



June 2026

# PARISH MAGAZINE

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Reverend Adrian Bailey Tel: 238744

Father Phil Hughes

**Commissioned Lay Ministers**

Mrs Jenifer Chippett Williams

Mrs Lindsay Clarke

Miss Sally Wright

Mrs Catherine Lefebvre

**Churchwardens**

S Oswald's: Miss June Williams

Mrs Muriel Jones

Mr John Abram MBE TD

Christchurch: Mrs Elizabeth Stanley

Rosemary Davies

Tel: 652544

Tel: 653598

Tel: 653316

Tel: 676450

Tel: 07813757498

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Hon Treasurer: Mr Paul Evison

Tel: 652861

Tel: 653315

Christchurch: Hon Secretary:

Hon Treasurer:

**Director of Music**

S Oswald's: Mrs Samantha Lewis-Widnall

Email: [samanthalewiswidnall@gmail.com](mailto:samanthalewiswidnall@gmail.com)

**Organist:**

St Oswald's: Josephine Sands email: [joasands@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:joasands@hotmail.co.uk)

Christchurch:

**Parish Office**

S Oswald's: Church Street, Oswestry SY11 2SY.

Tel: 652861

Parish Administrator: Ms Carron Boulton

email: [stoswald.office@gmail.com](mailto:stoswald.office@gmail.com)

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***This month's newsletter is written by Rev John Chesworth....***

One of the problems of living and working in a foreign country is the phrases one picks up and which get stuck in the mind. One Spanish rhyme that has bounced around my brain for about half a century translates as; “**praying to God and giving it all with a sledge hammer**”. It's been a long time earworm.

*a Dios rogando .....y con el mazo dando<sup>i</sup>*

I've always felt that it's a great motto for the church. Yes, we pray but we also get stuck into the real world. Not just a quiet sort of way but one which can be seen and perhaps heard by all around. Sadly, I've recently discovered that one of the leaders of the ruling party in Venezuela is using the second part of the saying, (giving it all with a sledgehammer) to justify their treatment with torture and imprisonment of any people, particularly journalists, who don't share their point of view. He conveniently forgets the bit about prayer.

But that couplet has bounced around my mind for years without ever finding an English equivalent. The nearest I've ever come up with is an American song written in 1942 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour; *Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition*. But it really doesn't have the same meaning. Anyone got a better one?

As a Christian community, Jesus is our leader and our example. Primarily he was a man of prayer; time and time again in the gospels we read of him drawing aside to pray. To listen to what God, his Father had in mind for him. But he was also a man of action; he healed people, he fed people, he listened to people from all walks of life. He served the old and the young. He cut across cultural and nationalistic boundaries. Jesus' ministry was never subtle. That's what made him famous in his own lifetime. And that's what he expects of us. He made a promise of eternal life to his followers – but he also called them to action. Towards the end of Matthew's gospel (chapter 25) Jesus spells out the lifestyle of his followers as he distinguishes between the sheep and the goats.

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,

<sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?

<sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?

<sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Jesus spells out responsibilities for his sheep which are every bit as hard as driving in fence posts with a sledgehammer, but those tasks come in fact as the answer to prayer. They are not just nice cosy words from our Leader, they are instructions.

As we look forward to the appointment of a new vicar, we are in fact looking forward to a new era in the life of St Oswald’s. It’s worth seeing our church’s activity in relation to the idea of a prayer life lived out through real action as together the members work as the Body of Christ. Yes, the church authorities, the wardens and the PCC members will be charged with the task of selecting the new person from a list of applicants. But that is a small part of the story. For someone to appear on that list of applicants they will have had to look at our parish and feel that it’s a place where they can really get to work. A place where their talents and experience will be appreciated. They will have to discern that St Oswald’s is a worthy partner as we seek to be the community of Jesus Christ for the people of this community. He or she will come with fresh ideas of their own; to get the church moving and ready to serve our parish, our town and our land. We can use this time of vacancy to stare vacantly into the future or we can use it as a blank slate on which we can inscribe our practical responses to Jesus’ instructions. This is not to tie the hands of our new vicar into doing things ‘our way’ but to being able to show him or her that we are ready and willing to get stuck in to whatever work we are called to.

And how do we discern what we are to do? We do it firstly in Jesus’ way – *a Dios rogando*, praying to God. Not telling God what he must do to solve the crisis in the Middle East but asking God what we can each do for Him in this little part of England. What we can do individually and what we can do as a congregation. I know that many individuals in our congregation give heavily of their time and talents. Some of us are no longer healthy or strong enough to do much physical work but that’s no excuse nor not praying; but those who can swing a virtual sledgehammer are invited to get stuck in. And how are we seen and heard outside the church, what is our impact on the people of this town? We have buildings and land worth millions. Apart from the odd few hours on a Sunday, how are they used for the benefit of those who are short of food or drink or clothing? What do we do regularly for the least of our brothers and sisters? What proportion of the churches income is given away? How

firmly do we wield that big mallet?

The vacancy will rumble on for some time yet and if we truly want to attract a really active vicar as our new leader, the job begins with us. The new person will have to be certain that we represent a congregation that's worth all the effort that they'll be expected to put into the task of leading us.

<sup>i</sup>Yes, I know that my dictionary translates *mazo* as a mallet but the word is used in practice for one of those great big ones you use to drive in fence posts.

John

### PRAYING FOR OUR WORLD



The next meeting is June 3 at 7 p.m. in the Church Reading Area.

For people who wish to come in and pray during the day, prayer resources can be found in St. George's Chapel.

A decorative border consisting of a repeating pattern of red strawberries with green leaves and stems, arranged in a rectangular frame around the central text.

**ST OSWALD'S PUDDING CLUB**

**STRAWBERRY TEA**

**Saturday, June 13**  
**in the Parish Centre**  
**3.00—5.00 pm**

***Tickets: £5***  
***from June Williams***

## BEREAVEMENT AND PASTORAL SUPPORT

From 3rd May 2026, Bereavement and Pastoral Support became officially enabled for those in need in our Parish. Catherine was commissioned as Lay Minister, at St Oswalds, by Father Phil Hughes and under the auspices of our Rural Dean.

We would like to explain as to how parishioners; church attendees, those attending funerals as well as local visitors to our church; may seek this support.

There are leaflets at the back of the church which will provide further details, but please know that bereavement / pastoral support, can be accessed through Father Phil Hughes or our Church Administrator, Carron Boulton.

Father Phil Hughes will oversee the bereavement and pastoral support that Catherine offers.

At this moment in time, we are limited to our one Lay Minister for bereavement and pastoral support but as a parish, we aim to gradually work towards building a team, in order that our capacity is greater.

If there are any queries, do feel free to contact us on:  
e mail : [stoswald.office@gmail.com](mailto:stoswald.office@gmail.com)  
Tel:-01691 652861

As a 'Living Christian Church', we hope to love and care for those in need around us and in our midst.

**Galatians 5:13 (NIV):** "...serve one another humbly in love."

*Catherine Lefebvre*  
Lay Minister Bereavement & Pastoral Support

## CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOXES

Apologies for the lateness of this report. The money from the boxes amounted to £808 which was fantastic. A little down on last year but sadly we have lost a number of supporters this year. Thanks to all box holders. Keep up the good work and many thanks to Fran for helping with the counting!

*Judi Neale*

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## SPINAL MUSCULAR ATROPHY: A LIFE WORTH SAVING?

I am sure some of you will remember our grandson Partick with his ever-ready smile and big power chair. Despite being told that he was unlikely to see his first birthday he is now twenty-one having survived; despite inheriting Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type one, the most severe form, due to the care and devotion he has received from his parents and members of the medical profession.

Currently he is in the final stages of a degree in Journalism and as part of this he has just completed a video documentary entitled “Spinal Muscular Atrophy: A Life Worth Saving?” It is mainly concerned with the testing of babies within the first week of life with a simple heel prick to identify those who have inherited diseases. This is vital so as to allow the available drug treatments to be administered in their first few weeks. These were not available when Patrick was born but he wanted to produce this video, which can be used as part of a campaign to offer the heel prick test to all babies born in the UK as normal practice, so that others can avoid many of the complications he has experienced.

Please view his video by typing Spinal muscular atrophy: a life worth saving? Into your search engine and you will find it on “YouTube”

Warning, have a hanky at the ready as it is quite moving in parts.

All viewings help to reinforce the case for introducing testing so please do your bit by spending sixteen minutes and thirty seconds on a very moving viewing.

*Pam and Keith Musson*



### DERWEN COLLEGE 10KM CHALLENGE SATURDAY 18 APRIL 2026

A big thank you to everyone who sponsored me for the 2026 Derwen College Walk.

This was the 57<sup>th</sup> sponsored walk I've completed and I raised £710 on this occasion.

*Olive Morris*

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## REFLECTIONS FROM JAN AND JOHN CHESWORTH

We lived in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, in the mid 1980s and soon became members of the congregation of the Anglican Cathedral. It was a strange time of change; in 1980 the Lancaster House agreement had set the new direction for the country, moving away from a white dominated society to a total democracy. The cathedral community reflected the old ways; the main services used the English Book of Common Prayer. Most of the congregation were white as were half the clergy. They had a black bishop, Peter Hatendi, who was also the Dean but the sub-dean was American from New England.

The changes under the new government started to take effect while we were there although it had been laid down by the Lancaster House agreement that nothing should change for 10 years. Gradually things started to deteriorate; streets which had been scrupulously clean started to get dirty as the government cut back on employment. Potholes began to be seen in the roads. But the biggest problem was the number of white owned farms which were taken over, broken up and distributed to local farmers. Previously these had provided work and homes for thousands of local people, most had also provided clinics and schools for the children of local employees. Broken up these farms just provided livelihoods for hundreds of families who did not need to employ all the previous workers and their families. Schools and clinics evaporated. Unemployment increased rapidly and poverty was commonplace. Many of the unemployed drifted into the city and hung out around the cathedral; people with no food, no water and little in the way of clothing.

Time for action. The church couldn't provide alternative employment for all these people but it could at least provide lunch. A move was made to raise money and food for a lunch club. What was a real surprise in this venture was that we were joined in this work by the Dutch Reformed Church which had been the central pillar of the white dominated racial segregation in South Africa, next door. Lunch was simple and in the local tradition, *sadza* and relish; in other words a thick porridge made from ground white maize with a topping of sauce and beans or anything else that might come to hand. The ingredients for this meal were collected and taken up with the money offering in Sunday services, in the same way that we take up food for the local food bank. The numbers coming to eat rose from a handful to many dozens each week. What always seemed to be a miracle was that there was always just enough food.

Jan and John Chesworth

## ST. OSWALD'S LADIES GROUP



St. Oswald's Ladies Group met in the Parish Centre for our monthly meeting on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May when we welcomed Ruth Allen to speak to us on behalf of Hearing Dogs for deaf people. Ruth brought along her two dogs, Myrtle and Iker.

Hearing dogs are provided to deaf people at no charge. The charity receives no government funding and they rely on the generosity of individuals, groups, companies and other organisations. The dog is trained to the specific needs of the deaf person they have been matched to. The lifelong care of each hearing dog costs around £45000. It takes 12-14 months for a puppy to complete its training and further sixteen to eighteen weeks to complete this.

Hearing dogs alert their deaf recipients to household sounds by touching them with a paw or nudging with a nose to gain attention. The recipient then asks the dog 'what is it' by voice and/or hand command and then the hearing dog leads the recipient to the source of the sound. For danger signals such as the smoke alarm, the hearing dog will alert the recipient in the same way but when asked 'what is it' the dog will lie down to indicate danger. Ruth demonstrated this for us with Myrtle and Iker and of course they were rewarded with a treat.

Hearing Dogs for the Deaf was officially launched at Cruft's as a three-year pilot scheme by Bruce Fogle and Lady Beatrice Wright with help from Tony Blunt and Gill Lacey. At first all Hearing Dogs' operations were carried out in Gill Lacey's living room. They were granted full charitable status and HRH The Princess Royal became their Royal Patron. In 1996 they changed their name to Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and in 1999 opened their main office and training centre at the Grange in Saunderton Buckinghamshire. They support thousands of people who are deaf or have hearing loss every year. They have over 3,000 volunteers.

What a wonderful afternoon we had with Ruth, Myrtle and Iker.

Ruth has just informed me that she is organising a Paws for Coffee Morning on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June at Welshampton Village Hall 10 a.m. - 12 noon, if you would like to support Hearing Dogs for deaf people.



Our next meeting will be our afternoon tea at Dobbies on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June when we will meet at 3 p.m. prompt.

We are always pleased to welcome new members to our group. If you would like further details please contact me at the Sunday morning service in St. Oswalds Church or telephone 01691657903.

*Ann Sagar*  
Honorary Secretary

### COFFEE ROTA FOR JUNE

7	Mary Jones	Natasha Bell	Sally Wright
14	Jane Mayne	Chris Abram	Jean Lawrence
21	Jane Wilkinson	Val Hamer	Carol Burke
28	Judi Neale	Babs Bone	Elaine Leek

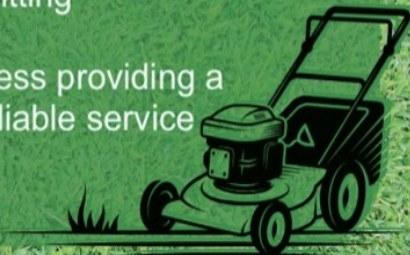


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**INSPIRING 18-25S TO STAND FOR ELECTION TO GENERAL SYNOD**

The Church is at a crucial moment in our life in so many ways:; there is, despite the debate over figures, an undoubted generational shift in attitudes towards the Bible and the church and locally, we are in the early stages of realising our vision: Seeking the Kingdom. We are at a moment of so much challenge and opportunity. We need to grow our church, our ministry and our financial resources to fulfil our vision.

**We need all hands on deck!**

A key part of our vision is to grow a younger church and to see younger people taking responsibility for our governance. It is obvious that young people should be encouraged to take an active role in every part of our church life. There are so many issues of crucial importance for our life, witness and worship that need fresh and new perspectives, rooted as always in the life of the church, our Christian beliefs and faith revealed in scripture and our worship together week by week.

As well as encouraging participation in parishes, in ministry and in chaplaincies, our church is governed by elected Synods. The General Synod is our elected national assembly, essential for shaping its direction and governance. Elections occur every five years, with the next elections between August and October this year.

**Would you consider standing for election to General Synod?**

General Synod considers and approves legislation for the entire Church of England, develops new forms of worship, discusses important national and international issues, and sets the annual budget for national activities. It has legislative authority – it is one of the few bodies in England authorised to make national laws through Measures that are approved by Parliament and the Monarch.

Candidates for the Synod are driven by their commitment to mission, governance, and pastoral care, aiming to influence policies on key theological and social matters, including social justice and environmental issues.

Drawn from among people across our worshipping communities and voted for by members local Deanery Synods, being a General Synod member means being ready to speak in debates, with clear sight about their views and the views we represent. This calls for determination, strong

communication and negotiation skills and strength of character and conviction.

To be elected, candidates will need to plan, network and build support. Involvement in parish, deanery and diocesan activities helps establish a reputation that can lead to endorsements and votes.

Candidates should create a clear manifesto and set out their stall to resonate with potential electors, engage with voters, and build trust.

Synod is not all work. Among the 450 members lasting friendships develop, bringing sharing and support for each other's ministry.

Are you called to serve on General Synod? Are you ready for the challenge? Do you know someone who could represent our diocese? Ultimately, standing for General Synod is a call to serve the Church in shaping its mission and governance for today's world.



*Tug Wilson has represented the Lichfield diocese at General Synod for twenty-one years and is active both locally and nationally in supporting the Church's mission and ministry.*

photo credit 'Geoff Crawford / Church of England

#### **KEY DATES FOR THE 2026 GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION:**

14 July	Current General Synod dissolves;
14 August	Nominations for New Synod open;
7 September	Nominations close;
21 September	Voting opens
13 October	Voting deadline
14-16 October	Voting Count
16-18 November	New General Synod meets

#### **SCWP 27<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 9 am at Holy Trinity Church Roft Street, Oswestry.**

All are warmly invited to the SCWP AGM. This will be fantastic opportunity to gather together, eat breakfast, pray and find out more about what's going on in our local schools. Further details can be found on St Oswald's website <https://www.stoswaldsoswestry.org.uk/news/>

## MUSIC NOTES

Greetings! I hope everyone is enjoying the nicer weather. It has already been a busy start to the term, and we have some wonderful music coming up over the next few weeks.

Recently, after an anonymous comment was made to a member of the choir regarding the teaching of the psalms, I decided to carry out a poll to hear more widely from the congregation. The results were as follows:

- Responsorial psalms preferred: 61%
- Traditional psalms preferred: 39%
- Enjoy singing the psalms: 66%
- Prefer listening to the psalms: 34%
- Enjoy the teaching of the psalm: 78%
- Do not enjoy the teaching of the psalm: 22%

Thank you to everyone who took part. We will continue trying to find a balance that works well for everyone.

Going forward, we will generally teach the responsorial psalm at 10.15am for around five minutes. This gives those who enjoy learning and practising the opportunity to do so, while also allowing anyone who would prefer not to take part to arrive slightly later if they wish.

With regards to traditional psalm chants, these will be available twice a month during Choral Evensong on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. The traditional psalms will also occasionally be included in the morning to help maintain a balance, although a regular rota for this is still being developed.

We are very grateful for everyone's support and participation in our music ministry.

As a choir, we are also looking forward to our Kids Singing Day on 6<sup>th</sup> June! Please pass on the message to anyone who would like to take part. They just need to email me to book their place!

Now.....over to Chelsea!

Hi, it's Chelsea here. I'm so pleased to introduce myself as your new Choral Music Assistant, especially in a place that meant so much to me growing up.

I first joined the St Oswald's Parish Church choir in 2005 at the age of seven, later becoming Head Chorister and Assistant Choir Trainer. In 2019, after 15 wonderful years with the choir, I moved to London to study Music Performance in Classical Singing at the London College of Music. I spent three years there and graduated with First-Class Honours.

Today, I'm fortunate to continue pursuing my love of music as part of the Performing Arts team at Derwen College as a Musical Theatre Trainee Teacher. I am also due to graduate from Staffordshire University after completing my PGCE in May, after which I will be a fully qualified teacher.

After conducting my first Ascension service, I am incredibly excited to continue settling into my role at St Oswald's and to become even more involved in the life of the choir and church community.

*Chelsea*

Thank you for that Chelsea! You've made such a great start, with an amazing service on Ascension. We wish you all the luck and love in your continuation in this role.

*Samantha Lewis-Widnall*  
Director of Music  
St Oswald's Parish Church, Oswestry



### **MOTHERS' UNION FELLOWSHIP GROUP**

Our May meeting was held at Selattyn Church as they had invited us to the Deanery Service to celebrate 150 years since the Mothers' Union had been founded.



Keith and 4 members represented us at the Service and tea, a wonderful spread they had provided. Thank you to the Selattyn members.

There is **no meeting in June** but I hope to see members in the Parish Centre on July 9th at 2.15.

*Pam Musson*

## Services at S. Oswald's

June 7                      8:00    Holy Communion  
*Trinity 1*                    10:30   Parish Eucharist with sung setting  
                                  18:00   Choral Evensong

June 14                    10:30   Parish Eucharist with sung setting  
*Trinity 2*                    18:00   Evening Prayer

June 21                    08:00   Holy Communion  
*Trinity 3*                    10:30   Parish Eucharist with sung setting  
                                  18:00   Choral Evensong

June 28                    10:30   Parish Eucharist with sung setting  
*Trinity 4*                    18:00   Reflective Space

***Every Thursday***      10.30   Holy Communion (BCP)

***Thursday 4***              **10:30 Eucharist BCP**  
***Corpus Christi***        **19:00 Festival Eucharist**

**MORNING PRAYER** is streamed online through the church Facebook page at 9 o'clock on Wednesday and Friday. Sunday worship is on the YouTube page.

Enquires for Baptisms, Marriages etc should be made to the Parish Office. Please email the Parish Administrator ([stoswald.office@gmail.com](mailto:stoswald.office@gmail.com)) for an appointment.

## Services at Rhydycroesau

*First Sunday*              09:30   All Age Service  
June 7

*Second Sunday*        09:30   Holy Communion  
June 14

*Fourth Sunday*        09:30   Holy Communion  
June 28



# Parish Church of St. Oswald, King & Martyr

## MUSIC LIST - JUNE 2026

### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June

Corpus Christi

7.00pm Festival Eucharist

Setting: Ireland - Communion Service in C

Anthem: Ave verum - Elgar

### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June

First Sunday after Trinity

10.30am Parish Eucharist

Setting: Stopford - St. Patrick's Eucharist

Anthem: Sent by the Lord am I - Weaver

6.00pm Choral Evensong

Introit: Corpus Christi Carol - Benjamin Britten

Responses: Clucas

Setting: Murril in E

Anthem: Like as a hart - Howells

### Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June

Trinity 2

10.30am Parish Eucharist

Setting: Shephard - Addington Service

Anthem: Let all the World in every Corner Sing -  
Vaughan Williams

### Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June

Trinity 3

10.30am Parish Eucharist

Setting: MacMillan - St. Anne's Mass

Anthem: A New Song - MacMillan

6.00pm Choral Evensong

Introit: Holy is the true light - Harris

Responses: Leighton

Setting: Brewer in D

Anthem: Solus advictimum - Leighton

### Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June

St. Peter

10.30am Parish Eucharist

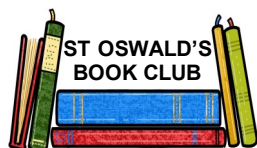
Setting: Archer - St. Albans

Anthem: Everytime I feel the Spirit - Trad. arr Chilcott

# CALENDAR FOR JUNE 2026



Monday 1	1500	Ladies Group—Afternoon Tea at Dobbies
Tuesday 2	1030—	1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 3	0830—	0940 Oswestry School Assembly
	1000	Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1900	<i>Praying for Our World</i> — Reading Area
	1915	Scholars & Gentlemen Rehearsal—Parish Centre
Saturday 6	0900	SCWP 27 <sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting—Holy Trinity Church, Roft Street—see page 17
	1100—	1600 Kids Singing Workshop—see opposite page
Monday 8	1000	Clergy Eucharist and Meeting
	1900	Section 11 Meeting
Tuesday 9	1030—	1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 10	1000	Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1915	Scholars & Gentlemen Rehearsal—Parish Centre
Saturday 13	1500—	1700 Strawberry Tea in Parish Centre—see p.8
Tuesday 16	1030—	1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 17	0830—	0940 Oswestry School Assembly
	1000	Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1915	Scholars & Gentlemen Rehearsal—Parish Centre
Saturday 20	1900	Concert of Madrigals and Elizabethan Song - Scholars & Gentlemen—see page 27
Monday 22	1930	PCC Meeting
Tuesday 23	1000	Home Communion Service—St Catherine's
	1030—	1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 24	0830—	0940 Oswestry School Assembly
	1000	Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
Monday 29	0930	Woodside School
Tuesday 30	0930	Woodside School
	1030—	1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre



Please check St Oswald's website and weekly pew sheet for information on dates and books. All are welcome to join us for coffee and cake and lively discussion!

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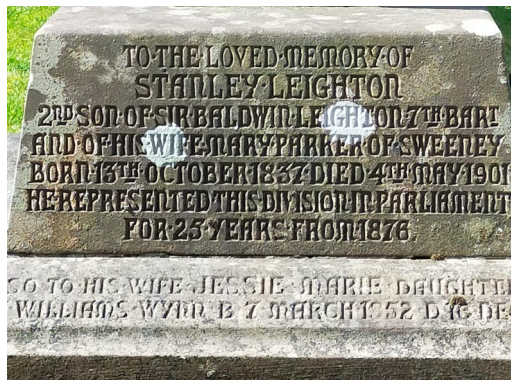
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Where? St. Oswald's Parish Centre

## A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE – 275 MORE ABOUT MR STANLEY LEIGHTON



In May's magazine, we looked back on the life of Stanley Leighton, owner of Sweeney Hall and the Sweeney estate, Oswestry's Member of Parliament for twenty-five years. A landed gentleman, the son of a baronet, he was educated at Harrow and at Balliol College, Oxford; he trained as a barrister; inherited Sweeney in 1871; and married Jessie Marie Williams-Wynn in

1873. In 1874 he stood, unsuccessfully, as the Conservative candidate for the Bewdley constituency, and in 1876 he won a parliamentary by-election for the North Shropshire constituency, retaining his seat in the House of Commons until his death in May 1901. So far, so unsurprising, some might say.

But we saw last month that there was much more to Stanley Leighton than might be assumed at first glance. We looked at his travels, to India and Ceylon, Australia, South Africa and the West Indies; and at the legacy he left to us in his sketches and watercolours, from his time in India, Australia and elsewhere, and from much nearer to home – his sketches of country houses in Shropshire, of buildings in Oswestry, and farm houses and estate workers' cottages at Sweeney. In recent weeks I have looked at the volumes of his sketches, bound into volumes, and often accompanied by Leighton's own notes, now preserved at Shropshire Archives in Shrewsbury. I have looked at his Australian sketches, from 1869, courtesy of the National Library of Australia's website. In recent weeks, I have also been fortunate to acquire a copy of his *Shropshire houses past and present*, published in 1901, shortly after his death.

We saw too how he was a fine local historian, contributing valuable articles to the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, to *Montgomeryshire Collections* (the journal of the Powysland Club), and to the *Advertiser's* 'Bye-Gones' column. I particularly value his work on the records of Oswestry Corporation (the records now held by Oswestry Town Council). And family historians from across Shropshire – and beyond – have benefitted greatly from the works of the Shropshire Parish Register Society, founded by Stanley Leighton in 1897. And we must all be

grateful that in 1875 he stepped in to purchase what we now know as Llwyd Mansion, to protect it from possible destruction (through modernisation plans for the town centre, or from neglect), and that he paid for the building's restoration.

His entry to Parliament, looking back 150 years ago, might seem unremarkable but, at the time, this was far from the case, and shows us that, though he was in many ways a traditional Conservative, he was someone who truly sought to represent the range of local interests. He was elected in 1876, at a by-election, when he stood against the official Conservative candidate who had been selected, controversially, at a meeting dominated by the interests of the major local landowners, without seeking the views of tenant farmers. Mr Leighton was given the support of those tenant farmers, and of many local Liberals including members of the Minshall family and Joseph Parry-Jones. The contest was described as "the talk of the whole country" and resulted in victory by just 37 votes<sup>1</sup>.

He represented Oswestry & district, and a wide area of rural Shropshire, through to 1901 – only facing re-election on two occasions (in 1885 and 1895), being returned unopposed in 1880, 1886, 1892 and 1900. Reports from the time of his death tell us that he was known in the Commons as "the man from Shropshire" (the name given to a character in Dickens' *Bleak House*), and indicate that he was well liked, with a "delicious sense of humour which frequently manifested itself in his speeches"; he was "always regarded as a friend by colleagues and opponents alike". The *Daily Telegraph* noted that he was "a man of fine presence, a manner marked with ancient courtliness, a scholar, and a country gentleman – he was of the type the House of Commons would not willingly let die". His interests in the Commons reflected areas of particular knowledge and expertise in his life generally – including the Church, agriculture and the land, and education.

The temporary closure of Oswestry Library in recent weeks has meant that I have been unable to read the reports in the *Oswestry Advertiser* of his unexpected death at his London home in Chester Square, Belgravia, of his funeral at St Oswald's, or to read the tributes, the obituary and so on in the pages of the *Tizer*. Instead I have relied on the reports in the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, the *Wellington Journal* and the *County Times*, all available on the online British Newspaper Archive, and in the Parish Magazine for June 1901.

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed description of this contest see J.R. McQuiston, 'Farmers' revolt: the north Shropshire by-election of 1876', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, 1969-74, p170-180

These tell us that he had been visiting the Earl of Bradford at Weston Park, had then travelled south to London to attend the Commons, but had been taken ill with bronchitis and double pneumonia, had briefly rallied, but died on Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup>. His wife Jessie, daughter Rachel and the Vicar of Oswestry, the Rev. Norman Ogilvy, were present; his son Captain Bertie Parker Leighton was in South Africa, serving with his regiment in the Boer War. On the news of his death reaching Oswestry, flags were flown at half mast at the Cambrian Railways station building, the Cricket Club, the Gas Works, at the Armoury in Beatrice Street, on the Castle Bank, at St Oswald's and Holy Trinity, the Grammar School, and at both the Conservative and Liberal Clubs.

Newspaper reports tell of a very busy, and a very productive life, and they cast aside any thoughts – based on his background, and the volumes of sketches and watercolours – that he was a man of leisure. Very clearly he was active in Parliament, active in local politics, active in church matters, in the parish, the diocese of St Asaph, and generally, and active in local life. He was a strong supporter of the Oswestry Volunteers, president of the Oswestry Institute, secretary of the Cottage Hospital, a director of the Oswestry Incorporation, on the committee for Oswestry's Free Library, a manager of the Savings Bank, a magistrate (both for Shropshire and Montgomeryshire), a strong supporter of the Art School, and president of the Agricultural Society. He welcomed the Volunteers, and also the children of Morda, Moreton and Pant schools to Sweeney Hall. He was also a governor of Shrewsbury School, treasurer of the Salop Infirmary<sup>2</sup> closely involved with the Shropshire Chamber of Agriculture, the West Midland Agricultural Society and the Shropshire Horticultural Society. And he was a director of the Clergy Pensions Institute and the Ecclesiastical Buildings Fire Insurance Company; treasurer of the Welsh Girls School at Ashford, Middlesex; and an early adherent to the views of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings<sup>3</sup>.



His funeral was held on Thursday May 9<sup>th</sup>, his “massive oak coffin” having arrived by train from London, with a procession through the town to St Oswald's led by the surpliced clergy (including representatives of the dioceses of Bangor, Lichfield and St Asaph) and the church choir. The service in the church was taken by the bishop of Bangor, and at the graveside by the bishop of Shrewsbury. A memorial service was held on the

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<sup>2</sup>It was not the *Royal Salop Infirmary* until 1914

<sup>3</sup>He chaired the this annual meeting of SPAB, at the Society of Arts, London, in June 1880

same day at St Margaret's, Westminster, seen as the parish church of the House of Commons, attended by the bishop of St Asaph and Lord Harlech amongst many others.

Finally, we should note that the wooden reredos or screen in the Lady Chapel beneath the east window was installed in memory of Stanley Leighton. Its centre panel is a representation of the Annunciation, with on either side St Melangell, St Winifred, St Bride and St Marcella. This was dedicated in 1902, on All Souls Day; a brass plaque (to the right-hand side) indicates that it was the gift of Mrs Leighton, their children Rachel and Bertie, and of Stanley Leighton's three sisters.

John Pryce-Jones

**Parish Church of St. Oswald, Oswestry**

## **The love of Madrigals**

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Elizabethan Song**

**THE SCHOLARS & GENTLEMEN**

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**DIRECTOR: MIKE DONKIN**

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## HOW TO READ YOUR MEADOW!

June is the perfect month to enjoy grassland flowers and many of us have a 'pocket meadow' of long, flowery grass in our churchyards, chapel yards, cemeteries and also our gardens. As well as being beautiful these small pitstops for pollinators can have great wildlife value within both urban and rural landscapes. Sometimes however, a meadow area seems to have less and less flowers as the years go by and it can be hard to know why. If this is the case in a meadow that you manage the grasses may give you a clue as to the cause of this problem.

Native grasses can be divided into fine and coarse species. The fine grasses are shorter, about 30cms, with fine, needle-thick stems and small leaves. Fine grasses allow plenty of room for wildflowers too. Common species include Meadow grasses, Bents and Fescues.

The coarse grasses are larger, sometimes over 1m high, with thicker stems, broad leaves and a tussocky base. In a sward of coarse grasses all but the largest, strongest wildflowers will be swamped and lost, their seeds will not reach soil to germinate and small plants will be overshadowed and pushed out. The main coarse grasses are Cocksfoot, False Oat-grass and Yorkshire Fog.

Whilst a flowery meadow may contain both fine and coarse grass species, if the proportion of coarse grasses increases to more than just occasional plants here and there then you may have a problem. Coarse grasses thrive in places with higher soil fertility and infrequent cutting. If you are cutting your meadow once a year, quite late in the season, this increases fertility and the strength of the coarse grasses. Raking up cuttings is vital for a meadow, if left uncollected the cuttings rot, increasing nutrients and swamping other plants. So, if coarse grasses dominate your meadow then cut more often, earlier in the summer and rake hard so that bare soil is revealed.

Whilst meadows vary depending on soil, location and weather, a good rule of thumb is to leave a meadow uncut for three to four months and no longer. You can cut in March or April and then again in July or August or, if you don't cut in spring then cut by mid-July. This does mean cutting off some flowers but it really knocks back the coarse grasses, favouring fine ones. After a year or two you will start to see wildflowers return. Also, most meadow plants are perennial so the flowers will still be there even if they didn't set seed and you can always cut around a clump or two of late flowering species.

All the best,

Harriet Carty,  
*Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor.* [harriet@cfga.org.uk](mailto:harriet@cfga.org.uk),  
[www.caringforgodsacre.org](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org).

The final half term of the academic is here. It is a busy time for schools with exams, sporting events and many educational trips and visits. Let us join together to pray for wellbeing and safety for the children and their teachers during this busy half term.

### What's Happening in June

- **Assemblies** this month will focus on themes such as perseverance, compassion, honesty, freedom, community and the life of Jesus.
- **The Christian Unions** will be focusing on Christian Characteristics and how we can reflect the fruit of the spirit in our lives.
- **Secondary RE lessons** will be exploring the life of Jesus and how that can impact us today.
- **It's Your Move** transition to secondary schools. This workshop allows pupils to explore their thoughts and feelings about moving school, along with lots of helpful tips and hints on how to make the move a positive one. As part of the workshop, pupils will receive the It's Your Move guide book produced by Scripture Union. This book allows pupils to explore different aspects of moving school and contains lots of helpful advice for a positive transition.
- **AGM. Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 9 am at Holy Trinity Church, Roft Street, Oswestry. SY11 2ES**

We warmly invite you to come and join us for a 'face to face' June monthly Prayer Breakfast in gratitude for another year of God's grace and faithfulness towards the Project. Bacon butties and pastries will be served on arrival and after a brief business meeting we will pray together giving thanks for God's faithfulness and interceding for our schools; the children, staff and parents Jane ministers to.

### Please pray for

- Those completing exams this month.
- It's your move workshops. Pray for those who are anxious about the move to secondary school.
- Safety for pupils and staff as they spend more time doing outside activities.

Regards

*Jane Webber*

**VISIT OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY TO ELIZABETH**

Mary - the virgin mother of Jesus. Her visit to Elizabeth, when both were pregnant, is a moving account of two humble, ordinary women, suddenly caught up in a great event that would shape world history. Their trusting faith in God and acceptance of His will, shine through.

Mary	C H U R C H A G O I W N D T C	Cana
Virgin	C I N N U T N I I S T C N R N	Wine
Mother	P T G I I I L D D E R E O I I	Beloved
Elizabeth	S E J R P Q O P E E V S G E R	Disciples
Pregnant	V G C E N T U R I E S E Z G S	Dying
Ordinary	R R E H R W D E D L L S R S I	Cross
World	R K M T U U I G N I D D E W N	Keeping
History	N E S O L C S N F Z N R V L H	Unique
Great	Y R A M E A C A E A N A H I B	Place
Event	B E V I R G I N L B M I R L T	Centuries
Family	A E D E R W P T C E S I B Y J	Church
Jerusalem	I N D E V O L E B T M U L C R	blessed
Wedding	E C A L P R E E O H T C E Y L	
	C T I C Y L S R S E L W E E I	
	E S H I E D Y I N G A I A K Y	

**Solution on page 35**

**BONUS BALL**

Congratulations to the April winners of the weekly Lotto Bonus Ball draw who will each have received £29. The winners were:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ball Number</u>	<u>Winner</u>
4 Apr	52	Helen Roberts
11 Apr	31	Eric Clare
18 Apr	48	Dawn Milner
25 Apr	23	Christine Townsend

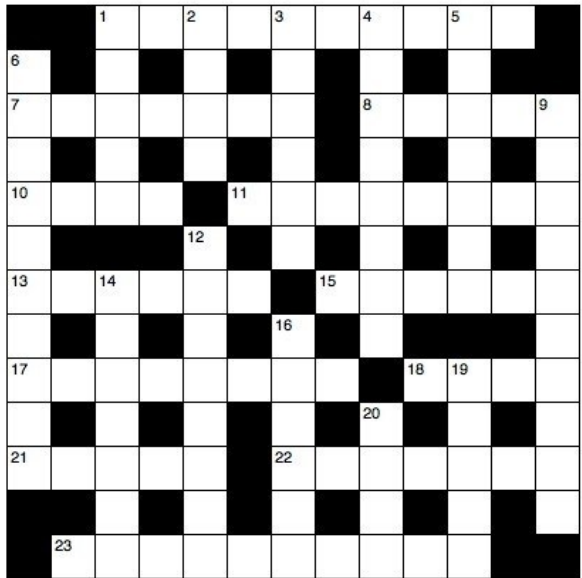
The Bonus Ball year started at the beginning of March. The cost of taking part is £13/quarter which is collected either annually, half yearly or quarterly.

If you would like to join the St Oswald Bonus Ball, please let me know.

*Paul Crosby*  
658606

**Across**

- 1 Evil (Genesis 6:5) (10)
- 7 Musician called for by Elisha when he met the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom (2 Kings 3:15) (7)
- 8 The request that led to the institution of the Lord's Prayer: 'Lord, — us to pray' (Luke 11:1) (5)
- 10 'We are hard pressed on every—' (2 Corinthians 4:8) (4)
- 11 Fraud (2 Corinthians 6:8) (8)
- 13 'His troops advance in force; they build a siege ramp against me and — around my tent' (Job 19:12) (6)
- 15 Where Rachel hid Laban's household gods when he searched his daughter's tent (Genesis 31:34) (6)
- 17 'Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be—' (1 Corinthians 12:1) (8)
- 18 Nomadic dwelling (Genesis 26:25) (4)
- 21 'As for man, his days are like—, he flourishes like a flower of the field' (Psalm 103:15) (5)
- 22 Or I live (anag.) (7)
- 23 Those guilty of 1 Across (Romans 13:4) (10)



**Down**

- 1 'God so loved the — that he gave his one and only Son' (John 3:16) (5)
- 2 'Away in a manger, no — for a bed' (4)
- 3 Mob ten (anag.) (6)
- 4 'Each — group made its own gods in several towns where they settled' (2 Kings 17:29) (8)
- 5 Began (Luke 9:46) (7)
- 6 Speaking very softly (John 7:32) (10)
- 9 Workers Ruth joined when she arrived in Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi (Ruth 2:3) (10)
- 12 Put in jail (Acts 22:19) (8)
- 14 Aceturn (anag.) (7)
- 16 Discharge (Acts 21:3) (6)

19 'All these—come from inside and make a man “unclean” (Mark 7:23)  
(5)

20 'Let us rejoice and be glad and — him glory!' (Revelation19:7)(4)

## Sudoku

2				6		8	4	1
	4	1			3			
			8				5	
		5	9			6	8	
	7		3	2	4		1	
	1	4			6	3		
	3				5			
			1			4	9	
1	9	6		7				2

Easy

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1	5							
					6	4		
	3	6		2	9	1		
	7			1	2			
8	9						4	1
			3	9			2	
		7	9	4		2	3	
		5	7					
							8	6

Medium

**PUZ?LES**

**Solutions  
on page 35**

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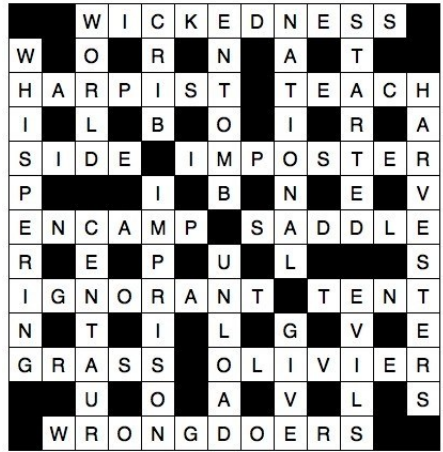
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**Easy**

2	5	3	7	6	9	8	4	1
8	4	1	2	5	3	7	6	9
7	6	9	8	4	1	2	5	3
3	2	5	9	1	7	6	8	4
6	7	8	3	2	4	9	1	5
9	1	4	5	8	6	3	2	7
4	3	2	6	9	5	1	7	8
5	8	7	1	3	2	4	9	6
1	9	6	4	7	8	5	3	2

**Medium**

1	5	8	4	3	7	6	9	2
7	2	9	1	8	6	4	5	3
4	3	6	5	2	9	1	7	8
3	7	4	8	1	2	5	6	9
8	9	2	6	7	5	3	4	1
5	6	1	3	9	4	8	2	7
6	1	7	9	4	8	2	3	5
2	8	5	7	6	3	9	1	4
9	4	3	2	5	1	7	8	6

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### S Oswald's

May 5	William Edward Bowen, aged 94
May 6	George Stanley Roberts-Jones, aged 83
May 7	Elaine Helen Williams, aged 70
May 13	Robert Keith Sperring, aged 83
May 22	Robert Paul McGrath, aged 76



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UNDER 5's PLAYGROUP	Manager: Ms Sigourney Merrony-Potton Email: <a href="mailto:stoswalds.u5s@gmail.com">stoswalds.u5s@gmail.com</a>	
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