

# PARISH NEWS

The Thameshead Parishes of Kemble, Ewen, Poole Keynes, Somerford Keynes with Shorncote



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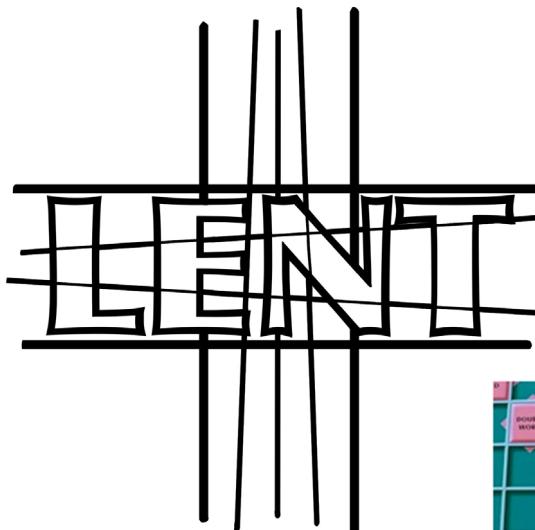
*St Michael & All Angels, Poole Keynes*

Vol LVII No 1 February 2026

Circulation: 310 and on-line



[www.thamesheadchurches.org.uk](http://www.thamesheadchurches.org.uk)



**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026**  
19:15 to 21:00

Hosted by Aileen Shaw

**Venue:**  
The Spinney, Sapperton, Near Cirencester,  
GL7 6LJ

Interested? Want to know more?

Contact:

Toto Walls 07989 301120 Aileen Shaw 07807 199602  
Julie Allen 07704 892029

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**FIRESIDE CHAT**  
with  
**ANNIE CAMPBELL**  
*who will be sharing her  
work with Grace  
Network/Long table  
alongside her personal  
faith journey.*  
RSVP to Aileen, Toto,  
Lucinda or Julie  
[www.thegracenetwork.org.uk](http://www.thegracenetwork.org.uk)

## February Services

All our services are for everyone so please join wherever you wish and all visitors are always welcome. We are one church family with several buildings and many villages. In addition to 'normal' worship services in our buildings everyone is invited to join the services that are streamed online from All Saints Kemble. To join these please go to the Thameshead website: [www.thamesheadchurches.org.uk](http://www.thamesheadchurches.org.uk) and select the LIVESTREAM button, from here you can join our worship live or share in recent services at any convenient time. We have a calendar on the website which will be kept up to date.

If you would like help or assistance please message us at [office@thamesheadchurches.org.uk](mailto:office@thamesheadchurches.org.uk) and we will get in touch with you.

### February services

01.02.26	<b>Epiphany 4 Candlemas</b>	10.00	Kemble	Morning Prayer with Source Seekers (streamed)
		10.00	Poole Keynes	Morning Prayer
		11.00	Sapperton	Holy Communion
		11.00	Rodmarton	Candlemas Eucharist
		11.00	Somerford Keynes	Holy Communion
08.02.26	<b>2 Before Lent</b>	10.00	Kemble	Benefice Holy Communion (streamed)
		11.00	Rodmarton	Morning Prayer
15.02.26	<b>1 Before Lent</b>	9.30	Coates	Holy Communion
		10.00	Kemble	Morning Source – all age
		10.00	Poole Keynes	Morning Prayer
		11.00	Frampton Mansell	Morning Prayer
		11.00	Rodmarton	Morning Prayer
		11.00	Somerford Keynes	Morning Prayer
18.02.26	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	19.00	Frampton Mansell	Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes
22.02.26	<b>Lent 1</b>	08.00	Tarlton	Holy Communion BCP
		10.00	Coates	Combined Benefice Service
		18.00	Rodmarton	Evening Prayer

### March services

01.03.26	<b>Lent 2</b>	9.30	Coates	Morning Prayer
		10.00	Kemble	Morning Prayer with Source Seekers (streamed)
		10.00	Poole Keynes	Morning Prayer
		11.00	Frampton Mansell	Holy Communion
		11.00	Rodmarton	Morning Prayer
		11.00	Somerford Keynes	Morning Prayer

### Thameshead Parish News

At a recent meeting held in the church a group of workers who edit/ contribute/ deliver etc met. A very interesting discussion and many views were expressed but it proved that this magazine wouldn't happen without the team of volunteers. Please consider supporting this community magazine in whatever way you can. Then the workload would lessen on the few!

For information a copy of every magazine produced since January 1971 can be found in the church Belfry!!!

Pat Ayres

## Reflections for February — Journeying with Love and Intention

February often slips in quietly between the bluster of winter and the promise of spring, yet it holds within its short days a wealth of meaning for those who search it out, our calendar gently leads us to moments of reflection, celebration, and preparation i.e. St Valentine's Day, Shrove Tuesday, and the sacred path of Lent. These aren't just dates to be ticked off; they are invitations to draw near to God, to each other, and to the deepest parts of ourselves.

St Valentine's Day (February 14<sup>th</sup>) is more than a chance for cards and flowers as it reminds us of the one who is love – God, who demonstrates love that is everlasting, selfless, always giving and always endures. For Christians, it's a timely reminder that to love is not just a fleeting emotion but a daily choice, to imitate such love to those around us. Indeed, we are called to a way of being that transforms our relationships, our communities, and even ourselves. Perhaps this year, we might take time to look beyond romantic gestures and consider how we can demonstrate Christ-like love in ordinary moments?

Before the solemnity of Lent, Shrove Tuesday arrives (February 17<sup>th</sup>) with the inviting aroma of pancakes and joyful playfulness, given that Lent (from February 18<sup>th</sup>) calls us to be honest about our failings, our longings, and our hope in God's mercy. The act of sharing a simple meal of pancakes with family or friends on this day can be a life-giving habit in itself: a moment to pause, connect, and prepare our hearts for the journey ahead. As we enjoy our pancakes, perhaps we can also reflect as to what we may need to let go of, so we might make room for something new?

This year, the Church of England invites us into Lent with the theme “Draw Near: Life-Giving Habits for Lent.” It’s a gentle nudge to consider what practices might help us draw closer to God and others. Rather than focusing solely on what we give up, Lent can be a time to take on habits that nourish our souls: daily prayer, sharing in worship, reading the Bible, acts of kindness, or even intentionally unplugging from our devices for moments of quiet.

Lent is a journey, not a sprint. It’s a walk alongside Jesus, who withdrew to pray and then went into the world to make a difference, especially to those who were often overlooked. As we seek life-giving habits, we echo his footsteps in the hope that, come Easter, we will not only have let go of what weighs us down but will have discovered new ways to live more fully, love more deeply, and serve more faithfully.

As February unfolds, may you find space to draw near to God, to your neighbour, and to your own heart. Whether through a quiet act of kindness, a shared meal, or a moment of honest prayer, may this Lent be a time when you discover the life-giving habits that God is longing to grow within you. In all things, may Christ's love be both your guide and your companion on the journey.

God Bless

Rev Dr Steve Bullock



**'Save the Date! Kemble Church Fête - Saturday, 9th May 2026. 2-4pm. Kindly hosted by Jill and Martin Kingston at Kemble House. More information to follow. Volunteer helpers needed - please contact [kemblefete@gmail.com](mailto:kemblefete@gmail.com)**

**\*\*\* KEEP OUR VILLAGE BRIGHT \*\*\***



**LITTER PICK**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month**

**Next meet: 14<sup>th</sup> Feb at the Tavern at 10.30**

**Following meet: 14<sup>th</sup> Mar**



**ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - KEMBLE AND DISTRICT BRANCH DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – February 2026**

The first talk of 2026 has been arranged.

Saturday 7th March - Branch Meeting - Talk A joint meeting has been arranged with the Women's Section starting 2.30pm on Saturday 7th March 2026 in Kemble Village Hall.

The speaker Martin Robbins will talk about Sir George Dowty, who was a globally respected aeronautical engineer.

The Women's Section has kindly offered to organise refreshments for this event.

If you would like more information about our RBL Branch, please contact me for details or check out the British Legion website: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/membership/become-a-member>

Ian Czapiewski – Branch Secretary – 07711 015168

Further details from secretary

Pat 01285 770385

[ayrescares50@gmail.com](mailto:ayrescares50@gmail.com)



# Kemble News and Events

## Kemble Church, Eco Church

Kemble Church holds one of 3000 Eco Church awards, which help churches to care for God's creation.



The yew tree in Kemble churchyard is believed to date from Anglo Saxon times, so may have been planted when land in Kemble was granted to the Abbot of Malmesbury in 682. It is difficult to work out the age of a yew tree such as ours because the centre is hollow with a new tree growing in the middle. We have estimated its age with the aid of string, a tape measure and a reputable yew tree age calculator as between 1000 and 1300 years old, which makes it an ancient tree, predating the establishment of England as a country.

The conservation charity, Caring for God's Acre hold a 'Love your yew week' in February. This year, we are asked to clear beneath the tree's canopy, clearing plants such as ivy, which might affect its growth – we had a working party in November to do this, so our tree should be ready for the year ahead. Please come and spend some time admiring this remarkable tree, which has stood through over a thousand years and continues to thrive.

Here are some more ways to enjoy February:

- 2 February is World Wetlands day, which celebrates these vital habitats - You can find out more about our local wetlands and where to visit from: <https://www.glosshirewildlifetrust.co.uk/nature-reserves>
- 14 February – Cirencester Repair Café 10:00-1:20 on the 2nd Saturday of the month at Cirencester Baptist Church
- 14 February, 10.30 am – meet at the Tavern for the monthly litter pick
- 9-15 February – Love your yew week – come and spend time in Kemble churchyard with Kemble's oldest resident

Rachel and Juliette Jago on behalf of Kemble PCC



### Kemble and District Royal British Legion w/s

It is also hoped that now a volunteer has come forward to take on the role as a Standard Bearer for the women's section and has received the necessary training Pat will be able to take a back seat after serving in the role for nearly 40 years. Meanwhile she will continue and then act as a deputy.

Pat Ayres w/s chair

01285 770385  
ayrescares50@gmail.com

### Kemble Bellringers All Saints Church

Please come along any Monday evening from 7pm to Kemble Church Belfry and meet us and perhaps have a go! Or contact Rick our team captain [rick@applegates.uk](mailto:rick@applegates.uk) to find out more info.



### Poole Keynes Film Club

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February**  
**Poole Keynes Village Hall**  
**2pm and 8pm**

Mr Burton is a film chronicling the formative relationship between Welsh schoolteacher Philip Burton and his gifted but troubled student, Richie Jenkins (the future Richard Burton), in 1940s Port Talbot, showing how the teacher mentored the poor miner's son, transformed his voice, and launched him toward international stardom, while exploring themes of ambition, class, and mentorship



**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2pm and 8pm**



Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale sees the Crawley family in the 1930s facing scandal as Lady Mary's divorce from Henry Talbot ostracizes her and threatens Downton's reputation, coinciding with financial woes, leading to Robert Crawley handing over control to Mary, who, with support from her family and staff, embraces her new role as the future of Downton, solidifying its legacy despite societal challenges and marking a poignant, hopeful close to the saga with key characters finding satisfying, conclusive arcs.

**If you would like to join us as a guest for either of these films the cost is £4 per person  
To book please email [pkfilmclub23@gmail.com](mailto:pkfilmclub23@gmail.com) as seating is limited and booking is essential**

### Somerford Keynes News and Events

#### Village Coffee Morning

The monthly coffee morning will take place in the Village hall on Thursday 19 February from 1030 to 1200. Everyone is warmly invited come and enjoy hot drinks and cake, browse the excellent book and produce stalls and catch up with friends and neighbours.

#### **Update on Somerford Keynes Church spiral staircase**

You may be aware that the Parish Council has very generously donated money towards the purchase and fitting of a spiral staircase in the church bell tower, so that safe access can be made for the maintenance of the tower. The staircase will be installed by the end of January. Once all work is completed, it is hoped that villagers will be permitted to access the bell tower to see the bells and have a Birds Eye view of the surrounding countryside.

Ronnie Dunn

## The Joy of Shoebox Season

Glynis Hunter, a local shoebox collector for T4U, has asked me to pass on to you the following thank you message:

Another very big thank you to everyone who supported T4U 2025 by donating empty shoe boxes, a financial donation, Christmas wrapping paper and/or gifts to enable us to fill shoeboxes and pay for their transportation. A big thank you also to those of you who donated already filled and wrapped boxes to add to the 120 individual and four family boxes wrapped by Glynis. All of the boxes were collected and taken before Christmas to T4U's central distribution depot for this area at Evesham, to join the thousands of others collected for their ongoing destinations in Eastern Europe, where they were delivered to children in hospitals, orphanages and schools as well as to children who live on the streets.

Each year, T4U distributes the shoeboxes and gifts to children and people who are victims of war, poverty and natural disaster and these are probably the only Christmas presents they receive.

For children (aged 2 - 14), suitable gifts include hats, gloves, scarves, new under-wear and socks, stationery, soft toys, puzzles, dolls and cars. A flannel, soap, tooth-brush and toothpaste, and of course a packet of sweets are also very welcome.

For the family/home, shoeboxes can be filled with candles, plastic containers, T-towels (preferably decorative), small saucepans, hairbrushes, plastic utensils, bowls and cups, soap, washing up cloths, clothes pegs, and a small Christmas decoration.

Gifts must not include anything glass, anything sharp, or anything to do with conflict or politics.

On behalf of Glynis, I would be pleased to collect or take delivery throughout the year of any suitable gifts you may wish to make whether Christmas wrapping paper, shoeboxes (men's sizes preferred) and/or donations of items to fill the boxes or to help cover transportation (which costs £3.50 per box).

I'm also happy to receive any filled and wrapped boxes (note - please do not seal them down as they have to be opened checked at the central depot before they are finally sent off);

May I request items are not left at my gate without prior agreement, to avoid them being spoiled by the elements if left outside and unattended for a period of time.

If you want to know more about T4U, do have a look at the website  
[www.teams4u.com](http://www.teams4u.com)

Jane Russell  
(01285 770340)

## **THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX COLLECTION**

Thank you to all the Children's Society box holders who during 2025 collectively raised £242.74

This goes towards helping children who feel isolated, neglected or without hope receive the support and care they desperately need.

It helps to provide them with a brighter future, helping them feel seen, valued and empowered to overcome the challenges they face.

On behalf of the Children's Society thank you all very much.

Pat Ferris

## **To Everyone at All Saints Church, Somerford Keynes**

We were told about Merton Augustinian Priory in 1997. We arranged to visit the remains of the Chapter House in November and caught Andrew Lloyd Webber in the House of Lords suggesting that the Millennium should be highlighted. Local people put us in touch with the Historian for the Priory, and an Augustinian gave us an Augustinian Nones. (See attachment.) We said the first Nones in the ruins on Sunday 3rd May 1998. There was no Sunday falling on the 3rd May for years after that. It was the actual anniversary of the Priory's Inauguration.

To remember the work of the Merton Augustinian Canons for this project, it is important that it is said as accurately and honestly as they would have said it. We don't think that the Canons today would always be using Latin. But we insist that only men read, lead and sing in the choir. (Women must do this in convents.)

Churches that do this year on year have noticed that more people turn up for Nones than for the usual services. One of the reasons for this is the love of many for the KJV.

The Augustinians are rooted in the Christianity of St Augustine of Hippo, St Maurice and the Theban Legion, and St Mark and the 12 Apostles. They are also the motivation for the Protestant Reformers and the Translators of the KJV.

( Theologian Tom Holland's excellent book on Romans is very useful for groups' Bible Studies.)

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Very best wishes

John and Sheila Fairbank. Friends of Merton Augustinian Priory since 1998.

We must not be confused with the Merton Priory Trust.



## *Kemble and Ewen Community* *Grant Scheme 2026*

Each year, Kemble and Ewen Parish Council gives small grants to local groups and organisations that provide a service or social benefit to people living in Kemble, Kemble Wick, and Ewen.

**This year a total fund of up to £700 is available.**

Depending on the submissions, the parish council may divide this between several groups, or give it all to just one group.

**Organisations are invited to apply for some (or all) of this money. Application forms are on the village website:**

**<https://forms.office.com/e/q2aX3tZkqf?origin=lprLink>**

If you cannot access it there, please email [clerk@kembleandewen-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@kembleandewen-pc.gov.uk), or call the Parish Clerk on 07503046989

The deadline for completed applications is

**Friday 27 February 2026**

**Please note that any applications received after this date cannot be considered**

## Farming Matters

The start of a new farming year traditionally kicks off with the Oxford Farming Conference, where the great and the good gather to explore and explain new developments in technologies and farming practices. It's also a platform for politicians to show their dedication to farm businesses and our food security.

This year's focus was on environmental challenges and adapting farm practices in the face of climate change, but it also gave an opportunity for Defra Secretary of State Emma Reynolds to set out government policies. Her way was paved for a softer reception by an announcement immediately before Christmas of a partial U-turn on Inheritance Tax relief for farms and small businesses. Although this was welcomed, there are still many farming businesses which will be caught by this tax which will most likely result in the need to sell the farm when the next generation needs to take up the reigns.



Ms Reynolds announced that the Sustainable Farming Incentive will return in 2026. You may remember a time (when we were members of the European Union) when farmers received payments allowing them to produce food below production costs, as part of a cheap food policy. These 'subsidies' are being phased out in favour of payments for 'public goods' based on good environmental practices. The SFI was born in 2021 with widespread rollout in 2022. Payment rates were increased in response to low levels of uptake until a successful scheme had paid £848m to 35,500 farm businesses. Then, out of the blue, last March the scheme closed abruptly, leaving farmers and landowners unable to implement plans they had to embrace the aims of the scheme.

Ms Reynolds acknowledged the damage caused by halting the scheme, admitted mistakes were made and promised no further unexpected closures. However, as always, the devil is in the detail and uptake of the revised scheme will be dependent on what practices (such as habitat creation and encouraging biodiversity) are supported and to what degree. Planning for 2027 harvest year will start in just a few months so the detail can't come too soon.



In other news, I'm writing this on Blue Monday (supposedly the height of the January Blues) and dairy farmers are decidedly blue at the moment. You'll remember the drought we experienced last year and the resultant poor grass growth. Cows were short of grass which could have been devastating for our milk supply, but because milk prices were high, there was an opportunity to supplement rations with purchased animal feeds to maintain milk yields.

Consequently, milk output over the year was an unprecedented 6% up on previous years. Demand was still high as global output was down, so we saw the unusual situation where both production and prices were high. But, as the saying goes, what goes up must come down, and wholesale dairy prices have plummeted recently as global output catches up. Bulk cream prices are 56% down on the year, mild cheddar is 31% down and butter is 43% down. Many farmers are facing a 10% price cut for January milk and a drop of around 25% over the year. It will be interesting to see if retail prices for butter, cheese and cream experience similar reductions. Don't hold your breath!

A trusted indicator of how healthy farm profits are is the number of new tractor registrations. New registrations for 2025 were at their lowest since record-keeping began in the 1960s, according to the Agricultural Engineers Association. 8,791 new tractors in 2025 represents a 14% drop compared to 2024 and a quarter below the 5-year average.

On a brighter note – spring is just around the corner. By the time you read this, sunrise will be almost half an hour earlier than it was at the winter solstice and sunset is being delayed by around 2 minutes each day, giving us around 20 minutes extra daylight each week. Snowdrops are in full bloom and daffodils are poking through the surface. Birds are already beginning their spring chorus, and the local woodpecker is very active.



But remember the Christian festival of Candlemas, which falls on Feb 2 marking the mid-point between the winter solstice and spring equinox, is also known as Groundhog Day. It's the day on which, according to legend, a groundhog leaves its burrow. If it's sunny and he sees his shadow, it's said we'll see six more weeks of winter. If it's cloudy and he doesn't see his shadow, it's said to mean an early spring.

## ROTAS FOR FEBRUARY 2026

	Sidesperson	Readers	Readings	Kemble Flowers	Poole Keynes	Somerford Keynes
1st February	Binnie Rank	Rob & Linda Day	Malachi 3.1-5 Psalm 24.[1-6] 7-end Hebrews 2.14-end	Guild Flowers	Liz	Flowers: Cleaning: Jon & Henrietta Cantouris
8th February	Colin Rank	Stephen & Karen Lambert-Humble	Genesis 1.1-2.3 Psalm 136.1-9,23-end Romans 8.18-25 Matthew 6.25-end	Julia Clarke	Liz	Flowers: Cleaning: Jon & Henrietta Cantouris
15th February	Martin Kingston	MORNING SOURCE	Exodus 24.12-end Either Psalm 2 or Psalm 99 2 Peter 1.16-end Matthew 17.1-9	Julia Clarke	Liz	Flowers: Cleaning: Jon & Henrietta Cantouris
22nd February		COMBINED BENEFICE SERVICE	Genesis 2.15-17, 3.1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5.12-19 Matthew 4.1-11	Lent	Liz	Flowers: Cleaning: Jon & Henrietta Cantouris
1st March	Keith Miles	Tim Postlethwaite Mark Wilton	Genesis 12.1-4a Psalm 121 Romans 4.1-5, 13-17 John 3.1-17	Lent	Lent	Flowers: Cleaning: Josie Woodley Polly Handover Poppy Broadbent

### Church Wardens

Kemble  
Poole Keynes  
Somerford Keynes

Jill Kingston 07798 830287 / 771133  
George Collins 770698  
David Crofts

Tom Grand  
Sussanne Lock

### North Wilshire Flower Club

Hi there this is Cathy Carroll again. I'm writing to tell you about our club the North Wilshire Flower Club that is based in Crudwell Village Hall and meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 for 7.30 start. On February 18th we have Cathryn Brown coming to demonstrate "a Flower Prescription for you". I do hope you will join us. It should be interesting as well as beautiful.

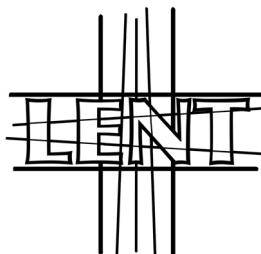
We have plenty of parking space and a raffle for the demonstration flowers. We also have free cake and tea/coffee afterwards and your first visit is free. We would love you to join us.

Cathy Carroll

### Crudwell indoor Bowls Club.

Looking for a new hobby with gentle exercise then just a few miles up the road this club will welcome you. You don't have to commit to league games just learn to play as a team member in a friendly group. Tuesday evenings and/or Thursday afternoons.

Pat Ayres min/sec.



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<b>Other useful numbers</b>			
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District Councillor, Mike McKeown	<a href="mailto:mike.mckeown@cotswold.gov.uk">mike.mckeown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	MP Dr Roz Savage	<a href="mailto:roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk">roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk</a>
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