite brilliantly from scratch for us. The dancing, singing and sketches had taken months of rehearsals, (where Sophie found her patience with us all, I've no idea!) and now was the time to deliver! We had even formed our very own Dunchurch Home Guard based on Dad's Army – and what a platoon. We won't see their like again I sense! Captain

The whole cast had dedicated so much time but also enjoyed doing it so much and then in a flash the final bagpipes echoed out over our historic old square and a momentous day was nearly done. As the clean-up and packing away began and people started to drift away, it was hard not to reflect on what a pleasure it had been. We estimated over 1500 people passed through in under three-and-a-half hours and it just shows what a great village and community we have here in Dunchurch, something worth preserving, celebrating and building on for our future – until next time!



## Dunchurch Fete 2025

**By Guy Watt, Chairman**

**P**lanning for the fete begins in December and gathers pace throughout the first few months of the new year. By the time the fete starts at noon, it is the culmination of over seven months of work. All the entertainment is in place, the stalls set up and we are ready to go. Hopefully the weather is good – hot but not too hot!

The Dunchurch Fete is a community event in the true sense of the word. Most of the entertainment is provided by local organisations and individuals who have supported the Dunchurch Festival Group over a number of years, but we are always keen to support new performers and give them a chance to shine.

As the Chair of the Festival Group, I had the pleasure of delivering some of the raffle prizes won on the day. The winner of the first prize (£200) was overwhelmed



*Aerial photo by Barrie Lambert showing a new circular arrangement for the stalls and entertainment*

and no one was unhappy with theirs.

This year we raised £5,600 and this money will go back into the community who support us over the year, with the village organisations being encouraged to put in funding requests for what they need. They are then presented with a cheque at the start of December, when as previously mentioned, we begin again.

Next year will be our 50th Dunchurch Fete and we want to really celebrate this landmark event. If you would like to be involved, get in touch – you will be very welcome. [gwattdfg@gmail.com](mailto:gwattdfg@gmail.com)

### Murder Mystery Evening

**Saturday 25th October**

A Murder Mystery play has been written for us, entitled 'Gunpowder, Treason and Plot', set in The Old Lion Inn, Dunchurch in October 1605.

To book tickets please email Julie:  
[juliepeters91@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:juliepeters91@hotmail.co.uk)

Food will be included and more details will follow on our website.

### Children's Halloween Disco

This popular event will return on  
**Friday 31st October**

### Santa Comes to Dunchurch

Raising money for Rugby Myton Hospice, look out for Santa around the village on  
**8th and 9th December**

Rides for children available on Santa's Sleigh





*"They handled the whole kitchen renovation from start to finish — we didn't need to find any trades ourselves. It honestly couldn't have been easier"*



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## Art in Dunchurch

Six glorious days in June, one beautiful garden, 20 amazing artists, what more could we have hoped for? That was Art in Dunchurch 2025.

This year we saw exciting new works by our regular exhibitors including beautiful cyanotype pieces, free machine textile portraits, collages described as 'painting with paper'. The fascinating work of our new artists included the abstract work of artist Richard Veys, the wonderful wood carving of Carrie Yuen and a chance to see the traditional printing methods being demonstrated in hand-inc's new studio.

The new layout for the front garden had a really welcoming feel with improvements to the way we could showcase our artists work and for visitors to relax and chat to the artists. Other changes included opening up new areas of the garden and showing Jackie's stunning glass in the glasshouse. Finally, we need to thank all those local volunteers who

helped to make the event such a success; those

who welcomed over a thousand visitors at the gate, the cake makers, Julie and the team working their socks off in the café, the musicians and not forgetting our generous sponsors – Art Friends Warwickshire, the Festival Group, Kitchens Inc and Courtyard Dentists. Together we raised over £2,000 which goes to our two chosen charities Hope4 Rugby and Ibba Girls' School, South Sudan.



*Art in Dunchurch exhibitors. Their joyful spirit matched their fabulous art! Photo by Ray Spence Photography*



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# Introducing Action For Dunchurch

by *Leanne Warren and Jo Phillips*

**W**hat is Action for Dunchurch all about and how can you get involved? You may have seen our green logo popping up in various places around the village in recent months, so we thought this would be the perfect opportunity to tell you all about us.

## Community collaboration

Dunchurch is more than just a place on a map. With its rich tapestry of history, heritage, and community spirit, it holds a unique charm that generations have cherished.

As the pressures of modern development creep ever closer, a group of passionate volunteers have stepped forward to ensure that our village doesn't lose what makes it so special. That group is A4D – Action for Dunchurch.

Formed by volunteer residents who care deeply about the character and future



*Cawston Woods*



of the area, A4D exists to protect Dunchurch's unique identity from inappropriate or damaging development. Their mission is simple: to support positive change while challenging proposals that could harm the village's rural environment, heritage, or sense of community.

A4D emerged in March 2025, ignited by Rugby Borough Council's latest local plan consultation – an announcement that intensified concerns over further housing and warehouse developments encroaching on cherished greenfield land. This followed the approval of 5000 homes in the South West Rugby development back in 2019, a project now set to dissolve the distinct boundaries between Dunchurch, Bilton and Cawston. Alongside this looms the vast Tritax logistics site, casting its shadow over the ancient woodland of Cawston Spinney. Faced with these mounting pressures, residents came together and declared: enough is enough.

## A constructive, watchful presence

At the heart of A4D's mission is a steadfast dedication to amplifying the voices of local residents. The group closely monitors planning applications and policy developments from Rugby



Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council, and national bodies like Homes England. When significant concerns arise, A4D takes action – alerting the community and mobilising residents to respond. The campaign continues to build powerful momentum, with coverage on ITV Central News, a front-page feature in the *Rugby Advertiser*, and a Teams meeting with Jeremy Wright MP – all contributing to raising awareness and strengthening the group's impact.

Importantly, A4D's approach is constructive rather than combative. They engage with planning authorities, developers, MPs, and Rugby Borough councillors – not to obstruct for the sake of it, but to ensure that any new development is sustainable, sympathetic to Dunchurch's character, and genuinely beneficial to the community. Where damage is unavoidable, they push for appropriate mitigation



*A launch meeting at the village hall was very well attended*

and environmental safeguards.

### **Collaboration and community power**

A4D doesn't work alone. It collaborates with other organisations; Dunchurch Parish Council, Thurlaston Parish Council, Stand Against Lodge Farm (SALV) and Rugby About Turn, keeping a close eye on planning frameworks and large-

scale development proposals. The group also promotes community awareness and involvement, hosting meetings, events and informing and supporting residents about the planning system and how to have their voices heard.

### **Real results, real impact**

In just a short time, A4D has made a tangible difference. When the Rugby Local Plan's latest draft was published, they mobilised quickly, raising awareness about the scale of the proposed residential and warehousing developments, that could irreparably harm the rural character of Dunchurch.



*Volunteers have been out seeking opinions and support*

Thanks to their work, well over 2000 submissions from residents were sent to RBC in response – an extraordinary show of community strength!

They've also brought crucial scrutiny to bear on a Homes England planning application for an electrical substation that would sever a protected wildlife corridor between Cawston Spinney and Cock Robin Wood. A4D's intervention has ensured this proposal is now being reviewed by RBC's Planning Committee, rather than being 'noddled through' unchallenged.

This summer A4D held two events: an afternoon tea with invitations to Rugby Borough Councillors Michael Moran and Louise Robinson; in attendance also was Gary Sly from DPC. Amidst the home-made scones and jam was talk of the latest planning applications, green corridors and design codes, all shared with Dunchurch residents afterwards on their social media page and on the stocks notice-board in the village.

A family walk and picnic took place around the fields near Windmill Lane, in August. Leanne Warren from Wild



*A4D volunteers united in a common cause*

Routes shared foraging tips and folklore stories! The walk was organised by A4D to highlight the value of bridal paths, public rights of way and hedgerows, soon to be lost by a sprawling Homes England development and in the shadow

of the Tritax warehousing. Both this and the planned extension of warehousing, right up to the ancient woodland of Cawston Spinney, were featured in *The Advertiser* this summer.

## Get involved

A4D proves what is possible when a small group of committed people step up to protect what they love. Whether you can spare a lot of time or just a little, the group welcomes new volunteers and supporters to join the cause. You don't have to be an expert – just someone who cares. If you believe in sustainable development whilst preserving green spaces, heritage, and a community feel,

then there's a place for you with Action for Dunchurch!

Find us on Facebook:  
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*Nick talking to a local TV reporter*



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## My journey into art

By **Richard Veys**

**L**ike many people coming through lockdown, I wanted something else and to do something more with my life. My wife suggested I take up art as I was often sketching and I booked on an excellent acrylics course at the Percival Guild House in Rugby under the tutelage of Jo Bryan. Why acrylics? It was the only evening class on at the right time.

The first Monday in the May term I turned up with a pack of paints, a load of brushes and a sense of dread. 'Can I paint?' 'Am I good enough to be here?' and honestly, I wasn't. I was terrible and now, I was frustrated. But then Jo explained, "No one can paint straight away". It took me at least 50 paintings before I did something I thought was halfway acceptable and over 200 before I found my style. Pinterest, Instagram, exhibitions and books all allowed me to figure out what type of painter I wanted to be and like Picasso admitted, I copied those painters I wanted to emulate. I went on courses across the country to learn different painting styles by different artists.

Now, I continue to paint representational work, that is paintings that look like something – but now I also paint in abstraction. I realise that abstract is quite



*A walk in the woods*

challenging for many people. All I'll say here is, take a few minutes to look at a painting, don't dismiss it in seconds and try to engage with the painting.

Recently, I've shown at Art in Dunchurch. This annual event held at Inglenook during June highlights 20 local artists. I think we all sold a few paintings but more than that, we had the chance to chat about our art, how we paint, how we started and what others see in our art. I think I might have even convinced some that abstract art is worth taking a second look.

You can see some of my art by visiting [richardveysart.co.uk](http://richardveysart.co.uk).

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## Dunchurch Community Hub and Library – more than just books

We're incredibly fortunate to have our very own library here in Dunchurch. While many villages have lost their libraries, ours remains open thanks to dedicated local volunteers – and it's become so much more than just a place to borrow books.

At the heart of the Hub is, of course, the library itself. With fiction and non-fiction for all ages – from toddlers' board books to thrillers and historical sagas – there really is something for everyone. To encourage children's reading, we run a popular stamp card scheme: each time your child visits and borrows books, they receive a stamp, and once they collect ten, they can choose a free book to keep.

But we're more than just a library. As a Community Hub, we host activities and events designed to bring people together. Our watercolour painting group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays each month from 1–3pm. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced artist, it's a welcoming, calm space to create and connect – and it's free to attend.

Every Saturday from 10.30–11.30am, our Lego Club offers children the chance to build, create, and develop problem-solving skills in a fun environment. We also run children's arts and crafts

sessions, aiming for monthly dates where possible – free of charge. Keep

an eye on our social media for upcoming sessions, and new events and information.

During term time, Dunchurch Youth Club meets on Thursdays at 5.30pm, open to ages 6–11, offering games, crafts, and outdoor activities when the weather allows.

The Knowing Stillness Meditation Group also meets at the hub every Wednesday at 9.45am – a peaceful way to start your day with guided meditation.

Outside, volunteers maintain a small community garden where fruit and vegetables are grown. Next year, we hope to expand this further and involve even more of the community.

We have big plans ahead for the library, including modernising the space and hosting more events and talks. All of this is only possible with the help of our community – we rely on you using it and supporting us to keep it thriving.

Volunteering here is satisfying and fun. To join the team please email [hubofficer@dunchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:hubofficer@dunchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk).

Open on Tues, Thurs, Fri: 10am–5pm,  
and Sat: 10am–12pm



## Digging for wildflowers

**by Paul Sanders, Secretary of Dunchurch Allotment Association**

**T**oday I unearthed three pairs of ladies' shoes, a bottle of lubricating oil, several plastic oddments – and a single wellington boot. Not quite enough to call in Professor Alice Roberts and the Dig for Britain team, but certainly an interesting haul. More importantly, the ground is now cleared for the Association's next major project: the creation of several wildflower areas across the allotment site.

These wildflower patches will be located in a range of settings – along field margins, beneath orchard trees, beside hedges, and in areas we've recently cleared of brambles and nettles.

One of the early challenges was tackling a large, overgrown area choked with brambles and nettles. After cutting it all down, we removed the debris and treated the ground with weedkiller to get back to the bare soil. Other sections presented their own difficulties, being thick with grass tussocks, couch grass, bindweed, and ground ivy. Once the dead vegetation was removed, we began the hard graft of loosening the compacted soil to create a workable tilth.

Wildflowers thrive best in low-nutrient soil – which is, ironically, hard to find. Years of gardening and farming have left most soils enriched with nutrients, great

for crops but not ideal for native wild plants. A common method to reduce soil fertility is to strip away the topsoil entirely, exposing the poor-quality subsoil beneath. Our site has been cultivated for centuries – originally known as the 'poor plots' of the village – so the nutrient levels are still a little too high for wildflowers to thrive.

To tackle this, we plan to grow a nutrient-hungry crop in these areas first. Once mature, we'll pull up the plants, taking some of the soil's goodness with them. Members of the brassica family – cabbage, broccoli, kale – are excellent for this purpose. We've managed to acquire a generous supply of oilseed rape (another brassica), which will be sown in the future wildflower beds and removed before it has a chance to set seed.

We hope to establish two types of wildflower habitats. In sunny spots, we'll plant species like lady's bedstraw, selfheal, and oxeye daisy. In shadier areas, we'll encourage the growth of plants such as dog violets, primroses, and yellow pimpernel.

But why grow wildflowers on an allotment at all?

Since the 1930s, the UK has lost an astonishing 97% of its wildflower meadows. That loss has had a dramatic



effect on pollinators – bees, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps – all of which rely on wildflowers for food. In turn, 60–80% of the world's flowering plants depend on animals for pollination, including many of the crops we grow and eat.

By creating wildflower areas, we support a greater diversity of pollinators, which benefits both nature and our own growing efforts. Insects that rely on wildflowers also help control pests

such as aphids, which can damage crops. It's a beautiful, mutually beneficial cycle: more wildflowers lead to more pollinators, which lead to healthier crops and a richer environment for everyone.

So, while we may not have found buried treasure in the soil (yet), we're working towards something even more valuable – a space that supports wildlife, helps our crops, and adds colour and life to the allotment site.

Apple juicing

Apple tasting

Kids trail

Apple crafts

Apple food

Apple games



## Apple Day at Dunchurch Allotments

Celebrate all things apple  
Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October

Join us at 1pm for an afternoon of fun  
Free event

# Going for Gold

By Rachel Gower

Local resident Charlotte Gower has recently been selected to swim for team GB at the Deaflympics taking place in Tokyo in November.

Charlotte, who swims for Rugby Swimming Club and GB Deaf Swimming, started swimming when she was seven and now swims six days per week and also manages to fit in strength and conditioning sessions in the gym. Charlotte was diagnosed as partially deaf at birth and developed epilepsy when she was 11, but she doesn't let these challenges deter her from aiming to achieve great things in the pool.

Charlotte's hard work and dedication mean that she has had success both in county and regional championships and she has also competed nationally. One of her highlights of the year was competing in the Aquatics GB National Championships at the London Aquatics Centre where she had the chance to swim alongside Olympians. Charlotte was also selected to take part in the Swim England National Youth Development Programme which is a Swim England talent pathway. This has allowed Charlotte to continue her progression participating in training camps and workshops throughout the season.



Photo by Malaper Photography

It's the 100-year anniversary of the Deaflympics this year and Charlotte is delighted to have been selected. In Tokyo she will be part of a team of 115 athletes competing in athletics, football, golf, swimming, cycling, shooting, and tennis. Charlotte has a busy

schedule planned, swimming in 12 events over six days. Her preferred stroke is backstroke in which she recently achieved a deaf swimming short course world record (pending ratification). She will also be swimming freestyle, individual medley and relays.

Charlotte said, 'it is such an honour to be selected to compete for team GB and I can't wait to experience the Deaflympics and visit Tokyo.'

Unfortunately, Deaflympics GB does not receive funding from the UK government or the lottery, so team members have to self-fund the trip to cover themselves but also coaching and medical staff. Charlotte is currently fundraising and plans to swim 9.5km in the pool as it is about 9500 miles from London to Tokyo. This is going to be a challenge for Charlotte as she is not a distance swimmer. Charlotte's GoFundMe page can be found here: <https://gofund.me/3e080fab>

## Thank you

By Dunchurch Youth Ambassador Rory Nuss,  
Age 10

**W**ow what an amazing fete this year. The sun shone brightly all day for us!

It was so much fun leading in the procession, the music was incredible and everyone had put so much effort into their costumes celebrating 100 years of TV.

I want to thank everyone who brought in toys for my stall. I loved taking them all into the children's ward at Walsgrave Hospital, they really will make a difference.

My mum and dad were kind enough to watch my stall sometimes so that I could go round and enjoy some of the fete too



(l) Rory with Fiona Stevenson from the Dunchurch Festival

Group and Chairman Guy Watt, (r) Presenting the toys to the children's ward at Walsgrave Hospital

with my friends. We had so much fun and really enjoyed watching all the live performances.

Thanks again for making the day so special. I feel very proud to have been selected as this year's Youth Ambassador.

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## Phill Freeman – a most worthy recipient

**H**uge congratulations to Phill Freeman who was awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the Kings Birthday Honours list in June. Awarded for 'meritorious civil service,' there has been no finer recipient. Since the early 1970s, Phill has been an ever-present volunteer for the village transversing many different groups. A past Parish Councillor and currently a village hall Trustee, member of the Dunchurch Festival Group, FODS, Pantomaniacs and volunteer at the junior school to mention just a few, he is frequently seen out and about putting up the village Christmas trees or hanging and watering the lamppost flower baskets and so much more.

A great team player, Phill has never sought any recognition and has just quietly gone about his voluntary work. It is for those of us who know him to sing his praises and we do so from the rooftops. We are delighted Phill's steadfast contribution to our village has been recognised.

Thank you Phill for your many years of service to the community and thanks too to his wife Debbie for so generously lending him to us.

### Another award

Hot of the press! Congratulations Phill for also receiving a volunteer recognition award from Cava and a Warwickshire



*Phill the family man: (left to right) son Tim, Phill, wife Debbie and daughter Emma*

Change Maker award for services to the County. You are going to need a much bigger shelf to display your awards on Phill!



## Foraging 3: Elderberry – the hedgerow's hidden treasure

**By Leanne Warren, RGN and assistant lecturer at Coventry University**



I wonder how many of you, like me, have walked past the humble elder tree hundreds of times without realising its rich and powerful history? It was once known as the 'medicine chest of the people' due to its antioxidant and immune-supporting properties. Next time you pass this hedgerow tree, take a closer look and you will discover a plant steeped in history, medicine and seasonal delights.



The elder tree, *Sambucus nigra*, is found abundantly in our hedgerows and field edges and is particularly noticeable in early June when the highly-scented umbels of creamy-white flowers bloom. These can be made into all sorts of foraged treats including elderflower wine and the delicately-flavoured elderflower cordial.

Late summer is the time to harvest the rich dark purple berries which grow from the flowers. These can be made into jams and syrups, rich in vitamin C, antioxidants and flavonoids. I love to make an immune-boosting syrup ready for the darker winter months ahead, it's like bottling a little summer magic, with

each spoonful carrying the warmth of the sun even when the days are short and grey. Studies have shown that elderberry syrup, taken early, can significantly help reduce the symptoms and severity of colds and flu.

Elder provides an abundance for wildlife with shelter and food throughout the year. Flowers rich in nectar feed our pollinators, and the birds especially love the berries, as you may be aware of if you've ever parked a car near one! The wood is soft and partially hollow making them traditionally used for blowpipes or small musical instruments.

Folklore tradition once thought that the elder tree was protected by the Elder mother or 'The Old Gal'. It was said to be forbidden to break even a single twig without asking for permission first or misfortune would follow.



The tree can grow quickly and can be seen as a pest for its ability to take over a hedgerow. But where some see a 'weed'

tree' I see a quiet symbol of resilience, not only flourishing in poor soil but giving generously whilst connecting us to seasonal rhythms. So next time you are out on a stroll, take a moment and stop to recognise this humble tree steeped in medicinal and culinary history, but don't forget to quietly ask permission from the 'Old Gal' first before taking its flowers or berries, at the very least you'll confuse the dog walkers!

Remember when picking to be absolutely positive on your identification and only take what you need, leaving enough for the wildlife that depend upon it. It's also important to remove all stalks and cook the berries before consuming otherwise they can cause an upset stomach.

### Elderberry syrup recipe

- 2 cups fresh elderberries
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup of honey (or sugar for a longer shelf life)
- Optional spices; cloves, ginger, cinnamon, star anise, cardamon, lemon.

Pick the florets when fully ripe and use a fork to remove the berries from the stems.

Add the berries, water and any spices to a pan and bring to a gentle boil, simmer for about 45 minutes or until

the liquid has reduced by half. Warning: these berries stain, so unless you want your kitchen to look like a crime scene, use a deep pan and an apron, and oh, and you will get purple fingers!



Pour the syrup through a fine sieve or muslin cloth pressing the berries for every last drop of goodness.

Cool slightly and stir in honey. If using sugar add then return to the stove and stirring gently for a few minutes until dissolved. For an even longer shelf life and an extra kick you can also add a tablespoon of brandy.

Allow to cool then add to sterilised bottles. Keep in the fridge for 3–6 months or freeze in ice trays or freezer-safe containers.

Take a tablespoon daily as an immune boost or three tablespoons when feeling run down. It can be added to porridge or made into a hot drink. Enjoy!

If you would like to know more about foraging please do get in touch!

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## Thank you from Friends of Dunchurch Society

**O**ur May vintage tearoom raised another £300 for village projects. If you supported this or any other of our fundraising events, thank you. You might like to know what your money has been used for.

From our funds, we have purchased flowers for the following at a total cost of £2,892.00

- 32 lamppost hanging baskets
- 6 village gateway planters
- 2 planters either side of the village stocks
- 4 planters around the beacon
- 4 planters around the Lord Scott monument
- 1 FODS barrow
- 20 'Freeman' troughs
- flowers for the FODS Express!

Thank you also to the Dunchurch Festival Group who sponsor the five baskets on the metal carpark tree in the centre of the village and the Pantomaniacs who sponsor the one at the end of Cawston Lane. Your support is much appreciated.

Fundraising for next year's village blooms starts now! Make a note of the following diary dates. We



*One of the 'Freeman' troughs that line the pavements outside the shops*



*Hanging baskets outside the Alms Houses*



*Polly the land girl with her Meditation Group wheelbarrow*

hope to see you there.

- Ladies Fashion show with Wanda's, Thursday 25 September
- Winter Wonderland, on the afternoon of Saturday 6 December



*The Daisy Meadow horse trough*

### Troughs and barrows

A huge thank you to those who planted and displayed either a 'terrific' trough or a 'blooming' barrow. We had over 40 barrows and a further 14 troughs. Each one was different and so imaginative. Thank you for bringing such a splash of extra colour to the village.



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## VE Day 80 – Canadian visitors

*By Theo Classen*

**O**n Thursday evening, 8th of May, we laid a wreath at the Halifax Bomber Memorial with Colonel Jonathan Bouchard, the Canadian Air Attaché. The service at the beacon was excellent and John and Stuart, relatives of the crash victims, were delighted to have been able to light it. After, we retired to the Dun Cow where we stayed with our party of international friends, exchanging stories and enjoying a bevvie or two until closing time!

Saturday was terrific with so many visitors, so much entertainment and most of all so many happy faces singing and dancing along. John and Carol Ewing and Stuart Wood have both written to Sue Protheroe to express their feelings about the events of the week and they are full of praise for the organisation, and especially meeting the Mayor and the very poignant meeting with Brian and June in the library as they told stories of their days in Dunchurch during the war.

As a member of the Civilian Committee of

the Rugby Air Cadets, I want to say thank you for having the Air Cadets who were inundated with questions about the microlight aircraft they built in honour

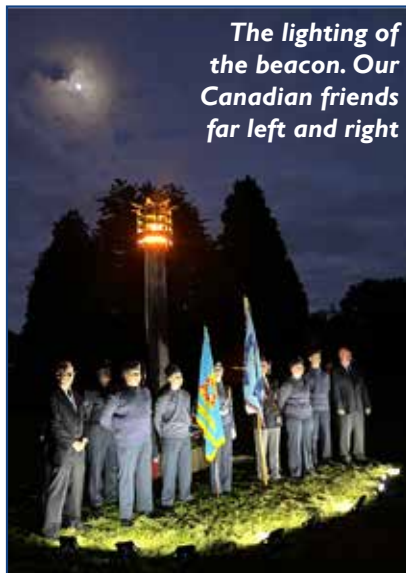
for the five crew members of the Halifax. Their flight simulator was a big hit with Simon, the Mayor, who flew the Halifax for a bit, without crashing it. A special thanks to the management of The Huntsman for the electric power to drive the simulator and to Rob Collings for facilitating.

Personally, I have very much enjoyed being part of the organising team and am more than happy to assist in any future event.

And finally, congratulations to all on the team for delivering such well organised and attended events.



*Bryan with John and Stuart after a fabulous question and answer session at the VE 80 event*



*The lighting of the beacon. Our Canadian friends far left and right*





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# Lance Corporal Harry Evans – a mystery solved

By Nicky Lowe

For a number of years, the Remembrance Sunday Service at the war memorial outside St Peter's Church has presented a puzzle. Why is the name of Harry Evans read out as amongst the fallen in World War I when it is missing from the war memorial itself? He is buried in a Commonwealth War Grave in St Peter's Churchyard but his name also does not appear on the memorial scroll inside the church. Sadly, Corporal Harry Evans died in the UK just five days before the Armistice.

His Commonwealth War Grave stone is inscribed 'in memory of Lance Corporal H Evans of the 7th Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps who died on 6 November 1918 aged 23.'

So who was the missing soldier, Harry Evans?

The 1911 census shows that Harry then lived in Crick with his parents William and Annie, younger brothers Albert and Daniel and younger sisters Leah and Gladys. His occupation was 'Garden helper and houseboy (domestic)' while his father was a 'Groom (domestic)'. It would therefore seem that he was employed in service in a prestigious house in Crick, of which there were several at that time, such as Vynter's Manor.

Some time after residing in Crick, the family moved to Thurlaston 'near Pudding Bag Lane' and the electoral roll shows that they were there in 1918. Another source of mystery was that if his grieving parents were living in Thurlaston when he died, why was he also not on the memorial scroll inside St Edmund's Church, yet his name is also read out there as at St Peter's?

**Military History:** Harry joined the King's Royal Rifles on 2 September 1914, and was wounded in action at Hooze in 1915 and on the Somme in 1916. After being wounded for the second time, Harry was classed as unfit for service and invalided home. That did not guarantee a return to civilian life as if fit enough, military service had to be resumed. He was transferred with the rank of Private to the Mechanical Transport section of the Army Service Corps (ASC). His obituary in the *Rugby Advertiser* indicated that he died of pneumonia after catching a chill on duty. However, it also refers to an outbreak of influenza at the ASC depot. As secondary bacterial pneumonia infections killed many people in the Spanish Flu of 1918–1920, it is not fanciful to believe that Harry was one of those victims. No longer the fit pre-war footballer and cricketer, military ser-

vice in Northern France may finally have caught up with Harry as the flu is reputed to have been brought back to the UK in 1918 by returning service personnel.

Whilst readers will recognise the reference to the Somme, that to Hooze may be unfamiliar. Hooze on the Ypres Salient was the first battle in which the Germans used flame-throwers against British and Commonwealth soldiers. On 29 July 1915, only ten days after the Battalion had arrived in France, German shell and mortar fire systematically destroyed the British trenches. In the words of the compulsory War Diary (regularly updated official record kept by military units):

'Day by day and night by night, they shelled the front trenches, the support trenches and the communication trenches. Gradually they blew them down faster than we could repair them; whole sections of men at a time were blown to pieces, and there was no cover to withdraw the men to. We were shelled from the front, from the flank, and from the rear. At the end of a week there were



*The Crick war memorial in the grounds of St Margaret of Antioch*

hardly any trenches left, and the two battalions in first line, without sleep, and worn with constant watching by day and night, sorely needed a rest.'

Harry was serving in one of the reserve battalions, and it was his turn to be called to the Front. At 3.15 am on 30 July jets of flame swept what was left of the British trenches, accompanied by shells and mortar fire, followed by hand-to-hand fighting. The Germans had achieved complete surprise. At 5 am they mounted a counter-attack on Hooze with 'a curtain of shellfire'. The

two reserve battalions were immediately recalled to the Front, and with the two battalions already there including Harry's, were ordered to counter-attack. Their officers knew that it was wholly impracticable and believed that there was no chance of success. As Harry's battalion emerged from the woods, the Germans opened with 'an unholy bombardment' of heavy machine-gun fire 'and literally swept the men away line by line' leaving the bodies lying in heaps. Despite this, the last wave of men pushed forward with great courage only to meet the

same fate. The commander was facing the loss of the whole 41st Brigade and stopped the counter-attack. Out of 4,000 in the four battalions of the Brigade only 720 soldiers of all ranks were capable of physically answering the muster. It is estimated that 2,500 were killed.

This illustrates the sheer horror to which the Harrys and Williams (see below) and our great-grandfathers, were exposed as citizen soldiers.

**Harry's Sibling:** Pte. William Evans of the 14th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment died on 10 June 1917, killed by a German shell during the Second Battle of Arras. His regiment served as part of the 5th Division in the Order of Battle in which there were 29 Divisions. The battle, which lasted for only five weeks, saw almost 160,00 British and Canadian soldiers killed or injured. As the main offensive ended in May, William may have died of wounds. He is buried at Orchard Dump Cemetery, Arleux-en-Gohelle in the Pas de Calais, where many Canadian combatants are also buried. As the Fallen were usually interred near their place of death, William is likely to have died at or near Arleux, captured from the Germans by the Canadians on 28–29 April 1917.

William is also not named on the Dunchurch war memorial nor in the memorial scrolls in St Peter's and St Edmund's churches.



*Harry and William remembered. Their names clearly visible from the path that runs alongside the church*

**Harry's Family:** The next census was in 1921 and of course does not mention Harry or sibling William Jnr. His father William and brother Daniel were both gardeners for Mr Hopps of Thurlaston. Brother Albert was a groom for Major Harold Cayzer of Dunchurch Lodge (now known as Dunchurch Park), owner of the Dunchurch Lodge Stud Company (still in existence) and Master of the Pytchley Hunt.

In 1939 at the outbreak of World War II the government commissioned a Register as a census substitute, and William and Annie with their daughters Leah and Gladys (now Mrs Colledge) are listed as the four occupants of Rose Cottage in Church Lane Thurlaston. William's occupation is shown as 'Gardener in Private Service' which bearing in mind that he was then aged 72, illustrates a life of hard toil.

In the circle of fate, William and Annie are buried in St Peter's Churchyard not far from Harry. Annie died aged 84 on 4 October 1947, and her widower



William died on 29 November 1949 aged 82. The couple had lost their two elder sons in the Great War within 17 months of each other. Their next son Albert also served but fortunately survived.

**The Mystery Solved:** And finally, the mystery of why neither Harry nor William Evans is commemorated on war memorials in Dunchurch or Thurlaston?

They are on the Roll of Honour in the church of St Margaret of Antioch in Crick, their home village as youngsters and where William may have continued to live after the rest of the family moved to Thurlaston. Two brave young men of

humble background, symbolic of the 6–7 million British soldiers (other ranks and NCOs) who fought in the Great War.

*Acknowledgements with grateful thanks: Brian Bowsher, Paul Smith and Peter Smith*

### An Act of Remembrance

For years, the name Harry Evans was never read out on Remembrance Sunday, presumably because the names had been taken from the War Memorial/Roll of Honour. Following his own research, that was corrected by Howard Blackmore with the assistance of Terry John and each year, Harry Evans is now commemorated at the annual Service of Remembrance in November.

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## The history of Bilton Grange as a house

**By Jayne Brumpton, Archivist**

In about 1150, King Stephen gave a large portion of his lands in Bilton to the Cistercian monastery at Pipewell in Northamptonshire. The lands formed a distant outlying farm to the monastery until it was dissolved in 1539 by King Henry VIII. The land had been rented by the Boughton family and they became its owners after the dissolution and up to 1768, when Anna Boughton married Alexander Hume, who worked for the East India Company as a China trader.

Their son, Abraham Hume, inherited Bilton Grange in 1806, which was then a Georgian farmhouse with 263 acres. There was no main drive but a simple road entering between the Cock and Robin Inn and the Old Lion, where today there is a footpath. The original Georgian building is what became the headmaster's house and the main entrance was through the archway which now leads off from the south end of the gallery.

### The Georgian farmhouse

In January 1839, Captain John Hubert Washington Hibbert married Julia Tichborne, widow of the heir to the Earl of Shrewsbury. The Earl himself lived at Alton Towers, and this association was to have a dramatic impact on Bilton



*The Georgian farmhouse*

Grange. The Hibberts rented Bilton Grange from Abraham Hume from 1839 to 1840 until they purchased it outright in 1846. Although Hibbert had been born a Protestant, his new wife was a Catholic and Washington Hibbert converted to the Catholic faith in 1849. Anti-Catholic laws had been in place in England since the reign of Elizabeth I and the Catholic Emancipation Act had only recently been passed in 1829, so Washington was making a bold move.

His family money came from the slave trade. Washington's father, grandfather and cousins were all slave traders in Jamaica and the family owned a slave-owning sugar plantation in Jamaica called Agualta Vale. In fact, his cousin, George, who was an MP, stood up in Parliament and argued against the abolition of the slave trade, saying it would ruin the British economy! Washington not only benefitted from this by a significant inheritance from his father Thomas, who



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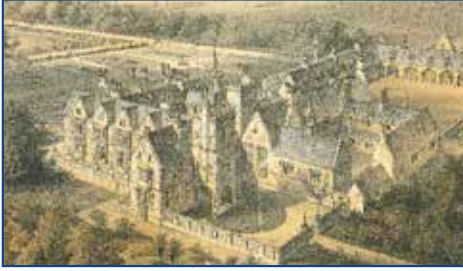
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*Bilton Grange in the 1860s*

had died when Washington was three, but he also received compensation for 'loss of goods' when slavery was abolished in 1833.



*Gallery windows showing crests of Hibbert and Tichborne*

The Hibberts turned their attention to enlarging Bilton Grange. The Earl of Shrewsbury recommended the architect Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin, who had worked on Alton Towers (and was later to design the

Houses of Parliament). Pugin designed the Victorian mansion which makes up the core of the current school, plus a host of decorations and installations, including our famed staircase, the fireplaces and fire 'dogs' and an elaborate chandelier (called a corona) made by John Hardman of Birmingham.

The 1851 census shows the Hibberts

living at Bilton Grange with their six children and various servants – John Turner the butler, Thomas Heyward, footman, Francis Field, keeper, Lucy Gardner, housekeeper and Mary Darkin cook. I wonder if any of their descendants still live in the area?

Hibbert was keen to support the Catholic religion in Rugby and paid for the building of St Marie's Church and the adjoining convent, again designed by Pugin. The spire of St Marie's is the tallest in the county and Hibbert had his own coach-house built at the entrance to the church for when he went to Mass.

In the late 1860s, the Hibberts moved to London and Bilton Grange was sold to John Lancaster, a Lancashire coal mine owner and Liberal MP for Wigan. Lancaster made some changes of his own, replacing some of the Hibbert family crests with his own and taking out a floor in the Georgian wing to create a large



*St. Marie's Catholic Church, and Hibbert's coach-house*

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bedroom, to which was added a marble fireplace depicting a phoenix rising from the ashes.

At its largest extent, as detailed in the sale particulars in the 1860s, the estate encompassed over 1100 acres, including Woolscott Manor Farm, Onley Fields Farm and extending out to Grandborough with a separate parcel of land in Hillmorton.



*The Lancaster fireplace*

The 1881 census which shows the Lancasters living in Bilton Grange, depict a completely different set of servants, though locally born staff include Fred Line the coachman and Sarah Jane French a housemaid.

Lancaster died in 1884, and his heirs sold Bilton Grange to the Reverend Walter Earle, who, in 1887, moved his school to Dunchurch from Yarlet in Staffordshire.

## Can you help Giles?

*FODS received the following email. If you have any information, please email [fodnews1@gmail.com](mailto:fodnews1@gmail.com)*

I am researching Lilbourne Airfield, near Rugby (1910–1920) including its use during the army manoeuvres of 1913. During these manoeuvres some 24 airplanes were based adjacent to Lilbourne and two airships were based at Bilton Grange, with a flying depot with stores and workshops at LNWR Dunchurch Railway Station, all in support of a defending White Army\*. King George V and Queen Mary visited Lilbourne Airfield on the morning of 26 September and the King, with the Secretary of State for War, Rt Hon JR Seely, then went on to Bilton Grange before attending a concluding conference at Weedon Barracks, Daventry.



*Reproduced from the 'Our Warwickshire' website [www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk](http://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk)*

The *Our Warwickshire* website has three pictures of the airships: Dunchurch HM airship Delta; Bilton army manoeuvres; and Bilton army airship.

I do have some additional information about the men and machines involved at Bilton Grange but I wonder if someone can pinpoint the fields used by the airships and the encampment and the access thereto. I do hope someone can help. Thank you in anticipation.

\*The White Army is the common name for the armed forces of the White movement which opposed the Bolsheviks and the Red Army during the Russian Civil War.

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## Dunchurch Photographic Society

**By Warren Strickland**

**L**ove photography? From beginner to professional, come along and join us at Dunchurch Photographic Society and be assured of a warm and friendly welcome. We meet every Wednesday evening, 19.30 at the WI Hall, Southam Road starting on Wednesday 10 September with our honoured guest, the Mayor of Rugby.

We have a comprehensive programme of tutorials, guest speakers and competitions.

Pictured are some photographs taken by our members – including this issue's front cover: Red Arrows performing 'Tornado', taken at Old Warden



Airfield in Bedfordshire on 28 May 2025.

If you need any more information please call me on 07773 867549 or email [warrenstrickland2003@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:warrenstrickland2003@yahoo.co.uk)



### Tony Evans in memoriam

It was standing room only at St Peter's Church when friends and relatives gathered on 4 July to say farewell to Tony. As well as running his

own business, Tony was often to be found in the village post office working alongside his wife Sandie or later, supporting her in the Social

Club when she was manager. A larger-than-life character, Tony will be sadly missed by many. Condolences to Sandie and family.

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## Dunchurch Voices 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert

Join us for a special evening of song & celebration



Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025  
7.30pm  
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Tickets £10 from Wanda's

Includes a glass of Prosecco & cake

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## Dunchurch Voices

By Barbara Davies

**T**he Ladies Choir has been singing together now for almost 20 years and we are looking forward to celebrating the anniversary with a concert at the village hall on Friday 17 October at 7.30pm (see poster opposite).

In the autumn term of 2005 about a dozen interested individuals gathered on a Wednesday evening to sing together with the aim of starting a village choir. We are still meeting on Wednesday evenings and currently have over 30 singers.

Over the years our performances have been mainly in Dunchurch, Rugby and surrounding areas, and have included many concerts, singing at care homes, weddings, birthdays and funerals.

Further afield, we have also taken part in 'Community Choirs Showcase Days', organised by the Sing for Pleasure organisation. A day was spent rehearsing and then performing Carmina Burana with the CBSO Symphony Orchestra in Symphony Hall in Birmingham. The recording of a Remembrance Day 'Songs of Praise' at the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick was another exciting experience in 2013, where we formed part of the invited audience/choir.

The Christmas season has for many years seen us entertaining at a pre-

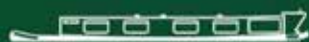


*Dunchurch Voices with a 'Gold' winning performance for the Britain in Bloom judges in 2022*

booked festive lunch at Waterside Restaurant, Draycote Water, also singing at St Peter's Church Dunchurch for the Rugby Dunsmore Rotary Club Christmas Service. Collaboration with the Rugby Male Voice Choir has been ongoing too. Certainly, a highlight on the calendar has been our involvement as invited guests at some of their Christmas concerts.

One of our most important aims has always been to support charitable organisations, local and national. The Myton Hospices, Help For Heroes, Save the Children, Blood Cancer UK, Target Ovarian Cancer, Hope 4, The Bradby Club and Rugby Dementia Group are just some to which we have donated.

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for performance is a time to have fun, whilst also working hard to learn and hone skills and techniques to achieve the highest standard of performance that we can. Singing is good for you, physically,

mentally and socially. The worries of the day will be forgotten for an hour or so as you simply 'Enjoy the buzz'.

(Contact details may be found in the community directory on page 63.)

## Dunchurch and Thurlaston WI

By Anne Gilbert

**D**unchurch and Thurlaston WI has been an integral part of our community for 106 years.

Our members enjoy a host of activities from stunning walks to intriguing guest talks, trips to fabulous venues across the UK, regular quizzes and games including archery, croquet and much, much more. It's all about fun, companionship and making a difference.

We're also extremely lucky to own our own spacious hall, with multiple amenities including a large stage, fitted kitchen and free WiFi, all of which are regularly used by local individuals and organisa-

tions and available for up to 100 people. It's perfect for any get-togethers, celebrations or parties!

However, owning our property, together with rising costs means we're always looking for new members. Whatever your age, whatever your interests if you love Dunchurch and Thurlaston as much as we do, find out what the WI can do for you.

For hall bookings, contact Anne Gilbert – [annegilbert1@hotmail.com](mailto:annegilbert1@hotmail.com); for general enquiries, contact Marion Townsend – [marion.gordon@btconnect.com](mailto:marion.gordon@btconnect.com)



### Warwickshire Connected

Warwickshire Police attended the recent village fete to promote the Warwickshire Connected initiative. The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) is made up of police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) who wish to work closely with residents, local

authorities and community leaders to better understand priorities/needs and then identify useful, long-term solutions to local problems.

Warwickshire Police are therefore encouraging Dunchurch residents to: 'Sign up for free to Warwickshire Connected to tell us your



priorities, find out what we are doing to tackle them, be the first to hear the facts and help make a difference to your community.' Sign up by visiting [www.warwickshireconnected.com](http://www.warwickshireconnected.com)

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## Dunchurch Boughton C of E Infants Academy and Nursery

**By Suzanne Marson, Headteacher**

**A**t the time of writing, we have just finished the academic year and what a year it has been! The children have been their usual amazing selves and continue to embrace every opportunity with enthusiasm and positivity. The year two children ended the academic year with a wonderful end-of-year play, showcasing their learning from their time at the school. They then enjoyed celebrating with an end-of-year disco and maypole event. Our pre-school children also 'graduated' from nursery, performing amazingly for their parents in the last week of term. There are already exciting trips planned in the autumn with year two planning to take part in a Victorian Christmas at St John's Museum, and the whole school visiting Warwick Arts Centre to take part in a theatre experience.

As many of you will know, we had a fire in school during May. We would like to publicly thank those in the local community that reached out to us to offer help and support. Special thanks to the local church communities at St Peter's and the Baptist Church who immediately offered their help in the days that followed the fire. We were thankful that we were able to use the upstairs space at the Baptist Church enabling our year

one children to continue their education, along with using space at Dunchurch Boughton C of E Junior Academy and Leamington Hastings C of E Academy for our reception and year two children. Our staffing team were amazing, going over and above to ensure the children received an education, and the outpouring of love and support that we received from our parental community was amazing. We were able to return to the school building relatively quickly, and a refurbishment project is taking place over the summer term. We will have a new school hall, school kitchen and refurbished corridors and reception classrooms ready for September.

The Boughton Trust generously supported us to carry out a library project over the course of this year. An outdated ICT suite was removed, being replaced with an age-appropriate new library area. This exciting transformation has provided a welcoming space that fosters a love of reading and supports the development of early literacy skills. The Boughton Trust have also supported us following the fire, kindly agreeing to fund the purchase of some new resources for the reception classrooms.



At the end of this academic year, we need to say thank you to many people. Thank you to the children – it is always a privilege to be a part of a child's educational journey. Thank you to the staff for everything that they do for the children. They always go above and beyond and are part of what makes Dunchurch Boughton C of E Infant Academy a special place to be. To our parents and

amazing PTA and Governor volunteers, thank you for your never ending support. Last but not least, thank you to everyone within the Dunchurch community who supports the school and enables our children to grow and flourish. We really do appreciate it.

Email us: [office.infants@dunchurch.covmat.org](mailto:office.infants@dunchurch.covmat.org) or call us: 01788 810292

## Dunchurch Oak Line

By **Mike Judge MBE**

**Y**our Oak Line team have been busy and thanks to their extra efforts, we were able to finish in time for fete day. First of all, Eric and Jane Ewington helped compile an addendum to the Oak Line Book including photos of all the oak saplings in their summer leaves and some interesting tree stories. This addendum will be added to the electronic version of the book.

Secondly, there were photographs added of our other spin-off project, kindly sponsored by the Dunchurch Festival Group. In the original book, I identified a huge oak on the path from Waring Way leading to the village sportsfield and chose to call it 'Colossus', and suggested it should have a plaque! Phill Freeman BEM (many congratulations!) has created and fixed an oak backing to some slate

plaques and we have added these, identifying the special trees as follows: two ancient oaks nearby 'Colossus',

Nelson and Wellington, the Millenium Oak near the entrance to the sportsfield, and the Silver Jubilee copper beech at the end of Cawston Lane behind the bus shelter. Maybe more plaques will appear later.

Many thanks to the team and I hope you find this update interesting. I am happy to receive any comments, criticisms or additions. Email me [mabjudge@icloud.com](mailto:mabjudge@icloud.com)



*Just one of the plaques that have been added to some of the special trees in the village*



# Girlguiding

By Nicola Townsend-Kennedy

**W**e show girls from 4 to 18 a world of possibilities big and small – one where every girl can laugh, learn and have adventures.

Girlguiding is what each girl wants it to be. It might be the thrill of doing something for the first time. Songs around a campfire. The buzz of getting a new badge. Coming home exhausted and full of stories. We offer a space where she can get creative, explore, become confident, and most of all have fun.

We bring girls together to have incredible adventures, figure out what makes them tick, share laughs and learn about the world around them. Maybe you recognise us from your own childhood, used to know us as the 'Girl Guides', or spotted our iconic Jeff Banks-designed uniform out and about? Whether your child comes from generations of guiding or your family is completely new to our movement, she'll find a space to belong here.

As well as making lasting friendships, there are loads of ways your child will develop her own leadership skills here too. Whether that's volunteering in a young helper role, or joining one of our fantastic youth panels, experiences in guiding are designed to help girls build confidence and take on new challenges at their own pace. Your child will help

choose the activities she takes part in with her unit, and also pick interest badges in topics or areas she wants to learn more about.

For over 100 years girls in guiding have been taking part in adventures, stepping into their brave space and trying new things. Maybe that's their first international trip away with friends – or getting muddy in their local park. Whatever adventure means to your child, we'll make sure she finds out here.

Girlguiding offers all girls an equal sense of belonging, no matter who they are or where they're from. Ours is a relaxed and encouraging all-girls space where every girl can feel at home, guided by our inspiring volunteers. We know the barriers girls face, and we're committed to making sure they have equal opportunities to thrive. Our programme is packed full of resources to help girls build their confidence and speak out.

It's important that costs don't prevent girls from taking part. Speak to your local volunteer about a payment plan, or whether your area might be eligible to apply for a grant.

Being part of Girlguiding gives your child the tools she needs to thrive. It's so much more than an after-school club!



## VE 80 yarn bombing

**A**s part of the village VE Day celebrations, volunteers decorated the saddle stones at The Old Holt. Sincere thanks to resident Alice for granting permission.

Look out for a Christmas display in December.



*High tea by Jane*

*Sailing home to Dover by  
Alison*

*Winston Churchill and the  
British Bull dog spirit by Alison*

*Soldier in happier times by Thelma*

*Celebrating around the maypole by Sue P*

*A dove of peace by Linda*

*The spitfire has landed by Wendy*



*Extra bunting provided by Sue K*

## Dunchurch Band

By Louise Balsom

**D**unchurch Band rehearses on Tuesday evenings at the WI Hall, Southam Road, Dunchurch from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

We have vacancies in the bass section and would love to hear from any bass players (BBb or Eb) interested in joining the band. Other brass instrument players also welcomed and instruments can be provided. Please contact us for more information or come along to a rehearsal and meet the conductor, Mr Paul Whitmore and the band members.

On Sunday 9 March 2025 the Dunchurch Band were delighted to come fifth in the Midlands Regional Championships 2025 competition held at the Bedworth Civic Hall.

The Dunchurch Band had an exciting spring and summer and enjoyed performing 'at home' at the Dunchurch Fete and further afield such as at the Abington Park Bandstand in Northampton in April and Pershore Midsummer Brass Festival in July 2025.



Our next concert will be the Brass and Broadway Concert at the Dunchurch Baptist Church on Saturday 4 October 2025. Doors open at 7pm and the concert will start at 7.30pm.

### Dunchurch Training Band

The Training Band rehearses on Monday evenings from 7pm to 8pm at the WI Hall in Dunchurch.

If you would like to learn to play a brass instrument, or already play and would like to have fun playing as part of a band we would love to hear from you.

The Dunchurch Training Band is for both adults and children (7 years of age and over) and is suitable for complete beginners and learners grade 1–4 or similar standard. The band has instruments that learners can use and provides tuition for beginners.

Contact Louise Balsom on [dunchurch.band100@yahoo.com](mailto:dunchurch.band100@yahoo.com)

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## St Peter's Church and St Edmund's

*By Reverend Ian Sweeney, Vicar of St Peter's and St Edmund's*

**H**ello! My name is Reverend Ian Sweeney, and I am delighted to be joining you – along with my amazing wife, our three wonderful children and our two slightly less amazing (in fact, quite mischievous) cats – as the new vicar of St. Peter's Church and St. Edmund's, here in Dunchurch and Thurlaston.

This new chapter will be officially marked at my installation service on Tuesday, 14th October, and it would be lovely to see members of the community there. Please do feel warmly invited to come along.

I was born in Coventry, where I began my journey into ministry around 13 years ago, serving in a variety of roles and locations. It is a real privilege to be called to serve in such a beautiful and historic part of the country, and I am very much looking forward to getting to know the community – and discovering what exciting things God has in store for Dunchurch, Thurlaston, and the surrounding areas.

It will probably come as no surprise that I'm passionate about Jesus and about helping people come to know His deep love for them. I also love spending time with my family and friends, and I have a long-standing love for music, having

played in a band when I was younger. Some would say I also have a slightly unhealthy passion for Coventry City FC...

I enjoy walking as well, so don't be surprised if you spot me out and about in the parish. Please don't hesitate to say hello; I'm always happy to meet new faces.

I look forward to worshipping, working, and walking alongside you as part of this vibrant parish.



**Save the date!**  
**Saturday 8th November 2025**

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## Adopt a grave at St Peter's

By **Chris Sarson**

**F**ODS and St Peter's have come up with an idea that would bring colour to parts of the churchyard which are otherwise neglected.

While graves at the front of the churchyard and those – usually dating from the 1960s in the area furthest from the church – are well tended, those in the central area can get overgrown. This is partly because the relatives of those buried have moved away or are now unable to look after the family grave, or because the volunteers who care for the churchyard don't have the resources to manage the whole area. Sometimes though, relatives visit St Peter's and ask where the family grave is situated and if it can be cleared and looked after.

This is where we are hoping that people in Dunchurch might like to select a grave which looks unloved and adopt it by doing things like clearing the area around it, cleaning the headstone and wording and occasionally placing some fresh flowers. Some village residents already do this and it is delightful to see life brought back to a neglected area.

There are certain things to bear in mind.



We would need to confirm that, if relatives can be contacted, they would have no objection to this being done. There are also churchyard rules (laid down by the Diocese) requesting no artificial flowers, photos, ornaments or lights.

If you are interested, please telephone Chris Sarson who is responsible for the churchyard on 01926 632408, or email Sue on [fodnews1@gmail.com](mailto:fodnews1@gmail.com) and one of them will be in touch. You will be talked through what is involved (not very much or as much as you want to do) and accompanied to the churchyard to help select a likely spot.

It might be that the name interests you, the location and its view, or you might even remember the family involved. Whatever, we would love to hear from you.

## St Peter's Church

**By Veronica Lowe, Joint Churchwarden**

**S**t Peter's Dunchurch and St Edmund's Thurlaston are very pleased to announce that the Revd Ian Sweeney has been appointed to be our new vicar. His licensing service will be on 14 October at 7.30 pm in St Peter's and will be conducted by the Bishop of Coventry, the Right Revd Sophie Jelly. Please see Ian's introductory article about himself on page 57.

We are always pleased to welcome you into St Peter's, whether at the Beech Tree Coffee Shop held on the first Tuesday of each month, or to take Communion or receive a Blessing at Sunday morning service, or simply to visit our historic 14th century church during the day. Its beauty is enhanced by the external floodlighting at dusk kindly provided by Dunchurch Parish Council.

St Peter's churchyard is a place of tranquility with wildflower plots, ancient trees, extensive views over Northamptonshire,

Wednesday 17 September – Rugby Heritage Open Day visit to the church and village

Wednesday 24 September – Harvest Festival with Revd Pam Gould

Sunday 5 October – Pets' Blessing Service with Revd Hilary Iredale

Tuesday 14 October – Installation of Revd Ian Sweeney

Saturday 8 November – Espresso Concert

Sunday 9 November – Remembrance Sunday service jointly with the Baptist Church

Sunday 30 November – Open Air Nativity Service with the Baptist Church and schools

Tuesday 9 December – Rotary Rugby Dunsmore Carol Service

Sunday 14 December – Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

and eight Commonwealth War Graves. You do not need to be a churchgoer to enjoy the churchyard as we welcome dog-walkers, artists and strollers, and those who come for quiet meditation.

Volunteers are of course always welcome from churchyard gardeners to bellringers! Please contact

**[dunchurchstpeters@gmail.com](mailto:dunchurchstpeters@gmail.com)**



*Do you need somewhere local for friends or family to stay?*

This luxurious roundhouse set in a beautiful Dunchurch garden sleeps up to six in a large open space with an adjacent fully fitted kitchen/diner with separate shower room. There's a TV in the tree house next to the covered stage and a gas BBQ under the shade of the walnut trees. For more information email [carinahaley@btinternet.com](mailto:carinahaley@btinternet.com)

# Dunchurch Baptist Church

**By Reverend Alistair Jones**

It was delightful to see so many different community organisations involved in the village VE Day and VJ celebrations. It was a great festival (observance) of a significant moment in our national history and I was encouraged to see many of our own church family involved in the different activities.

That is part of the ethos of the Baptist church, to be integral to the life of the village. Yes, our building is on the edge of Dunchurch in location, but that does not stop us being part of the village. Our thriving toddler group, Noah's Ark, has been running for many years. Each year we welcome new parents, grandparents, guardians and childminders along with their children. There is also the inevitable saying goodbye as the children grow and move onto nursery and school, only to renew that relationship at another time.

Our monthly Route 41 café on the third Tuesday of the month continues to attract a regular group of people, along with more occasional visitors. It is a very relaxed environment, where all are made welcome. This is often in the same week as our cake and craft group on the third Friday of the month.

Alongside the activities organised by Dunchurch Baptist Church, we welcome



*Beautiful patchwork depicting Noah's Ark*

the use of our building by other community organisations like Brownies and Dunchurch Voices. With so many different activities going on in one place, we are aware that there is something on offer for everyone, encompassing different ages, interests and abilities. All of these events have a focus that brings a particular group together, whether it is small children enjoying social time together or adults with a common interest.

To me, it reflects the Kingdom of God, or family of God. We all come from very different backgrounds, have differing abilities, yet find a place within God's family. DBC is a diverse group of Christians who have the common interest of following Jesus and discovering more about the God who loves us. Despite our varying backgrounds and nationalities, we each find a role within the church to serve one another, and the community in which we live. All are welcome to come and be part of God's worldwide family, and find their place and role within it. We will be celebrating harvest on the 28 September by having a café church instead of our usual service format. All are welcome to come and join us for this relaxed celebration, as we give thanks to God for another harvest.





Extra copies of the magazine available at:  
Anne-Marie's, Baptist Church, Library, Post Office,  
Rugby Road Newsagents, Village Hall, Wanda's

## Advertising rates

Professionally delivered to homes and businesses in Dunchurch Village including Toft, Lime Tree Village, Dunchurch Hall and also Onley Park. Over 1400 copies distributed each quarter, with an estimated readership of 3000.

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To place an order email [fodsads1@gmail.com](mailto:fodsads1@gmail.com)

Deadline for December 2025 issue: 31 October

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# Dunchurch Community Directory

Badminton Group	Dunchurch Village Hall, Monday 7.30pm	judge.patricia@googlemail.com Pat Judge 01788 810253
Beavers	Boys and girls aged 5¾ – 8 Mondays & Tuesdays, Scout hut, Done Cerce Close	www.dunscout.org.uk join@dunscout.org.uk
Cubs	Boys and girls aged 8 – 10½ Wednesdays at the Scout hut, Done Cerce Close.	www.dunscout.org.uk join@dunscout.org.uk
Dunchurch Allotment Association	Situated on Coventry Rd	www.dunchurchallotments.org.uk admin@dunchurchallotments.org.uk Secretary Paul Sanders 01788 811744
Dunchurch Bellringers	St. Peter's Church. Sunday Service ringing 9.50-10.30am, Practice, Wed 7.45–9pm	Tower Captain Simon Benton, 07890 325434 simon.j.benton@gmail.com
Dunchurch and Bilton Cricket Club	Based as Dunchurch Village Hall Rugby Rd.	https://dunchurchbilton.play-cricket.com
Dunchurch and Thurlaston WI	Meetings 2nd Thursday of each month, 2pm, WI Hall, Southam Rd.	Anne Gilbert 01788 811837 annegilbert1@hotmail.com
Dunchurch Band	Senior and training band	www.dunchurchband.co.uk dunchurch.band100@yahoo.com
Dunchurch Baptist Church	Baptist Church, Coventry Road.	www.dunchurchbaptistchurch.org.uk Minister: Rev Ali Jones, minister@dunchurchbaptistchurch.org.uk. Church Secretary Sarah Coulon, sarah.c@dunchurchbaptistchurch.org.uk
Dunchurch Boughton CoFE Infant Academy & Nursery	Nursery children are taken from aged 2yrs 9months. Other year groups, Reception, year 1 and 2	office.infant@dunchurch.covmat.org 01788 810292
Dunchurch Boughton CoFE Junior Academy	Primary education situated in Dew Close	office.juniors@dunchurch.covmat.org 01788 81028
Dunchurch Community Hub and Library	School Street Open Tues, Thur, Fri 10am–5pm and Sat 10am–noon	www.facebook.com/ DunchurchCommunityHub library@dunchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk 01788 817550
Dunchurch Festival Group	Organise fete and other events. Meetings third Monday of each month 7.30pm at the village hall	www.dunchurchevents.org Chair Guy Watt gwattdfg@gmail.com Secretary Julie Peters juliepeters91@hotmail.co.uk
Dunchurch Girlguiding including: 1st Rainbows 3rd Brownies 1st Guides	Girlguiding girls have fun, adventure and space to discover their potential Age 5 – 7 yrs. Wed 3.45 – 4.45 pm Age 7 – 10 yrs. Wed 5.00 – 6.30pm Age 10 – 14 yrs. Wed 6.45 – 8.15pm	www.girlguiding.org.uk is where parents/ carers may express their daughters' interest in joining. Adult volunteers welcomed.

Dunchurch Health Walks	Tuesday 2pm, Friday 10.30am Meet at war memorial	
Dunchurch Pantomaniacs	Organise and perform village panto in January. Rehearsals begin October.	paul.lepoidevin@btinternet.com sueprotheroe@gmail.com
Dunchurch Parish Council	PC office based in the Library. Open Tuesday and Thursdays 10am – 1.00pm	https://dunchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk clerk@dunchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk 01788 817550 or 07474 705061
Dunchurch Photographic Society	Meetings held at WI Hall, Southam Road	www.dunchurchps.com secretary@dunchurchps.com
Dunchurch Surgery	Dunsmore Heath (off Rugby Rd)	www.dunchurchsurgery.warwickshire.nhs.uk 01788 522448
Dunchurch Village Hall	Rugby Road	bookings@dunchurchsportsandvhall.co.uk 01788 522444
Dunchurch Voices	Ladies choir meets Wednesdays, 7.30pm at the Baptist Church, Coventry Road	Barbara Davies 07890 659857
First Dunchurch Scout Group	Fun, challenge and adventure for boys and girls aged 10½–14. Done Cerce Close on Thursdays	www.dunscout.org.uk join@dunscout.org.uk
Friends of Dunchurch Society	Organises Britain in Bloom and Winter Wonderland Produces the village magazine	friendsofdunchurch@gmail.com
Knowing Stillness Meditation	Dunchurch Library 10am Wednesday	Jim Hesketh 07899 948551
Live Music Memories	Supporting Playlist for Life and the Alzheimer's Society	ann@annchristinacoomber.co.uk
Rugby About Turn	Newsletters on local development	richardallanach@aol.com
St Peter's Church	Churchwardens: Veronica Lowe 01788 815861 Celia Jones 01788 314564  St Edmund's Thurlaston Deputy Churchwarden: Brian Bowsher 01788 812094 dunchurchstpeters@gmail.com	

### Directory

To make any amendments or to add your Dunchurch-based, non-commercial club or organisation, please email  
[friendsofdunchurch@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofdunchurch@gmail.com)

### Send us your thoughts

If you would like to see new topics or would like to submit an article for inclusion on any aspect of local interest please email the editor on [fodnews1@gmail.com](mailto:fodnews1@gmail.com)

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