



# **PARISH MAGAZINE ONLINE**

St Chad's



Issue 8 - October 2020

[www.bishopstachbrook.com](http://www.bishopstachbrook.com)

Your magazine featuring news and views from within Bishop's Tachbrook Parish. A gentle mix of the chatty and Church.



# What's in this month's magazine

**Start here** Precis of what you'll find in the magazine are shown on this page. Click on the title (underlined) to go to the article.



**The Good Old Days** Revd. Elaine muses about change, the impact of the last six months and her upcoming retirement. As always a thoughtful read whatever your beliefs.



## **St Chad's Church questionnaire**

The Parochial Church Council of St Chad's wish to elicit your opinion on what St Chad's will look like in the future. Even if you don't physically attend church on a weekly or monthly bases, St Chad's is YOUR church. PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AND RESPOND

## **Parish Council News**

The online meetings are saving our Chairman a fortune in biscuits! There's other good news covering bonfires, road safety, littering and the development of the country Park and new school—keep yourself up to date



**BT Primary School** The first piece by our new headmistress, Mrs Kilbey

## **Heathcote Primary School**



Headmistress, Mrs Humphriss keeps parents up to date with what's going on at our newest school.



**Nature Page** Steve Harvey explores September's best with Hedgehogs, Goldfinches, Tawny Owls and Geese featured A gentle read.



**Men of Domesday** Peter Lister continues his scholarly description of the impact of the Norman invasion. This month looks at some of the key movers and shakers of the time



**Parish Working Party** see what those stalwarts of our community, the people who volunteer to improve our community got up to in September

**Adverts** Many of our loyal advertisers will be going through a hard time at present, please use them in preference to those who don't advertise with us. Click on the links below to see who can provide you with a service: [List of all advertisers](#); [Food & Drink](#); [Financial Services](#); [Funeral Services](#); [Garden Services](#); [Health & Beauty](#); [Home Improvements](#); [Trades](#); [Miscellaneous](#)

# The Good Old Days

By Revd. Elaine Scrivens

If you are of a certain age you will remember a TV programme called 'The Good Old Days'. It was a light entertainment show that was performed at the City Varieties theatre in Leeds and recreated an authentic atmosphere of the Victorian–Edwardian music hall with songs and sketches of the era performed in the style of the original artistes.

The show was compered by Leonard Sachs, who introduced the acts from a desk situated at the side of the stage and used elaborate, erudite and enthralling introductions for the acts about to perform on stage.

The audience dressed in period costume and joined in the singing, especially "Down at the Old Bull and Bush" which closed the show each week. It looked back with nostalgia to a previous era.

As most of you will know, I'm retiring in January and the following verses from the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament have been speaking to me the past few weeks as I and the congregation of St Chad's contemplate the future.

"Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do.

It is happening already—you can see it now!"

*Isaiah 43:18-19*

The book of Isaiah is commonly

thought to be written in three sections, before the Jewish people went into exile after defeat by the Babylonians, during exile in Babylon and post exile, when they returned home. Some of the people had been taken into exile in Babylon while others remained in the land, but both groups suffered to varying degrees the debilitating effects of being a conquered people. The verses above were written by someone exiled, looking back to their previous lives.

I've found this passage really helpful as I've reflected on my time in Tachbrook and also as I've reflected on the past six months. We, as a congregation and a community, have if you like, been exiled from church and from each other. Throughout the Bible, people and nations, have been 'exiled' for many reasons. Even Jesus and his family had to leave their home for fear of their lives.

The prophet writing the above text tried to create an imaginative space in the minds of the people so that their memories and understanding of the past could transform their understanding of the present and, thus, the future: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" In a seemingly hopeless situation, the prophet calls on the people not to lose heart but to look with anticipation for the "new thing" that is coming.

Last week we returned to the church building, but it was not and will not be like the good old days, not for a long time, so we must work to create new ways to worship. I am also very conscious of the language we use when we talk about 'church'. As many have discovered over the last six months 'church' is not just the building. So, although some people are able to worship back in the church building, we must be careful that we don't say 'we are returning to normal church'. Church has been your dining room, your sitting room, maybe even your garden or bedroom. We have gathered as people of God and worshipped God, distanced from one another, but still connected with each other and with God. What we have done 'traditionally' is now changing, it may feel difficult for some for a while but what we do and say now will determine the future of St Chad's as a church community.

Of course, when I leave and please God, you have a new vicar, things will not be the same.

*'Watch for the new thing I am going to do.*

*It is happening already—you can see it now!'*

I am excited about my future as I return to Redcar, to my husband and son but it won't be the Redcar I left 10 years ago but that's okay, things change, and we adapt to those changes.

Who knows what is in store for us, for me personally and for all of you as a

community as we journey on? Please pray for me as I will pray for you in the weeks and months ahead as we journey out of exile. My final Sunday will be on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2021. I hope, to be able to say goodbye to many of you before I go.

On page 7 you will find a questionnaire put together by the Parochial Church Council of St Chad's who wish to elicit your opinion on what St Chad's will look like in the future. Even if you don't physically attend church on a weekly or monthly bases, St Chad's is YOUR church. Many of you will have attended festivals, weddings, baptisms and funerals in the church. If you wish it to remain as an integral, vibrant part of this village then please do fill in the questionnaire and return to:

chadstreasurer@outlook.com

God bless you all, Elaine

## **CYCLE OF PRAYER**

### **Praying for our Community**

In October we are praying for those living in

Powell Close

Reignier Place

Rye Fields

Sabin Way

Savages Close

If there is something or someone you would like us to pray for please let Elaine, our Vicar, or a member of the congregation know.

# Parish Council News

By Matt Greene

The passing of the Autumnal Equinox and the vibrant colours on the trees signify the seasonal change. As we head towards a subdued winter I found myself thinking of my favourite childhood story, 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe' with a fear of it being *"always winter and never Christmas"* (don't worry, I'm not about to suggest we all take shelter from the battles outside by hiding in a cupboard!)

Despite this, I'm trying to take comfort from the fact that the best days/nights/parties are often the ones that you don't plan; they are the ones where expectations are low, and therefore, enjoyment is genuine. When I read the suggestions for pumpkin trails and for shining the brightness of Christmas as a beacon of hope in our community, I know that our Parish will rise to the challenge set us by this virus.

The continued restrictions mean that the PC will continue to meet virtually for the foreseeable future. If you would like to watch or partake in any of the Parish Council meetings, please do contact the Clerk who will be able to share the appropriate link. Whilst I miss meeting with Councillors in person, it is saving me a fortune in biscuits!!

The bus shelter on Harbury Lane has finally been installed in time for winter; thanks to the many residents who

campaigning for its installation.

Cllr. Carter worked with AC Lloyd to ensure that signage was erected to stop lorries accessing the Seven Acre Close site via the village. He has also arranged that lorries will have their wheels cleaned before exiting the site. We are monitoring this situation as closely as possible, but we would ask that, should you have any issues, please do ensure you contact the clerk to make us aware.

Bloor Developments have finished the allotments on the Oakley Meadows Development. Our solicitor has now been instructed to move forward with the transfer. We will keep you updated on progress as we know many of you are keen to apply for plots as soon as they are ready for allocation.

Regarding the existing allotments, following several complaints from residents, we have made the Meadow allotment manager aware of the concerns expressed regarding bonfires on the allotments - we are clear that allotment users should be very considerate not to cause nuisance to the surrounding areas and, at our next meeting, we will be discussing whether any further action to ensure this needs to be taken. We would note though that the majority of allotment holders are not responsible for the issue and therefore would ask for calm on both

sides. In the meantime we would please ask that any issues be passed to the clerk.

We have received a request recently for the siting of a bench on the Meadow in memory of a loved one. This is a lovely idea but we have agreed to only have three dedicated benches. If you wish to fund a dedicated bench on the Meadow please let us know.

Thanks to our Play Area Working Party the play area is finished and being very well used. Please enjoy but remember the rules; two metres social distancing, hand sanitiser and wiping equipment before and after use. Litter should be placed in the bins near the play area. We are in the process of ordering a new bin which the Working Party has agreed to install. This bin will be in the play area. No glass bottles, chewing gum or smoking is allowed and please don't kick balls against the equipment.

There is a harness available for the single seat on the Titan piece of equipment (the twirly round with seats) which could assist a differently abled child. If anyone would like to borrow this harness please contact the Parish Clerk, the day before you are going to use the equipment, and she will arrange for it to be delivered to you. The Working Party kindly fixed the old gate so it now shuts. Arrangements have been made to deal with the mole hills.

Following interest from residents we have asked the District Council if we could purchase the telephone box for £1. Waiting to hear from BT.

Cllr. Deely has been appointed to lead the Project Board for the Country Park. We are hoping that he will be appointed to a similar board for the school.

Community speedwatch is up and running in multiple locations around the Parish - including a new location on Harbury Lane. The team were very pleased to welcome PC Mark Young to one of their recent patrols - and noticed a substantial reduction in the number of cars speeding when he was with them! If you are able to join this worthwhile parish group please do let us know.

Our next virtual meeting is on 8th October at 7pm. If you would like to join please contact the clerk.

### **Flu Jabs from the Croft Practice:**

Flu vaccinations are available for patients of the Croft Practice.

Please contact the Surgery to make an appointment.

Alternatively an appointment can be booked online.





# St Chad's Church Questionnaire

## The Parochial Church Council

St Chad's has been a part of village life in Bishop's Tachbrook for almost a thousand years.

During that time many hundreds, if not thousands of people have worshipped, been baptised, married and said their final farewells to this world from this beautiful church. Many of your families have been laid to rest in the churchyard.

As I come to the end of my time at St Chad's both myself and the Parochial Church Council have been reflecting on a vision of St Chad's for the future. When the PCC advertises for a new priest in charge they will need to write a Parish Profile and they are interested in hearing the community's ideas on how St Chad's can remain at the centre of village life. What more can the church in this place do for you and your family?

Of course, in addition to that question, we need to ask, what can you do to help St Chad's. We know how important it is by the speed we raised money for our own "Tachbrook Tommy" and how you helped us raise over £30,000 for the roof repairs.

St Chad's receives no government money and has to raise £40,000+ pounds each year to stay open. This money is raised by the generosity of our congregation, donations from baptisms and collections made at

weddings and funerals. Often it hasn't been enough, and we've had to dig into our reserves which are now almost all gone. When raising money for the roof a number of people suggested giving a small amount each month by direct debit. £5 or £10 a month from a number of people would make a huge difference to our finances especially if people could gift aid their donation too.

The diocese of Coventry have signed up to The Parish Giving Scheme. This is free for St Chad's to use. Donations made through this scheme use a Direct Debit. This can be made on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. Each donation is restricted to a parish church chosen by the donor and cannot be used elsewhere so only St Chad's will benefit. There is a telephone service, designed to enable prospective donors to set up a regular Direct Debit gift over the phone.

If you would like to explore this further, please call **0333 002 1271**.

Lines are open Monday to Friday, between 9 am and 5 pm.

You will need to have your bank account details, the name of your church, St Chad's, Bishop's Tachbrook and our PGS parish code, which is 110611222

Even if you cannot afford to donate please do fill in the questionnaire and send you answers to:

**chadstreasurer@outlook.com**

What do you most enjoy about attending services at St Chad's?

What, if anything, would you change about attending services at St Chad's?

Would you recommend St Chad's to a friend or family member? Why or why not?

What are some ways that you think we could make St Chad's more welcoming for new visitors?

Have you attended a different church in the last year? If so, what—if anything—did you enjoy about that church that is different from our church?

Have you participated in our on-line church services? If they are continued, will you participate in our online service instead of in attending in person?

Would you like to see courses offered for those exploring their faith?

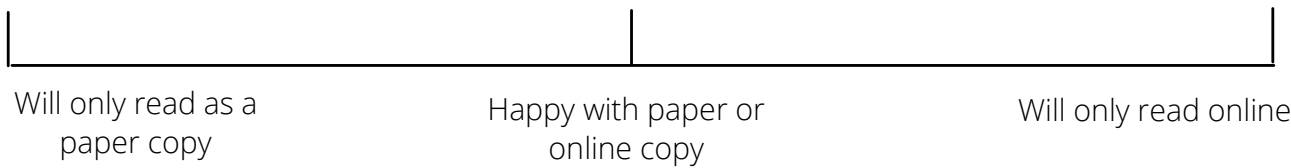


Would you consider contributing a small monthly donation to ensure St Chad’s is able to continuing being an important part of our community? If so could you please include a telephone number or email address?

In the past we have held craft fayres, coffee mornings, concerts, craft mornings for children and a Film club. Are there any more activities you would like us to organise?

How else could St Chad’s help you?

Thinking about the Parish Magazine where would you put yourself on the continuum below?



# Nature Page

By Steve Harvey

September always opens the door to Autumn. The mornings have a chill and the grass lays heavy with dew. Robins greet the day with a blast of song to warn their rivals to keep away. Social distancing since birds began, it's all about food not virus!

It's September when the Geese become mobile, moving from the lakes at Ashorne to the river near Charlecote. As the light fades in the evening you can hear them coming across the park. Love that "gaggle geese" sound. They fly just above the treetops calling to each other all the way, now in family groups as they move from lake to flowing water for the night to be safer from predators.

The Tawny Owl family are still together. Often I hear the adults start proceedings with a lovely low "whooo" call to be answered by a youngster's "Keee". Then they leave, often for the park, as the light slips away. I would think the youngsters are able to feed themselves by now.

I've seen a few Elephant Hawk Moth caterpillars recently making their way across the ground. They will pupate just under the surface. They are big and brown with clever false eyes at the front. You can't miss them. One lady emptied out a flower pot and

there was a big one snuggled down inside the compost; so be careful.

It's been like "Goldfinches are Us!" on the bird table and feeders. So many youngsters this year. They start pale brown with just the black and gold wing bars. Now the advanced youngsters have a hint of the red and black on their faces. I remember years ago someone said if you feed the bird they may not learn to feed themselves with natural food. Well the bird feeders usually run out by the afternoon and the other day I accidentally sent up a cloud of finches from the mass of knapweed we grow near the pond. It's a tall plant with



purple thistle-like flowers. They also love Teasels so they are happy to “pick and mix” their food. Instincts run deep.

I’m so glad the young Hedgehog is still around the garden. It seems to roam around but so far it comes home. I often hear it crunching on the dry cat food I put down. Really hope it hibernates with us. (Not that we are going to hibernate - you know what I mean!)



As I scribble this last part another flock of Geese flew over - (almost dark!) sounding like they were chatting and laughing all the way.







## News from Heathcote Primary School

Welcome to the autumn term here at Heathcote. We have now welcomed back all our children after the summer break and it is so wonderful to hear our school buzzing with learning and laughter again. It is as if they have never been away. Our new Reception children have really settled in and are exploring their classrooms and learning their phonics with vigour. New members of staff have joined us as we grow. We now take children up to Year 5. We have certainly enjoyed the beautiful weather at the start of term but are now preparing those colder autumn days. It doesn't stop us getting out and about in our school grounds and learning outside as much as we are able.



Whilst we were on summer holidays our second stage of building has progressed rapidly. The contractors are now putting the finishing touches to the classrooms inside and working on the landscaping around the building. We have new fencing at the front of school which means the classes can now have their own outdoor areas and already children are working with teachers to plant up tyres, create bird feeders and make decorations for the fence. In the playground we are watching the creation of an amphitheatre and our forest school area has new mounds and has been cleared to accept new trees for planting.



We have been super busy learning since we returned. Across the school children have been completing baseline assessments to ensure that we can plan the next stage of their learning. We introduced our new feelings boards in school. We are all using The Colour Monster which explores different feelings and acknowledges that sometimes we might be calm and relaxed but equally we might feel sad or scared. We all talk about how we can support each other with those feelings and that it is fine to be different to each other. We are also very used to washing our hands, keeping our space from each other and using a tissue when we have a cold to 'Catch It, Bin It, Kill It!' All of our children have a good understanding of how to stay safe and well.

We began our year with a whole school text to learn from 'Here we Are' by Oliver Jeffries. It is a wonderful book which explains how our earth was created, who lives on earth and how we are all special and unique. It



explores the different continents and the creatures that inhabit the earth. I have seen some brilliant writing exploring feelings, creative collages of the earth, learnt the 7 continents song, heard from children how they understand different cultures and seen how an incredible text can inspire children to want to read. The children have already been immersed in a variety of different experiences. Year 5 have been Bell Boating on the River Avon, Year 4 had a Roman day learning to bake bread and use Roman numerals, Year 3 were visited by Birds of Prey as part of their Predator topic and Year 2 found a fairy door in the garden outside my office which has taken them off into the realms of Midsummer Night's Dream. Meanwhile our two year one classes have been learning about animals in the savannah and down in Reception they love to show me the portraits they have created of themselves.



Each week as a whole school we are pledging to make our world a better place. We have been exploring raising money for others, looking after our world by picking up litter, learning to be kind to others and creating a world of peace. It costs nothing to smile at people and we promote looking after each other.

In October we will be holding an open week for prospective reception children for September 2021. You can book a short tour of the school with myself or Mrs Abernethy our deputy. This will be controlled so it doesn't impact on our bubbles. Please go to our website to find out more [www.heathcoteprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.heathcoteprimaryschool.co.uk) or telephone the school office on 01926 290330.

*It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. It isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it.' Eleanor Roosevelt.*

Mrs Humphriss – Executive Head Teacher.







## **BACK TO SCHOOL—BACK TOGETHER**

September has brought the Bishop's Tachbrook school family back together, and it has been so wonderful to be able to share smiles and our learning with each other again. The start of the school year has seen lots of changes to our normal routines, but we have been blessed with some fantastic weather, and the children at Bishop's Tachbrook have enjoyed taking lots of their learning outside. Children from all year groups have explored our beautiful grounds through art, science, maths, English, drama and many other curriculum areas.



Of course, we are also busy preparing for Harvest, and while we are unable to celebrate at St Chad's this year, Reverend Elaine is coming to visit us at school to celebrate with Year 4 and all of the other bubbles virtually. The children have already harvested the delicious ripe fruit from our orchard, exploring their crop through art before enjoying eating it.

We are looking forward to supporting the Food Bank with our Harvest offerings this year.

**RESPONSIBILITY**  
"Take care of every  
living thing that  
moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:11-12



# Men of Domesday

By Peter Lister

Some months ago I did an article on the five women who were allocated manors in the Domesday records. Time now to look at five of the men who were recorded as holding manors - although in one case as a sub-tenant. Three of them were Normans, two Anglo-Saxons.

## ***Normans***

The three Normans I have chosen were part of a select band of 15 men whose names have come down to us as taking part in the Battle of Hastings: they are referred to as the 'Proven Companions' of William the Conqueror.

## **Robert de Beaumont**

Robert's father, Roger de Beaumont, had been a staunch supporter of Duke William of Normandy and had helped to establish William in that role when he went through some difficult and contentious times. When Duke William planned his invasion of England after King Edward the Confessor's death in 1066 Roger provided a substantial number of ships towards the invasion fleet, as well as sending his eldest son, Robert as part of the invasion force. So it was that Robert, at the age of 17, took part in the Battle of

Hastings and made a name for himself. It was reported that he, "found himself that day in battle for the first time. He was as yet but a young man and he performed feats of valour worthy of perpetual remembrance. At the head of a troop which he commanded on the right wing he attacked with the utmost bravery and success".

Following the Conquest, Robert gained some 91 manors in England, with 66 of them in Warwickshire. Tachbrook Mallory was one of the manors granted to him. He is listed in Domesday with the title of Count of Meulan. This came to him on the death of his mother in 1081. He was considered to be one of the wisest men of the age and companion and adviser to three kings: William I (The Conqueror), William II (Rufus), and Henry I.



Wise he may have been, but he was also a more complex character. He was one of the hunting party in the New Forest in August 1100 with King William Rufus and his younger brother Henry when the king was killed with an arrow. It was officially claimed to have been an accident, but it may have been the result of a plot to have Rufus killed so that his younger brother, Henry could become king. The actions of the party certainly seem rather suspicious. They left the king's body where it fell and immediately made haste to get to Winchester so that Henry could secure the royal treasury and then on to Westminster so that he could be crowned as Henry I. This was done so hastily that it appears there not time to get the two archbishops to attend to carry out the coronation as custom decreed.

Robert de Beaumont was not averse to some discreditable dealings, and not just in connection with the death of William Rufus. When Henry I became king, he imposed a hefty fine on Ivo de Grandmesnil. Ivo thought it wise to set out for the Holy Land and

came to an arrangement with Robert de Beaumont to get a substantial loan from him and in return he pledged his land holdings for a period of fifteen years. Whilst on the way to the Holy Land Ivo died and Robert reneged on the agreement. At the end of the fifteen years he retained Ivo's holdings and effectively dispossessed his heirs. King Henry I also appointed Robert as Earl of Leicester, where the de Grandmesnills had been sheriffs before him.

Robert de Beaumont died in 1118 and was buried at the Abbey of Saint-Pierre de Preaux in Normandy.

### **Hugh de Grandmesnil**

During the time of the minority of the young Duke William the land of Normandy experienced a great deal of turmoil as rival families fought each other. The de Beaumonts and the de Grandmesnills came into conflict and in 1041 savage fighting led to the death of Robert de Grandmesnil, the head of the family. His two sons, Robert and Hugh, divided the property

between them and Robert entered the Church while Hugh took over his father's mantle of warrior politician. By the middle of the century, the Grandmesnil family achieved prominence, having made a fortune by breeding and training



war horses. Hugh de Grandmesnil wielded considerable influence at the court of William Duke of Normandy, but Hugh eventually displeased William and was banished from court in 1058 and out of favour for five years. However, by 1063 Hugh was restored to favour with the Duke and was made a cavalry commander for the invasion of England in 1066. There is a popular story that Hugh de Grandmesnil almost came to a sticky end at the Battle of Hastings. As fierce battle raged, Hugh's horse leapt a bush during a cavalry charge and his bridle broke. Barely able to keep upright in the saddle, and with no control over his horse, Hugh saw to his dismay that he was all alone, and careering towards a band of Englishmen. Just as his enemies leapt in for the kill and as Hugh was preparing to die, the English gave out a great shout in triumph. Hugh's horse immediately shied in fear at the shout and bolted in the opposite direction and carried its helpless master away from the English and back to the safety of his own lines.

Hugh became one of William the Conqueror's main men in England as shown when, in 1067, he joined as a regent with William FitzOsbern, 1st Earl of Hereford, and Bishop Odo of Bayeux in the government of England, during the king's absence in Normandy. In 1068 King William assailed the City of Leicester, and took it by storm. The king handed the government of Leicester over to Hugh

de Grandmesnil, appointing him as its Sheriff. He was also granted the governorship of Hampshire as well as gaining 100 manors, 65 of them in Leicestershire. When Hugh married Adeliza he gained several more manors in Herefordshire and three in Warwickshire.

On the death of William the Conqueror in 1087, the Conqueror's eldest son, Robert, became Duke of Normandy, while the second son, William, became King of England. Hugh de Grandmesnil and the other Norman barons with English possessions now found that they owed allegiance to King William II for their English possessions and to Duke Robert for their Norman possessions. As the brothers were constantly quarrelling, these barons found themselves in a 'between the frying pan and the fire' situation. Backing the wrong lord at the wrong time could put family fortunes at risk. This proved to be the fate of the Grandmesnil family as they tended to support the new Duke Robert in the feuds that broke out within Normandy. Unfortunately, he was not the most reliable support to his followers, as shown when in 1091 he joined forces with one of Hugh's enemies. Disaster was only averted by the arrival in Normandy of King William II with a substantial force and Hugh's enemies had to withdraw and leave him in peace.

In 1094, Hugh de Grandmesnil was



again in England, worn out with age and infirmity. Feeling his end approaching, in accordance with the common practice of the period, he took the habit of a monk, and expired six days after he had taken to his bed on 22 February 1094 at Leicester. His body, preserved in salt and sewn up in the hide of an ox, was conveyed to the valley of the Ouche in Normandy and he was laid to rest at the Abbey of St. Evroult.

### **Bishop Odo of Bayeux**

Odo was the half brother (on their mother's side) of Duke William and may have been born about 1030. Possibly when he was about 19 Odo was made bishop of Bayeux by the duke. William of Poitiers, a priest who was chaplain to William the Conqueror (and therefore rather partisan) described him thus: "This Odo, bishop of Bayeux, was known to excel in affairs both ecclesiastical and secular. In the first place his goodness and prudence is witnessed by the church of Bayeux which with great zeal he set in excellent order and embellished, for though yet young in years he was more mature in capacity than older men. . . . in councils where secular matters were discussed, he was outstanding both for his discernment and his eloquence." Although a bishop, Odo is best known as a warrior and a statesman. He provided ships for William's invasion of England and is shown and named on the Bayeux tapestry as taking part in the battle, brandishing a club and

encouraging the Norman cavalry to turn back to face the English. The embroidered lettering above his image reads, "Here Odo the Bishop holding a club encourages the boys". It should perhaps be born in mind that the tapestry was likely commissioned by Odo to be displayed in his own cathedral and therefore would want to boost his image. Odo was well rewarded for his support of William. He was granted a



very large number of manors in England, spread over twenty counties and mainly focussed in the south-east and East Anglia. As a trusted supporter and minister, Odo became Earl of Kent and served as a regent in England when William was absent in

Normandy. In 1075 the earls of Hereford, East Anglia and Northumberland rebelled against the king when he was absent in Normandy. Odo as well as Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester raised forces against them and the rebellion was defeated.

The year after the revolt of the earls, Odo was accused by Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury of defrauding the Crown and misappropriating some of the endowments of the diocese of Canterbury. A trial was held and it resulted in Odo being forced to return a number of properties. His woes were not over. Six years later in 1082 he was in disgrace with the king and imprisoned for having planned a military expedition to Italy. The real purpose of this remains unclear, but it resulted in Odo spending the next five years in prison in Normandy and the loss of his English estates and earldom of Kent. However, he remained as bishop of Bayeux.

On his deathbed in 1087, William the Conqueror was persuaded to release Odo, who then returned to England. The following year he supported the Conqueror's eldest son, Robert, Duke of Normandy, in his claim to also be king of England. Odo gained some support from among the barons, but Duke Robert's efforts to bring a force from Normandy to support the rebellion were thwarted by bad weather and William II was able to win the day and capture bishop Odo, who

was exiled back to Normandy where he entered into the duke's service. Odo joined with his duke Robert in 1096 in setting out on the First Crusade to the Holy Land. But he never made it, for on the way he was taken ill and died in 1097 at Palermo in Sicily. Odo was certainly a highly unusual bishop, as much interested in worldly as ecclesiastical ones. His own seal says it all: one half a bishop holding his staff of office, the other side a knight with a sword. The epitome of the church militant?

### ***Anglo-Saxons***

My two Anglo-Saxon men responded to the Norman conquest in very different ways. One collaborated with the new regime, the other rebelled against it.

### **Thorkill of Warwick**

Thorkill was the great nephew of Leofric, Earl of Mercia. His father Alwin was Sheriff of Warwick at the time of the Conquest and Thorkill would have been in his mid-twenties when that regime change happened. He had not responded to King Harold's call for fighting men to face the Normans in the lead up to the Battle of Hastings. The reason is unknown, but there was certainly historic tension between the Mercian family and the Wessex family from whom King Harold came. What is known is that immediately after the battle Thorkill submitted to William and may even have been at his

coronation at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066 and acclaimed him on behalf of the Anglo-Saxon nation. The new King William was grateful for his support and he was well rewarded with many manors in the redistribution of them that took place. He ended up with 68 manors in Warwickshire as recorded in Domesday, as well as others in Staffordshire and Oxfordshire. He had also been allocated four properties in the town of Warwick itself. Some may have thought of him as a collaborator, but perhaps he was a realist and quick to secure a good base to preserve a significant Anglo-Saxon presence in the county.

Domesday seems to tell us that Thorkill had done very well under King William and after 20 years was secure in his county. However, two years later there came a dramatic change of fortune. In 1088, King William II appointed Henry de Beaumont as Earl of Warwick and transferred most of Thorkill's manors to him. He was left with a few holdings in the Forest of Arden area and the family took on the name 'de Arden' and established themselves as a prominent family in the county. From the 13th century Park Hall, near Castle Bromwich became their primary estate. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, was a descendant in a junior line from Walter Arden who died at the



beginning of the 16th century. The direct line eventually died out in the 17th century but junior branches have kept the name alive to this day. The Ardens can claim to be one of only a handful of families that can claim descent from Anglo Saxon times.

### **Hereward the Wake**

While Thorkill was a survivor and quickly came to terms with William the Conqueror and ensured the continuing wealth and status of his family, Hereward the Wake was of an altogether different temperament. He was recorded in the Domesday record as having had four manors in Warwickshire at the end of the reign of King Edward the Confessor, so he must have been of a noble Anglo-



Saxon family - but it is not known which one. Some later claimed that he was the offspring of the Earl of Mercia and Lady Godiva, but this seems altogether fanciful.

Hard facts are not always easy to come by with regard to Hereward as a number of later records of his life and deeds seem to contradict one another. What does seem likely is that he was born somewhere in south Lincolnshire but his date of birth can only be surmised as sometime in the 1030s/40s.

It would seem that in his teens he was a bit of a James Dean 'Rebel Without a Cause', for at the age of eighteen he was exiled from his home for disobedience to his father and disruptive behaviour among the local community. His escapades even came to the attention of King Edward the Confessor, who declared him an outlaw. Although some claimed that his travels took in Cornwall, Ireland and Scotland, what is more certain is that he ended up in Flanders (the northern part of what is today Belgium) where he gained employment as a mercenary.

It was almost a year after the Battle of Hastings before Hereward was able to return to England, only to discover that his family's lands had been taken over by the Normans and his brother killed. One source claimed that the brother's head had been placed on a spike at the gate to his house. From

that point Hereward became a rebel *with* a cause. He exacted revenge by killing a number of the Normans who had killed his brother and now found himself outlawed by the Normans. He gathered a number of followers and, hiding in the Fens, undertook guerrilla warfare against the Normans.

In 1069/70 the Danish king, Sweyn Estrithson sent a small army to establish a camp on the Isle of Ely and Hereward and his followers joined him. Together they stormed and



sacked Peterborough Abbey. Hereward was then joined by a small army led by Morcar, the former Anglo-Saxon Earl of Northumbria. In 1071 King William sent an army to deal with the rebels, who were forced to retreat to their stronghold on the Isle of Ely. The Normans found themselves in difficulties in mounting an attack because of the wide area of marsh lands that surrounded the island.



Eventually, one of William's knights, named Belasius, bribed some monks of the isle to reveal a safe route across the marshes and he was able to capture Ely. Morcar was taken and imprisoned but Hereward seems to have escaped with some of his followers into the wild fenland and to have continued his resistance.

What happened to Hereward after his escape? Various stories were put forward as to what happened to him. In one, after various escapades, he eventually made peace with King William and lived the rest of his life in relative peace. Another story suggests that he escaped into exile, possibly Scotland, and was never heard of again. This self-exile certainly was the fate of a number of prominent Anglo-Saxons after the Conquest. A third story, however, states that he remained in the Fenlands for some time, but was traced and killed by a group of Norman knights. I suspect that this is the more likely scenario.

Why his epithet: "the Wake"? It is likely that it was used of Hereward to mean "the Watchful". However, an alternative suggestion is that the epithet was concocted later by the Norman Wake family who gained Hereward's lands in Lincolnshire, and who claimed descent from Hereward's daughter.

It has been suggested that Hereward the Wake's escapades as an outlaw in the Fenlands may have been the inspiration for the development of the story of Robin Hood, which had its

origins in the 14th century. Hereward was little noted after his death until the Victorian period, when the idea of Anglo-Saxon heroism became popular. Charles Kingsley wrote of him in his 1865 novel, *Hereward the Wake: the Last of the English*, and this elevated him to the position of a national hero, fighting against a repressive Norman yoke.

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In a previous article about life in Warwickshire in the 1080s, I made the point that for the greater part of ordinary folk of Anglo-Saxon stock, the Conquest probably made little impact on their day to day lives. However, for the Anglo-Saxon nobility and land holders there were huge repercussions and great changes. To some extent this is reflected in the lives of the two Anglo-Saxons in the article above. For the Normans who took part in Duke William's adventure the rewards were considerable. But they lived in fickle and tumultuous times where fortune and status could just as easily turn to ruin - and back again. The few lives I have set out illustrate the point.

# Parish Working Party

Keith Wellsted

The Parish Working Party was out, hard at work, on Saturday 12th September. They did a great job clearing around the village green. A big thanks to all.

If you'd like to join us please e-mail me on [keith@bishopstachbrook.com](mailto:keith@bishopstachbrook.com)











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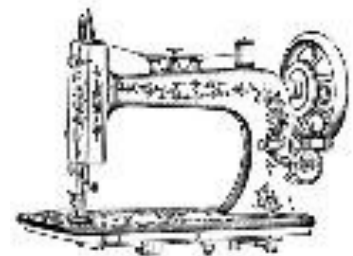
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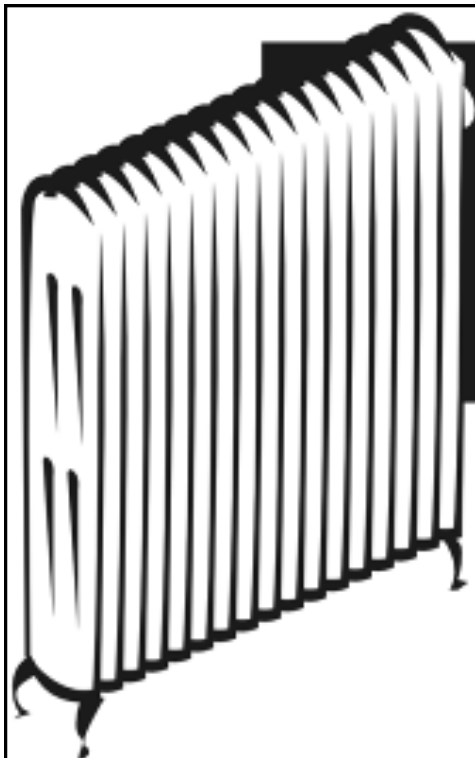
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