



# South Leigh News

## PARISH COUNCIL OVERVIEW

While the Covid numbers continue to be alarming across the country, life here is returning to a sort of normal. Nevertheless, we must all remain very careful to minimise the risk of catching or transmitting this awful disease.

### Back to 'normal'... sort of

As we are able to do more now that we are jabbed, South Leigh has wasted no time catching up. This edition of the South Leigh News is packed full of reports and stories that show just that.

In summary, it really started in earnest back in September with our super Post Lockdown party on the Football Field thanks to a National Lottery Communities' Fund grant.

Services at St. James the Great have been re-scheduled to 10:30am on the second and fourth Sunday in the month, and regular bell ringing has recommenced after a long silence. The refurbished tower is also attracting bands from other towns and villages to ring our lovely 1908 Whitechapel bells

### Another solar farm

The second solar farm is right at the top of the Parish Council's agenda and reports on this will be updated on the village email, Facebook and South Leigh website. It is also live on the WODC planning portal reference, [21/03711/FUL](#), if you would like to comment directly. The Tar Farm solar farm negotiation is 'work in progress' and we'll keep everyone informed.

Of course, the chameleon-like bus shelter morphed again from its summer, sixth edition, 'Beach huts', to bewitch us with its seventh, 'Witch's Kitchen'. This was followed by a moving silhouette of a soldier standing among poppies, a stark reminder 'Lest we forget' the 21 men from this village alone, plus Thomas Henry Pickett who died in the Boer War, and the countless others from elsewhere who gave their lives in the two World Wars.

### Village life returns

Right now in the village, Speed Watch training is about to start after its suspension, and the Parish Council will be studying carefully residents' views following the survey on a possible 20 MPH speed limit.

Tree planting is also resuming around the village, and our struggle with Thames Water and the mobile phone companies continue. Our Christmas lunch is back in the Village Hall on Sunday, 5th December.

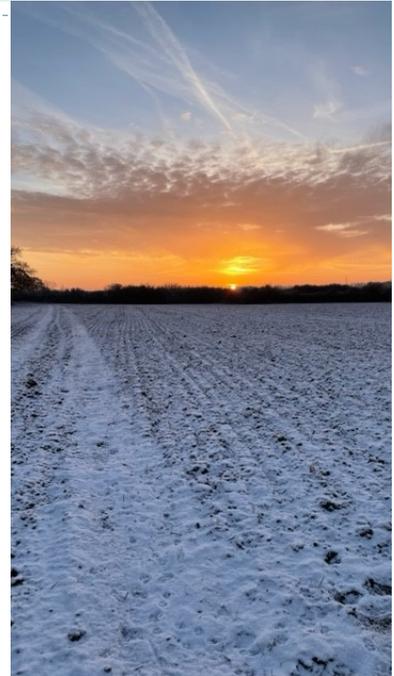
### Thank you and farewell

I want to thank Graham Soame who has stood down as a Parish Councillor, for his invaluable contribution over several years. I also ask you to remember Malcolm Odmundson who died on 16th October. We also would like reflect on the celebration of life of Tom Litt.

South Leigh is really is back in action looking at the proposals for the A40, Tar Solar Farm, Anerobic Digester and Speeding.

As we approach the end of 2021, I want to welcome newcomers and thank everyone in the village who has helped us get through the year. Finally, I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a very different and more positive 2022.

*Nicky Brooks, Chair, South Leigh Parish Council, November 2021*



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## The South Leigh News Photograph Requests

South Leigh News would like to publish photos taken by villagers in each edition capturing our Parish.

We won't be able to publish everyone's, however we shall choose photos that are best suited to the edition.

A star photo will be selected to go on the front page of the newsletter. Please can you email any photos to :  
[newsletter@southleigh.info](mailto:newsletter@southleigh.info)

### THANK YOU GRAHAM SOAME

At the Parish Council meeting on 15th December, Graham Soame resigned his post as Parish Councillor saying that his commitments with work and family mean that he is not able to be as active on the Parish Council as he feels the role deserves. Graham wants to continue with his nature conservation and protection work within the Parish and kindly offered to be on hand to offer advice to the Parish Council as and when it may be required.

Graham has been a great asset to the Parish Council over the years that he has served and we are sad to see him depart whilst totally understanding his reasons. We thank him for his time and commitment.

*Nicky Brooks*

## PARISH COUNCIL EYNHAM ESTATE UPDATE

Representatives of the Parish Council met representatives of Eynham Park Estate and are pleased to report that the Estate are keen to improve communication. They had requested the meeting and were keen to work closely with the village. It was a largely positive meeting.

David Mason, the previous owner of the Estate, has now retired and his son, Michael, is about to take over. Michael is in his early 30s, married and has been living in London but in spring of 2022 he is relocating to live on the Estate.

He is going to be very active, using Savills as their agents, but has a clear agenda to modernise their operation. His agenda is very much influenced by the 'greener' side of things.

They have already agreed with Martin Spurrier that further tree planting should take place as well as discussing the siting of the trees.

Topics included:

- The renegotiation of the Football Club lease - I know that previously, valiant efforts were made to widen the terms of the lease but with the new management they are more receptive to further conversations that are scheduled and we will report in due course.
- Working with residents to help create better habitats for wildlife including following recent advice about leaving hedges higher and so giving more protection / food for birds.
- Some of the flooding that occurs in the village is due to water running off their fields - they have agreed to look at this with us.
- Margery Cross Field - this field by the T-junction in the village is coming back under the Estate's control and will be cut and tidied to allow for healthy regrowth, the Limb Brook will be cleared.
- The Estate has agreed to do work on the field at the rear of Chapel Road (where the cattle graze) to repair the fences and the banks of the Limb Brook where cattle have broken them down.

- The Estate are going to produce a map of footpaths and add some permissive paths - these are footpaths granting no rights but where walking is permitted by the landowner. The Estate will then discuss with the village and with our Parish Path Wardens, Russell and Anne Cherry. There will, no doubt, be discussions to be had but once agreed they will ask that all walkers stick to these paths. They are aware that their performance of spraying of footpaths through crops has not been great in the past.

- Gladman and development - they have no plans to action this in the short to medium terms (15 - 20 years) and possibly not at all, but they weren't prepared to commit to anything.

There was discussion about the dualling of the A40 which will take in some of their land and we agreed to work together on this.

*Nicky Brooks, November 2021*

### THAMES WATER (LYMBROOK CLOSE)

Residents of Lymbrook Close have received an update from Thames Water (whether it be because we've chased or out of their huge sense of responsibility). Anyway, we are now told that the works will continue past January 2022 because they have had to order equipment which can't be delivered until that time.

The Parish Council feels that that is an unacceptable amount of time, especially when we were originally told that the works would be for be for six weeks from August. We are about to write to the CEO to express our outrage and to ask for compensation. We are also chasing for more detail of the works and ask whether the lorries really need to come into the close with such frequency.

The only bit of good news is that Rita Sawrey-Woodards reports that the phosphate levels in the brook, once clear of the sewage plant, have fallen considerably.

We will keep you posted.

*By Nicky Brooks.*

## View From The Vicar 2021

Do you have Christmas traditions in your family? Last year all of our Christmas traditions were completely disrupted; many of us were very disappointed that we couldn't see family and friends. My Christmas was particularly painful not because we couldn't see our children, although that was a pain, but rather because I developed a tooth abscess on Christmas Day, that by Boxing Day meant that my face was swollen up and I was at the emergency dentist in Oxford getting antibiotics before taking to bed. At least all the plans to see the family had already been cancelled! 2020 the year that kept giving.

How are you feeling as we approach Christmas this year? All of the disruptions last year did help us to reflect on what was really important and, for many of us, what we missed the most was not the presents or the food but the people. We missed family and friends and want that to be at the heart of this Christmas.

Relationships are so important to us and for Christians the heart of Christmas is the possibility of a relationship with God, through His son Jesus. It's a message that has brought hope to millions of lives. We hope and pray that at the heart of this Christmas you will know the love of friends and family and the blessings of God.

We would love to invite you to join us for one of the services at St. James in December and they are listed below. While we hope many of you will be able to join us we are also aware that some are still isolating from larger groups because of Covid and while we will continue to monitor the situation, locally and nationally, we wouldn't recommend attendance at busier services if you are clinically vulnerable.

If you would like a member of the clergy team to visit you at home please get in touch with the church office at [office@coggesparish.com](mailto:office@coggesparish.com).

Grace and peace be with you this Christmas time,

With best wishes,

*Simon Kirby*

*Vicar of James the Great, South Leigh and St. Marys' Cogges.*

**Sunday 12th December 10.30am Informal Service with Traditional Carols**

**Christmas Eve 6.00pm** Carol Service with Traditional Carols and readings.

**Christmas Day 9.30am** Christmas Celebration with Communion.

### **St. James the Great Christmas Cards**

St. James the Great Christmas cards are now available from Liz Ashwell or in the church. They come in packs of 5 for £2.50.

All proceeds go to our lovely village church for its preservation.

*Liz Ashwell*

Lymbourne, Chapel Road / 01993 703534 / [liz@southleigh.info](mailto:liz@southleigh.info)



## **Black and White**

*The message is quite clear at the bus shelter. It's 'Lest we Forget'. In the two World Wars, twenty-one men from South Leigh died, sixteen in the First World War and five in the Second. Their names are in the porch at the church and they will be remembered.*



### **Comings & Going**

We have said goodbye to Simon and Kathy Stace who recently moved from Beacon View, Chapel Road into Witney and in their place we welcome Peter and Teresa Grant. We hope they will enjoy living in South Leigh.

## **BELL RINGERS' REPORT NOVEMBER**

**EVADNE VALLANCE**

After all the summer excitement of a Gold Tower Award, The Westley Award and the Bishop's visit, autumn bellringing has been pleasantly mellow.

Our practice night continues at St. James' on Wednesday evenings from 7:30pm – 9:00pm. Some of us also attend practice night on Tuesdays at St. Mary's, Witney and at St. Mary's, North Leigh on Fridays. Indeed, there are any number of Towers which will give us a warm welcome if we just turn up, and it is a pleasure to be part of such a community. Come and have a go!

We have been most grateful for tuition and support from Andy Goldthorpe and Alison Merryweather-Clarke, Tower Captains at Witney and North Leigh respectively, as well as for extra monthly teaching from Hugh Deam with his Marston band of ringers on Saturday afternoons since September.

Martin Spurrier continues to tend the bells with the greatest care and dedication. Our practices and special event ringing all depend on checks and maintenance being regularly carried out

and no amount of climbing in the belfry is too much to ask.

On 16th October, a Quarter Peal Attempt was successful. A QPA is 45 minutes of the continuous ringing of a method, and in this case the chosen method was 'Grandsire Doubles', rung on 6 of the 8 bells. The heavier six bells were chosen, both for the aesthetic quality of the sound and because the improved performance of the bells following Martin's refurbishment means that they handle much more easily than previously. The Quarter peal was in celebration of the 90th birthday of Phyllis Broome, a former South Leigh resident and author of the two publications, 'South Leigh Remembered'.

We are inspired to practise even more diligently by one or two residents, who have suggested that we might attempt to get a recording of our ringing broadcast on 'Bells on Sunday' on BBC Radio 4. While you can listen to the bells of Notre-Dame being rung here, small parish churches also feature. Something to aim at!

## **Bells for a Birthday**

Phyllis Broome celebrated her 90th birthday with a party for 37 people in the village hall on 16th October. The bells of St. James rang a ¼ peel 'Grandsire Doubles' involving 1260 changes in recognition of this milestone in Phyllis's life.

The tables were decorated with flowers and balloons and after a glass of fizz a delicious lunch was served. Phyllis cut a very pretty fruit birthday cake while cameras clicked.

Phyllis was born in the home of her great grandparents, John & Angelina Harris, 88 Manor Cottage, one of three cottages, later demolished, behind the Manor House. Angelina Harris's maiden name was Keen and the Keens & Harris's go back to the 1600s in South Leigh. When Phyllis was 6 years old she moved with her brother Chris and parents Fred and Freda Tipping to Wayside. They lived



there for 60 years.

Although Phyllis now lives in Witney she considers South Leigh as home.

*Liz Ashwell*

## Flashback in Station Road

This picture was taken in Station Road on 3rd November. I think the lady I spoke to said it was The Old Berkshire Hunt. The only similar photo I have seen is an old black and white picture of 'The hunt at the Mason Arms' in *South Leigh Remembered*, Book 1, on page 93 and one in the pub.. That section contains the wonderful reminiscences of sadly departed Tom Litt who took over the management of the pub with his wife, Barbara, in 1964.

By MS



## South Leigh Christmas Lunch

The Village Hall Committee are delighted to let you know that we are once again planning to hold a village **Christmas Lunch in the Village Hall on Sunday 5 December** at 12.30 for 1.00

Cost of £15 per head – half price for children under 10.

The meal will be a traditional Roast Turkey dinner and dessert followed by Coffee, Mints and Mince Pies.

A bar will be available as usual.

Numbers will be limited to 50, so do **book your tickets now** by emailing or phoning:

John Ashwell

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

01993 703534

Payment in advance by BACS or cheque

## A QUIZ FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

Insert the missing vowels to solve these sequences of words that appear in the named carols. The spaces are not relevant, e.g. the words "Season's Greetings" might appear as SSN SGR TNGS or SSNSG RT NGS. *Answers appear elsewhere in this issue.*

- 1 LTSD RHMCM (O Come All Ye Faithful)
- 2 NDDR MLSS LPTHSL NT  
(O Little Town of Bethlehem)
- 3 LLSBR GHTR NDYN (Silent Night)
- 4 NDRY STLS TSHL LSHM  
(Once in Royal David's City)
- 5 SMDT HWN TRSS NW  
(See, Amid the Winter's Snow)
- 6 FRN TSDHF RMG HTYD RD  
(While Shepherd Watched their Flocks)
- 7 HRL DNGL SSN GGLR YTTH  
(Hark! The Herald -Angels Sing)
- 8 DN GMRR LYNH GHN  
(Ding Dong! Merrily on High)
- 9 RGNS WTSN GNGN TH (The Holly & the Ivy)

- 10 CMN DWRS HPWRS HP  
(Angels from the Realms of Glory)
- 11 NCR BFRB DTHLT TLL RD  
(Away in a Manger)
- 12 SN WNSN WSN WNS NWN  
(In the Bleak Midwinter)
- 13 FLLT HTR STHTRN (The Holly & the Ivy)
- 14 THTGL RSS NGFLD  
(It came upon the Midnight Clear)
- 15 SWST RSHNN GNT HST  
(The First Nowell)
- 16 THLN LYMN TNSS TP  
(See, Amid the Winter's Snow)
- 17 HCMD WNTR THF RM  
(Once in Royal David's City)
- 18 GLDBR NGTCR WNH MGN  
(We Three Kings)
- 19 PRSH PHR DSNF LDSST HY  
(The First Nowell)
- 20 HRWW NTGNT LWG TSM  
(We Wish You a Merry Christmas)





## Did you know that the Quiz is back?

Yes! That's the correct answer.

On Sunday, 31st October, the Mason Arms hosted the Village Quiz, whose future has been a sticky question since before the pandemic restrictions came in. Twenty cerebral residents answered Graham Soame's call correctly with sharpened pencils at the ready to give their brains a post-lockdown airing with a touch of the pub's finest lubrication.

Caroline Gane, the Quiz Master (Quiz Person?), gave John Humphrys, the recently retired veteran BBC Mastermind host, a good run for his money on the night, and Graham managed to get the veritable parliament of owls organised.

The key question in the back of their minds was the prize for the winners. Correct! It was £10 and a bottle of the finest red grape tincture from their hosts. And here's another question: Who was the winner? That is printed very small at the end of this report.

Much fun and erudite banter ensued and one hotly contested answer was referred to an innocent, non-contestant member of the Hooky-

drinking public who resolved the issue summarily to an equal number of cheers and huffs and puffs.

Graham said afterwards, "The revival of the Village Quiz was both for fun and to give us all a reason to get out with village friends. It creates a marvellous opportunity for those who don't get out much, or who can't, to get together with old friends and to meet new ones in the village. We shall continue to run the quiz and, hopefully, to expand it. Thanks for all who attended and to Caroline for asking the questions".

A modest £32 was raised towards a local charity, probably one addressing loneliness, but the suggestion agreed on the night was that at the end of the December Village Quiz, the total raised would be donated to a charity agreed by a majority of those present.

The dates, all Sundays, of the upcoming Village Quizzes and the Question People are:

November 28th 2021 -	Nick Kelaher
December 19th 2021 -	David Auge
January 30th 2022 -	Russell Cherry
Winner Graham Soame!	



## **MALCOLM DOUGLAS OSMUNDSON, MBE**

13<sup>th</sup> May 1940 -16<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Malcolm was born in Redbridge, east London in May 1940, and was brought up by his mother and grandmother in London. When he was ten, his mother married a member of the United States Air Force, and the family relocated to Washington. He was educated and graduated in America and was passionate about science.

Upon returning to Britain in 1960, he worked at Queen Elizabeth College in London in the Physiology Department, where he became a chief technician, or laboratory superintendent, as was the terminology then.

Malcolm met his wife, Irene, when they both had part-time jobs at a cinema. She was an usher and ice-cream vendor, Malcolm was front of house. Their marriage was blessed with the births of Mark and Deborah. Sadly, Malcolm and Irene split up when the children were in their teens but Deborah and Mark remember him being a loving, hands-on Dad, a proud Granddad and great-Granddad.

Outside of work, Malcolm had a keen interest in industrial archaeology. Art was also one of his abiding interests and so were his collections of cigarette cards, coins, stamps, periodicals and matchboxes. The last few months of Malcolm's life were spent avidly doing crosswords and Scrabble.

In the late 1980s Malcolm met Sue Holly, a colleague at work. Later, Sue was offered a job at Oxford University and following Malcolm's retirement in 2005, they relocated to South Leigh.

Malcolm had become a lay officer in the Queen Elizabeth College ASTMS Union branch, playing a pivotal role in the merger of Queen Elizabeth College, Chelsea College and King's College London into a single organisation, King's College London's Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine. In the Queen's birthday honours in 2003, he was awarded an MBE for his 'contribution to higher education'.

Malcolm and Sue loved South Leigh and Malcolm became very involved in village life as well as volunteering at Witney Museum. He took up wood turning and became the finance trustee to the Oxfordshire Wood Turners Association. Sadly, in 2012 Sue passed away at home, with Malcolm caring for her to the end.

Malcolm's interests were manifold – he had a strong social conscience and was a trustee of the SAUL, a pension scheme of the Imperial College London. He took a great interest in the homeless, and was a long-serving supporter of the RSPB, the Ashmolean Museum, the National Trust and Amnesty International. In retirement, Malcolm was a member of the Oxfordshire Pensioners' Group.

Malcolm's last years were enriched by his partnership with Shirley and, during his last months, he was fortunate to have Mark, Deborah and Shirley at his side and overseeing his care.

Malcolm touched many people's lives. He will be remembered for his many kindnesses, his strong social conscience, his gentlemanly nature, his care for his family and friends, his sense of humour and his encouragement of others.



## South Leigh Goes Even More GREEN

The recent COP26 conference in Glasgow has brought to the public's attention how fragile the survival of our planet and the life living on it really is. The 200 nations which took part in the conference have made pledges of what their governments can do to achieve and not exceed the critical 1.5°C warming of Planet Earth and other ways in which each can contribute to the planet's protection and preservation.

South Leigh is one of millions of communities around the world; each of us individually is one of billions of human beings worldwide. It is us that have caused the problems Planet Earth is facing by living in and populating our material world, expecting comfort, earning money to spend as consumers on many things, consuming natural resources and leaving waste products in huge quantities to pollute and destroy our beautiful Earth.

But we also, as individuals, have incorporated ideas into our lifestyles where we are 'doing our bit' to help the environmental crisis. Here are a few examples:

I no longer buy washing liquid in plastic bottles; instead I have delivered in an A5 cardboard



carton small, fully soluble strips of washing detergent; the wash is good, the plastic waste reduced, the pollution from detergent less.



I also have made the decision to drive at least 10mph slower in my diesel car (an electric car is off budget at the moment), so on motorways, I do 60mph, A-roads 50mph etc.

I use a steamer to cook vegetables, potatoes in the bottom, other vegetables in the top layers; so one heating ring only is active, minimal water is boiled, energy usage is reduced and all veg are ready together.



I have turned my thermostat down to 19°C and I wear an extra layer so that my warmth and comfort indoors in the winter are not compromised.

There are many more examples which I am sure you all practice in your daily lives and these would be great to share. The collection of ideas will ultimately go on the website and would lend itself very well to a bus-shelter display so that others who pass through the village could also benefit and maybe put some of the ideas into practice and share them with their communities and so the 'individuals doing a little bit for Planet Earth' will add up to 'local communities doing a lot for Planet Earth'.

So, can we please share with each other what we already do and what we could do, so that we all make our lifestyles and our little bit of the world a greener and more planet-friendly village? Young people will already be looking at these issues in their schools and being creative in their thinking for preserving their present and future world. Please encourage your youngsters to put forward their ideas to this sharing too. It is them who will inherit the world we have made and are making, so let's make it a world that is safe and comfortable with the biodiversity ours and previous generations have enjoyed. If everyone does just a little bit, it would add up to an awful lot and it will make a difference.

Our webmaster has suggested that we post our ideas on the South Leigh Facebook page with a specific hashtag to assist future processing.

So please post your ideas on the South Leigh Facebook page, making sure you include the hashtag #lesscarbonplasticandwasteinsl.

Thank you all and I look forward to seeing your many varied suggestions.

Do contact me if you have any thoughts on how we can encourage South Leigh as a community to do more.

Rita E. Sawrey-Woodwards  
([rita.sawrey-woodwards@southleigh.info](mailto:rita.sawrey-woodwards@southleigh.info))



## Wildflowers and Hedgerows by Heather Horner

Many of you have commented favourably on the range of wildflowers appearing in our verges, and the planting of native trees within the hedgerows in the village. It is time to start thinking about adding more areas and yet more diversity. There are four local schemes in the pipeline. We hope you will join in with suggestions and offers of new locations.

Firstly, I have been collecting local wildflower seed from various habitats, meadows and verges, sunny and shady places, hot and dry as well as cool and damp. All is mixed into this year's harvest, and is on offer to any villager who can give it a friendly home. It does need bare soil to establish, so not into existing grass. The plot could be in your garden or the verge outside. I'd be happy to visit your proposed site to discuss possibilities and outcomes.

Call me on 01993 357389 or at Windrush Cottage, Station Road.

Secondly, in conjunction with the local *Nature Recovery Network*, there is the opportunity to plant some new native hedging, young saplings of hawthorn, spindle, field maple, blackthorn, hazel, etc. No costs involved, but we do need some sites, so all suggestions considered - it could be in your garden.

Thirdly, the *South Leigh Forest Restoration* group has just received permission from the Eynsham Park Estate to extend the planting of more mature specimen trees around the village. See the details elsewhere in *Nature Notes*.

Last but not least, there will be an invitation shortly to continue the work commenced so successfully last winter in restoring the biodiversity in the churchyard, and ensuring that the 200-year-old lime trees get some overdue love and attention.



## Bats In The Belfry by Martin Spurrier

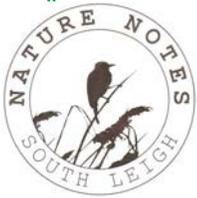
This little chap seemed to have fallen down in the tower at St. James the Great on Remembrance Sunday and accompanied the bell ringers in the ground floor ringing room for the service. After a little while, happily, he recovered and flew away. We think he's the Common Brown Long-eared Bat. With ears like that, the bells must have sounded very loud! Photo © Richard Law.

If you find a grounded bat, though, they may need urgent help. Here is how to contact people who know what to do at the Oxfordshire Bat Group. Local volunteers can be contacted between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. on [07878 265076](tel:07878265076). Outside those hours please follow the guidance on the [Bat Rescue](#) page to keep the bat safe until you can contact someone. Please note this phone number is for calls about grounded bats only in Oxford City and West Oxfordshire. If you have a general enquiry please contact [info@oxfordshirebats.org](mailto:info@oxfordshirebats.org)



And here are notes from the Wild Life Trust about our furry flying friends:

The brown long-eared bat is a medium sized bat with huge ears. As with all UK bats, they are nocturnal, only coming out at night to feed on midges, moths and other flying insects. They have an incredible sense of direction thanks to echolocation, which they use to hunt prey. Brown long-eared bats roost in holes in trees and old buildings, and feed in parks, gardens and woodland. In the summer, females form maternity colonies and have just a single pup each. They hibernate over winter between November and April.



## As we go to press, we have just received great news from Savills, the land agents for the Eynsham Park Estate, that we may plant more trees on Estate land in the village!

This agreement has taken almost a year because of Covid and because of new legislation that landowners have been trying to get to grips with.

In the meantime, we have been given the green light to plant on the west side of Church End from Margery Cross to the Village Hall, and along the north side of Chapel Road from Margery Cross to Acre Cottage.

The Church End planting is very exciting because the new trees will replace the former great elms that are shown in Phyllis Broome's *South Leigh Remembered*, Book One, in a picture from the 1930s, shown here with thanks to Phyllis.

We have the agreement for the areas marked 1 and 4 on the plan below, which was sent to Savills for the Estate's consideration. Area 2 and another area not shown here have not been agreed but, equally, have not been refused. Indeed, Savills' letter says, "...we can certainly keep the discussion open and continue to identify possible locations".

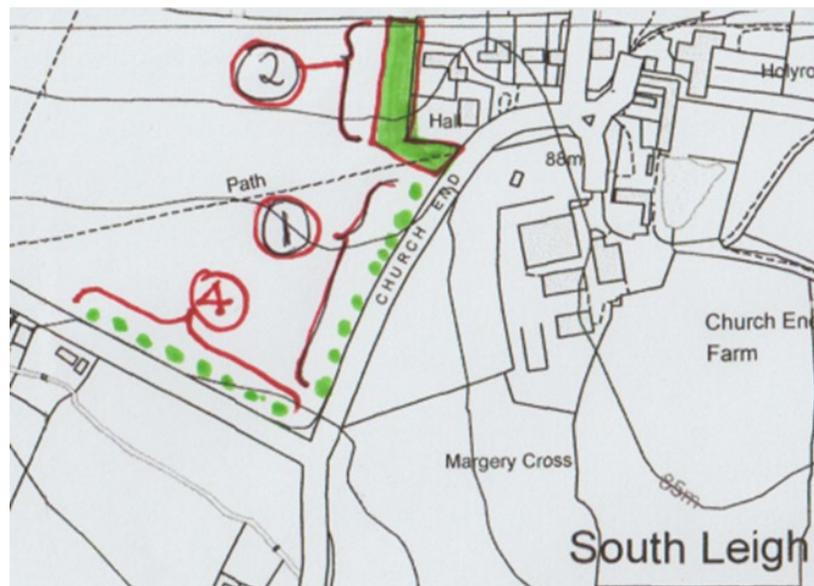
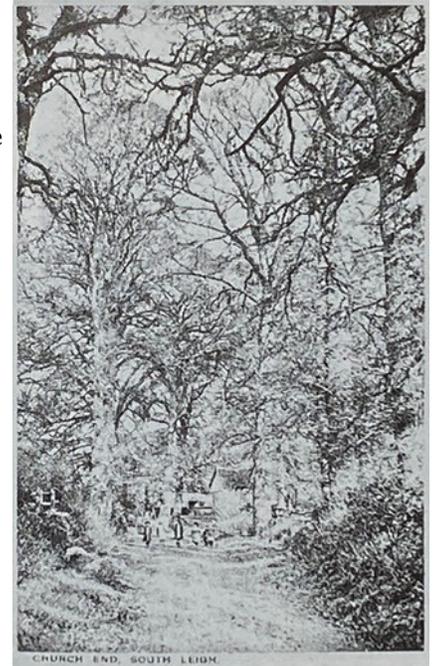
The plan shows where we shall plant this winter, although we now need to find the money for the trees! If we are to plant trees similar to those in the first planting in Chapel Road, we shall need about £500 (or twice that amount if they are taller as at the football field), so we'll be applying for grants immediately.

The problem with grants is they usually take quite some time to be processed. Additionally, we can't apply until we have agreed planting sites, nor are they usually retro-active. Chickens and eggs!

If anyone would like to help plant or to contribute to the costs, please let any member of the Parish Council and me know.

Many thanks,

Martin Spurrier 07799 368464 and David Brooks.





## Still Honking & Hovering by Martin Spurrier

A couple of editions of South Leigh News ago I wrote about the Canada geese grazing on the stubble at the top of Bond's Lane. I didn't see them this year until 30<sup>th</sup> September but they came honking low over the house when I caught this picture. They are impressive.

As lovely as they are, they are not liked by farmers and they make an awful mess from their droppings. They are not protected, by the way.

I have just read that they were introduced to the UK in St. James's Park in London in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Today there are 62,000 breeding pairs, here!

Incidentally, the little kestrel that featured in the last newsletter is still very much around and can be seen on power lines or hovering along Stanton Harcourt Road. Apologies for the very poor picture (it could be any bird, frankly!).

I read that the hummingbird is the only bird that can truly hover - that is, it does not need a wind to hover. It manages this by flapping its wings 20 to 80 times a second. It can fly straight up and down.



But kestrels, terns and hawks use the wind to hover. Whilst other birds of prey are able to hover, none can do as well or for as long as the kestrel. They fan their long tails out to act as a balance, and flap their wings very quickly in order to stay airborne.

The Woodland Trust says that with extremely sharp eyesight, kestrels can also spot a beetle from 50 metres away. They can even see ultraviolet light, which is invisible to the human eye. This means that they can detect the urine trails left by rodents on the ground, helping the birds locate their prey. Like the barn owl, they love voles.

Sadly, the UK's kestrel population has fallen by half since 1970, so it's lovely to see the kestrel around South Leigh.

### STOP PRESS

## SNOW OVERNIGHT—28th November 2021

Many of us will have woken up to a light dusting of snow and hard frost. It is important that we all ensure wildlife can access food and water during particularly cold spells.

Birds don't hibernate like hedgehogs do and there is more information about the village hogs further on in this edition.





## Harvest Moon by Martin Spurrier

*“Do not swear by the Moon, for she changes constantly. Then your love would also change”.* William Shakespeare

One thing is for sure, though, and that is the dates and names of the twelve full moons each year!

This picture is of the September Harvest moon on 20th September over South Leigh.

So that I don't repeat myself in future editions, below are the dates and names of the remaining full Moons for 2021 and for all of 2022.

By the way, apparently many of the moon's nicknames have come to us from Native American culture because of their way of life. They were first adopted by the Colonial Americans and then by us. Happy Moon gazing!



### 2021

19th November	19th December
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### 2022

January 17th - Wolf Moon	February 16th - Snow Moon
March 18th - Worm Moon	April 16th - Pink Moon
May 16th - Flower Moon	June 14th - Strawberry Moon (also the Supermoon)
July 13th - Buck Moon	August - 12th Sturgeon Moon
September 10th - Harvest or Corn Moon	October 9th - Hunter's Moon
November - 8th Beaver's Moon	December - 8th Cold Moon

### *Plough the Fields and Scatter...*

*If you noticed an increase in the number of visitors to South Leigh in September it might have been for the rich air as well as the bucolic views.*

*More seriously, maybe this was because our local farmers were practising the old art of 'muck spreading' and were preparing the fields for a mighty crop next summer with what looked and smelled like slurry.*

*Slurry is made from cow manure and water, and while I gather that it's a fantastic fertilizer, it does produce a very dangerous gas around the tanks where it's held. There are, however, strict Government health and safety rules to keep people safe.*



## A Free Lunch? ..... Yes



You may have seen this story in the media, but it was a big even in the village's programme after lockdown, so we felt it needed to be here.

There really was such a thing as a free lunch in South Leigh on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> September thanks to a National Lottery Local Connections Fund grant that supported a residents' 'Get-together' to celebrate the end of lockdown.

Its aim was to bring communities together again with an emphasis on tackling loneliness. More than half the entire village showed up to enjoy the fun and entertainer, tribute singer, Elvis. K Presley.

The South Leigh Parish Council had applied for the grant in August and on 1<sup>st</sup> September they were advised that it had been awarded. Just 19 days after that, a fully-fledged 'residents only' fete had been organized on the Football Field.

Attractions included a free hog roast and pint of beer or other drinks for every resident and family member; tribute singer, Elvis K. Presley; children's games, family fun dog show, tug o' war, Aunt Sally, penalty shootout, slowest bike race, and a visiting ice cream van with free ice creams for residents' children. The day ended with country dancing and drinks around the fire pit at sunset.

Parish Council Chair, Nicky Brooks, said, "The get-together created the opportunity for everyone in the community to get over lockdown blues and pandemic isolation, and could not have happened so quickly without the National Lottery grant. We are most grateful to them and to the team of residents who performed magic to organize it in the time! After a damp start to the day, it cleared perfectly for residents to arrive to the delicious aroma of roast hog".

She added, "To ensure that we reached everyone we hand delivered flyers to every single household in the parish and asked folks to bring anyone who had found it hard to get out and about during lockdown. It was a very happy day".

Regarding loneliness, Nicky explained, "We are a small but spread-out community and believe that through our comprehensive communication with residents via letterbox drop, social media and email, we do get to everyone, but we need to be truly resilient. We want to ensure that no-one is isolated or slips through the net. The legacy of the National Lottery grant will be a specific and sustained effort to ensure that every single person in our parish feels included". MS

(Some photographs taken by Anne Peake)



# Tom Litt, Remembered & Celebrated

**1930 - 2020** by Sara Voice and Kairen Caudwell

Tom was born in 1930 in Cumbria near Carlisle and came to Oxfordshire as a child when his father was asked to manage a farm in Horspath near Cowley.

One of six children, Tom followed in his father's footsteps and on leaving school worked on a number of farms. He soon found a thriving social life at Faringdon Young Farmers' Club, which provided a centre of activities that Tom enjoyed including dances, quiz nights, darts matches, football and tennis. He made many long-term friends and was always fully involved and eventually became their club chairman. He was working at Step Farm for a Mr. Saunders who encouraged former agricultural students. By now he was playing football for several different clubs, including Stanford in the Vale, and it was whilst playing for them that he broke his jaw so badly that it had to be wired up for several weeks.

On leaving Step Farm Tom went to work at Barcot Farm before being asked to manage Buckland Marsh Farm for the executors of the late M. Bob Pike. Later he took another farm manager's role in Cricklade running a large estate for a Mr. Horton. It was whilst working there that he met Barbara.

Eventually Tom and Barbara married and life took on a big change of direction when, with two small children, Sara and Kairen, he decided to take on the lease of The Mason Arms in South Leigh, a run-down pub in need of a big makeover if it was to be a viable business. Tom became an excellent host and landlord, brewing his own beer which became a very popular local brew and nationally recognised by the Campaign for Real Ale. He and Barbara ran an excellent restaurant which quickly became the 'go to' eating establishment in the area. Tom travelled to Faringdon to buy his beef and to Selsey in Sussex to buy fish, lobsters and crab.

Tom, along with Jeremy Walker, kept a water ski boat aptly named 'Tom & Jerry' at the 3T's lake in Standlake. The girls became proficient water skiers and Tom enjoyed driving the boat and teaching their friends how to water ski.

It was during this time that Tom was also Chairman of Witney Town Football Club and was heavily involved in the development of the club.

During his 20 years in the restaurant business, Tom had built a family home in Church End, South Leigh but when he retired from The Mason Arms they moved to Tarwood Lodge until a house at Field Assarts had been renovated into a beautiful new home. By this time Sara was cooking in London, Scotland, France and Greece and Kairen was working for Pergamon Press in Oxford.

Tom took over the running of Witney Park and Pick on the estate of John Mawle. This he made into a successful business until the land was needed for development as Witney expanded.

On leaving Field Assarts, Tom and Barbara moved to Bampton and being at a loose end, but wanting to keep busy, Tom started going to Bristol Fruit and Veg market twice a week and created a small delivery round to local shops.

Tom and Barbara's next move was to Pulborough in Sussex to be nearer to Sara and to help with her growing family. One of his pleasures whilst there was attending Goodwood races where he became a member and made some good friends whilst doubtless winning a few pounds.

Following Barbara's death in 2004, Tom moved to Drayton, near Abingdon.

Tom always enjoyed his holidays and spent many boating holidays in Cornwall, camping in France and visits to the Algarve, Gibraltar, Malta as well as visiting Sara when she was cooking on one of the Greek Islands. There were also several winter trips to East Africa.

At the age of 78, Tom decided on a big trip to Australia and New Zealand by himself, travelling light with just one carry-on case for a six weeks tour. "I can buy what I need when I get there" he said.

His final two years were difficult; as Tom had become less mobile he moved to The Bridge House in Abingdon for care where he celebrated his ninetieth birthday with an excellent lunch.

Tom was a great family man and a proud grandfather of five grandchildren. He led an eventful and varied life which he lived to the full. It led him in many different directions... he had hard times, he had great times, he was always good company, he made lots of friends, he worked hard, he played hard, he was loyal to a fault. The world was a better place for him having lived for ninety years.



# HOGWATCH



Summer was an active time for the hedgehogs in the garden. I fixed a trail camera nearby to catch wildlife activity overnight and was chuffed to see regular users and diners coming to the feeding station every night; one night three well rounded and healthy looking individuals were tucking into the cat crunchers. The bowl of fresh water was much appreciated, especially in the heat of the summer months.



Female hedgehogs are pregnant for around 35 days and produce litters of up to 5 to 7 hoglets (or urchins) born around June. The babies' eyes are closed for a couple of weeks and during this time the sow leaves the nest in the evening searching for food and returning to feed them. The hoglets start to join her in her foraging about a week later when their teeth have developed and they stay until six to eight weeks old when they leave the nest and fend for themselves.

Sometimes a sow will have a second litter in the autumn, this is a more tricky time for the hoglets - their natural food becoming more scarce and the youngsters struggling to put on enough weight to survive hibernation.

At the beginning of October a friend contacted me about a very small hedgehog found on a road in Witney. The hoglet



was so tiny, she definitely needed expert help being so young and weighing less than 100g. I immediately contacted the amazing people at 'Minster Hedgies' and they took her in and will continue to care for her until she can be released to a safe area in the spring. She is now eating well and has put on weight. They have named her 'Badger' because of the little white spot on her nose.

With late September to November/December being much colder, hedgehogs are busy building nests and trying to eat as much as possible to fatten themselves up before hibernation. I will be keeping my feeding station topped up with meaty cat crunchers and fresh water all through the winter with my trail cam poised to catch any winter diners!

A minimum weight of 600g is necessary to survive the wintertime using their fat reserves. Food gets increasingly scarce to find and they are a poorly insulated mammal. They need to hibernate in a well insulated nest of thick undergrowth and leaves to prevent them getting frostbite or hyperthermia (which can depend upon the skill of the individual hoggie and availability of nesting material). Leave some of the fallen autumn leaves, a hedgehog may want to use them to build a lovely hibernation nest - a great excuse to dodge or delay a task and all in the name of wildlife!

The hedgehog may stir periodically during hibernation and will leave the nest in search for food, making it vitally important that food and drink are available if needed. Some even move nest sites a few times during hibernation. Males tend to hibernate earlier than females, they have more opportunity and time to fatten up in late summer and early autumn, whereas sows, having nursed their young, will take longer to fatten up. Around mid-March the hedgehogs will start to stir from hibernation; this is dependant on temperature but by April they are hungrily foraging for food to replace the one third of body weight they may have lost over the winter.

Tiggywinkles 24 hour emergency helpline:  
01944 292292  
Minster Hedgies : 07786 962211



## QUIET LANES AROUND YELFORD

A choice of several linear walks (returning same route) on quiet country lanes, giving the opportunity to stretch the legs when footpaths are sodden! The Yelford & Lew walks can of course also be combined, as necessary, for longer walks ; take great care when crossing the fast and often busy Aston Road. There are likely to be puddles in places after heavy rain, so wear stout footwear.

For Yelford walks park at point A on map (G.R. SP360048), a short way from sharp bend by seat.

For Lew walks park at point B on map (G.R. SP328062), at far end of gravel by Manor Farm, Mount Owen Road to not obstruct entrance.

### **Walks from Yelford**

Towards A415 near Hardwick (2 ½ miles return, allow 1 ½ hours), with option to extend walk to 5 miles (allow 2 ½ hours) by walking along firm track (bridleway):-

Go along minor road away from Yelford, pass cottages on L, and turn back before reaching A415.

For longer walk, on return go along bridleway Calais Lane from finger post, retracing your steps before reaching A415.

Towards B4449 at Cote (3 ½ miles return, allow 2 hours):-

Go along road through Yelford, soon passing the Grade II Listed timber-framed Yelford Manor on L, which dates from the C15 and built on Norman foundations. After bearing R the small church on R, set back off road, is worth visiting ; there are also 2 seats in the small sheltered churchyard. Continue on road for a further ½ mile, then go L at signpost & turn back before reaching B4449.

### **Walks from Lew**

Towards Aston Road (3 ½ miles return, allow 2 hours):-

Walk back to T-junction, go R and return before reaching Aston Road.

Towards Bampton (3 miles return, allow 1 ½ hours), with option to extend walk to 6 miles by visiting Bampton (allow 3 hours, excluding stops).

Refreshments in Bampton. You may prefer to explore Bampton separately, in which case park in Market Square by Town Hall in the centre ( 'P' on map):-

Walk further along Mount Owen Road, passing more farms, returning when reaching large farm barns on L beyond L bend with modern housing development ahead on R.

If you plan to extend walk to Bampton then continue beyond barns & past New Road on R. After passing Beam Paddock cul-de-sac on R take tarmac footpath on R (between fences). Ignore all paths off to L or R, then when reach road go L to join High Street opposite The Morris Clown PH. Now go R to Market Square on R, with Town Hall (home to West Ox Arts Gallery, with changing exhibitions through the year).

Go L along Bridge Street from junction/mini roundabout, cross Shill Brook, & just beyond roadside fence go L on tarmac path (Mill Green) to reach lane at Spring Cottages. Now go L, then L at junction, & soon bear R to cross Shill Brook & eventually bring you back to Bridge Street opposite The Horse Shoe PH. Cross road & go L, then R along Church View with many fine buildings leading to the Library on L at end ; this was originally a free school, built in mid C17. Just beyond Library is Churchgate House, dating from C16 & the former Rectory.

Be sure to visit the fine Grade I Listed church, dating from C10/C11 then rebuilt in C12, with the spire added in C13. You may also wish to explore beyond church. Then go along Church Street opposite Library & cross road (Cheapside) to go down narrow Bell Lane passing the thatched Old Bell Cottage to return to Market Square.

Bampton is an old market town, one of the oldest towns in England. There were settlements here in both the Iron Age & Roman periods. It was known for many years as Bampton in the Bush because of its location surrounded by a large area of common land. There was a castle here with origins in the early C14. It was demolished a few centuries ago, possibly by Cromwell's army in the Civil War. Only a small part survives—the gatehouse & part of the curtain wall—now part of Ham Court, a private house off the Clanfield road outside the town centre (no public access).

Bampton has for many centuries been associated with Morris dancing. There were 13 Public Houses here in the 1950s!

RC

# Update From The Parish Wardens

by Russell and Anne Cherry

Whilst our network of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) is clear for access, the underfoot conditions soon become difficult in places after heavy rain at this time of year. A number of these routes that cross recently ploughed fields have not (at the time of writing, mid November) been reinstated, as they should be within 2 weeks after ploughing. These are the same footpaths that were not reinstated earlier in the year after crops were planted, and which therefore caused access difficulties through the summer months. This issue has again been referred to the powers that be at the County Council and to the Parish Council, asking them to again contact the relevant landowner(s) to resolve the matter, hopefully now and in future years!

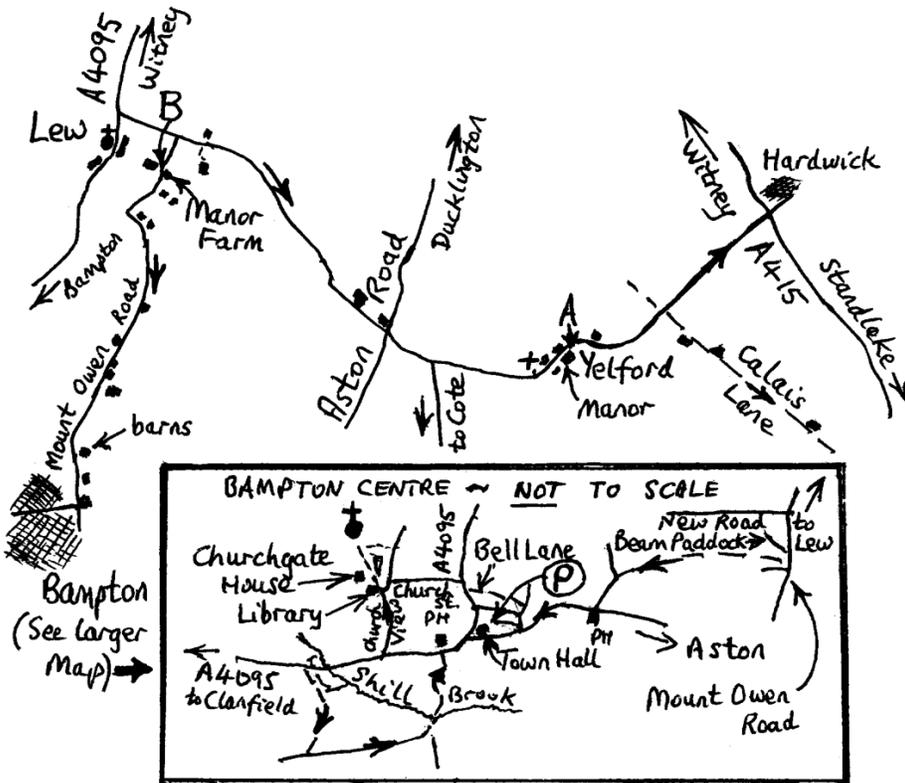
Turning now to the proposed Tar Farm solar farm, the fact that a number of public footpaths pass through the site concerns us. The area concerned (from behind the cartridge store across to Rushy Common and Tar Farm and beyond towards Cogges Lane) has a truly country feel to it, with expansive views, including looking across to South Leigh in its rural setting. We feel that the aesthetics of the area will be lost with a solar farm there, and screening the site from the footpaths will not help; after all, this screening will also obscure the very views that are currently enjoyed from these routes!

We certainly agree in principle with the construction of solar farms in view of the climate emergency, as long as they are placed where there is minimal (preferably no!) impact on people. However, we feel that this particular site is not the right location for a solar farm, as the number of 'public footpaths' there brings it very much into the public domain.

If you value the importance and benefits of these public footpaths, and would rather the area be left as it is, we trust, like us, you made your views known to the developers (Bluefield) and the Parish Council, as well as to Planning, W.O.D.C. immediately following submission of the planning application.

To end on a more upbeat note, we hope that the parish routes continue to be used and enjoyed by as many as possible, not only over the winter months but beyond too—and may the weather be with you!

## QUIET LANES AROUND YELFORD



## VILLAGE HALL

### Village Hall Committee

Dorothy Carden – Noad  
(Secretary)  
703840

John Ashwell (Treasurer)  
703534

Debi Diacon (Bookings)  
773314

David Brown  
703765

Sue Washington  
775574

Caroline Auger  
834899

## Club 100 Winners

Septembers winners were  
Rosemary Brock and Rita  
Hutchings

October: Caroline Gane and  
Martin Wilson

November: Nicky Brooks and  
Marina Pinker.

## The South Leigh Charity

The South Leigh Charity has been helping people in the parish for centuries. It has wide-ranging powers and can provide help in many ways.

If you know someone who might benefit from what the charity has to offer, would like to make a donation to it or would like to become a trustee, please contact, in confidence, one of the Trustees:

Richard Law, Chair (01993 773355 or  
ralaw1984@gmail.com),

John Ashwell (703534),

Sue Washington (775574)

Karen Wilson (771346).

## DISCLAIMER

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editors.

Please keep up to date by looking at the Facebook page or the website:  
[www.southleigh.info](http://www.southleigh.info)

If you are not currently on the residents' circulatory list please contact Nicky Brooks on [nickybrooks@southleigh.info](mailto:nickybrooks@southleigh.info) to receive important updates.

If you know of someone who hasn't got access to a printer please let us know via email:

[newsletter@southleigh.info](mailto:newsletter@southleigh.info)

### **COPY Deadlines**

#### **South Leigh News**

February 18th 2022

May 18th 2022

August 18th 2022

November 18th 2022



## QUIZ ANSWERS

1 LET US ADORE HIM, O COME. 2 AND DREAMLESS SLEEP THE SILENT. 3 ALL IS BRIGHT; ROUND YON. 4 AND OUR EYES AT LAST SHALL SEE HIM. 5 SEE, AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW. 6 "FEAR NOT", SAID HE; FOR MIGHTY DREAD. 7 HERALD-ANGELS SING, GLORY TO THE, 8 DONG! MERRILY ON HIGH IN. 9 ORGAN, SWEET SINGING IN THE. 10 COME AND WORSHIP, WORSHIP. 11 NO CRIB FOR A BED, THE LITTLE LORD. 12 SNOW ON SNOW, SNOW ON SNOW, IN. 13 OF ALL THE TREES THAT ARE IN. 14 THAT GLORIOUS SONG OF OLD. 15 SAW A STAR, SHINING IN THE EAST. 16 THE LONELY MOUNTAINS STEEP? 17 HE CAME DOWN TO EARTH FROM. 18 GOLD I BRING, TO CROWN HIM AGAIN. 19 POOR SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS AS THEY. 20 HERE. WE WON'T GO UNTIL WE GET SOME.

# SEASONAL SOUTH LEIGH RECIPES

The latest seasonal recipes, using wonderful squash and other winter vegetables, will be online at [southleigh.info/recipes](http://southleigh.info/recipes) from early December.

You can also browse all the Seasonal Recipes in the online archive at [southleigh.info/recipes/recipes\\_archive](http://southleigh.info/recipes/recipes_archive)

