

# Bengeo Magazine

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# Bengeo Parish Magazine and Community News



Pentecost is on Sunday 8th June.

## Bengeo is on the map!

What with Hollywood stars coming to film here and acclaimed musicians giving concerts, our part of the world is punching above its weight. Find out how a house in Duncombe Road was the backdrop to a feature film and what the Academy of St Martin in the Fields have been doing to support the community.

Nearer to home we have local news and events including a profile of The Avenue shops. If you want to learn a new skill, then why not take up bowls or handbells. Find out more inside.

Robert pays tribute to the expertise and dedication of Jennifer Newton who played the organ at Holy Trinity and St Leonard's for 56 years and sadly died last month.

### The Editorial Team

*The views expressed by the contributors are not necessarily those of the Editorial Team or the PCC. Whilst every care is taken, we cannot be responsible for the action of any of the contributors or advertisers in this magazine.*

Front cover: Photographs by kind permission of Bengeo Bowls Club. Credit: Rob Pinkham.

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### Editorial Team

Items for the magazine should be sent to [mail@bengeomagazine.co.uk](mailto:mail@bengeomagazine.co.uk)

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SCAN ME

**HERTFORD SHOWROOM**



The Bengo Club is a friendly Social Club in the heart of Bengo, it offers its members a great social calendar including live acts on Saturdays, Bingo and Raffle evenings, plus sporting activities including Bowls and pétanque, Darts, Snooker and Pool. Bingo is also on every Tuesday in the Garden Room at 8pm. There is a large selection of games available (not just for the children but adults too) including Cards, Crib, Rummikub, Dominoes, Scrabble. Or simply enjoy a drink or two on our lovely sunny patio.

## Bowling

Hidden away behind the Bengo Club on Bengo Street, there is a bowls green. Bowling at The Bengo Club is available on a pay and play basis or by joining the Bowls section (for an added fee). The Bowls section is a friendly group which play socially on Monday afternoons and evenings in the summer

months (May to September) as well as running their own competitions, competing in a local mixed league and playing friendly games against local clubs.

Are you interested in playing bowls but, as a beginner, don't know where to start? We have the answer as we will be having open days on 10th and 11th May, 10.30am–4.00pm. Come along whether you are a beginner or have played before. We have bowls you can borrow. Please wear trainers or similar to prevent damage to the green.

## Entertainment in April

- 26th Drop the Monkey

## Entertainment in May

- 3rd Kelly's Heros
- 4th Sunday Bingo
- 10th Scratch
- 17th Bingo
- 24th Phoenix Blues
- 31st Bingo

## Entertainment in June

- 7th Bingo
- 14th The Bonnet
- 21st Bingo
- 28th Soul Chain

*NEW MEMBERS WELCOME – pop in and see us soon.*

## From Bengo Bowls



Why not try your hand at green bowling and join the Bengo Bowlers at their Open Day weekend on 10th and 11th May. All are invited to come along anytime between 10.30am and 4pm on either day to have a go.

We have a limited number of sets of bowls, various sizes, and would ask that you arrive in flat shoes to protect the green.

You will find us behind the Bengo Club building, use the side gate to access the green and the bowls pavilion. Teas and coffees can be provided, and we guarantee a friendly welcome with one of the bowlers ready to show you the ropes and give advice.

### Bowls Open Days

#### at the Bengo Club

Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 May

Any time between 10.30 and 16.00

**Why not try your hand at Bowls?**  
Suitable for ALL



**Just come along to the Bengo Club and our friendly Bengo Bowlers will help get you started**

**No booking needed - please wear flat shoes, trainers will do**

**For more information please call**  
Joan 01992 583564 or Christina 07961 529226

or email: [bengeobowls@btinternet.com](mailto:bengeobowls@btinternet.com)

# On the Doorstep

When I think of a quintessential English cottage garden, one of the flowers that comes to mind is the Foxglove. The Foxglove is widespread around the UK and is a native plant. It can be found growing in various habitats, woodland, hedgerows and grassland.

The Foxglove's Latin name is *Digitalis Purpurea*, *digitalis* means finger-like and *purpurea* means purple, this is in reference to the finger like flowers and the colour of the flowers that are usually a dark pink/purple colour, although you do sometimes see white flowers. As well as the name Foxglove the plant is also known by various other common names, Goblin Gloves, Witch's Gloves, and Dead Men's Bells.

The plant is a perennial or biennial, it produces a tall spike of flowers and can grow to a height of 2 metres. The leaves are a slight oval shape with a toothed edge and have a downy hair over them. The leaves grow in a rosette formation at the base, however as the plant matures the leaves do also start to grow up the stem in an alternating arrangement. The flowers have five petals that are fused together to make the familiar tubular shape, known as a corolla. The flower has a lower lip that acts as a good landing pad for visiting insects and it also has an attractive dark spotted pattern on it. The pattern on the lower lip is even more visible under ultra violet light, this is to attract pollinating insects,

as they are able to see ultra violet light. Foxgloves are a favourite of bumble bees, some butterflies and some moth caterpillars. The flowers open in sequence from the bottom to the top, by the time the top flowers open the ones at the bottom are already dying off and producing fruit with the seeds.

All parts of the Foxglove are poisonous, perhaps why it is also known as Dead Men's Bells. The plant contains various chemicals including Cardiac Glycoside, which is a naturally occurring steroid-like compound and is used in various drugs to treat heart failure and irregular heartbeats, such as atrial fibrillation. During World War II when the supply of drugs was short, the British Health Ministry conscripted various plants with Foxglove being one of them. People were encouraged to grow foxgloves and groups like the Women's Institute, Scouts and Guides were encouraged to grow and harvest them for the national dwindling medical reserves. However, touching the plant can also cause irritation, so hopefully they were encouraged to wear gloves.

There are, of course, various myths and legends surrounding the Foxglove. It is said that the plant could raise the dead and kill the living. The plant had a strong association with fairies who were said to hide in the flowers and that the spotted pattern was in fact their footprints. Foxes were supposed to have used the flower as gloves (hence the name), to help them silently creep up on their prey, those poor old hens! As May seeps into June and on into the summer, keep a look out for the tall showy spires of the beautiful Foxglove.

**Bridget Hersant**

*See Bridget's photographs of Foxgloves on page 27.*



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# Friends of St Leonard's



We are getting ready for our summer season at St Leonard's Church, the ancient heart of Bengoe, this summer.

## Wall Paintings

We are very proud of the rare wall paintings found in St Leonard's. The 13th century painting of the Deposition from the Cross is an amazing survival and the brick and lozenge-shaped decoration in the chancel gives us a glimpse into the way the church would have looked in the medieval era.

The paintings are exposed to some extreme cold and the general fragility of the walls, so it is important that we review their condition from time to time. We were delighted to welcome Opus Conservation Ltd into the church last year to carry out this assessment. Opus ([www.opusconservation.co.uk](http://www.opusconservation.co.uk)) is a respected and expert consultant who worked on projects in many churches plus some major buildings like Hampton Court Palace and the House of Lords.

Dr Elizabeth Woolley and Dr Amarilli Rava visited the church last April to assess how well the full set of wall paintings are standing up to the passage of time. They reported that the wall paintings are in reasonable condition – especially considering their age – and they recommended some conservation work to stabilise the surface of the paintings. This will be taking place in May, so our paintings will be secured for future years.

The Friends of St Leonard's are delighted to be able to support this important conservation work. We have received some grant funding for the assessment work and hope to receive more for the conservation work itself. Becoming a member of the Friends and visiting and contributing to the upkeep of the church all help us continue to do this

important work. You can join through our website [www.stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/friends-of-st-leonards](http://www.stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/friends-of-st-leonards) or just drop me a line.

## Little Trains for a Little Church

We will be welcoming our local model railway enthusiasts to St Leonard's on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd of June. "Little Trains for A Little Church" will include a range of working model railways and vintage train collections. It will include a model for children to operate.

## Children's Art Workshop

On Saturday 12th July we are delighted to be welcoming back Courtyard Arts to run a Children's Art Workshop. At previous events some wonderful creative art has been made.

## Services and Prayers

St Leonard's remains an active place of worship and there will be several special services this summer.

We will hold the very popular Pet Blessing Service at 4pm on Sunday 6th July. Bring your pets to say a special thanks for the joy they bring you.

The Hymns and Pimms Service will take place on Sunday 3rd August – put the date in your diaries and get ready to sing.

The church will also be open on Tuesday evenings at 8pm from 4th June for Quiet Time reflection and prayer.

## Music

We have several concerts planned so look out for details of these on the website [www.stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/events-and-concerts-at-st-leonards](http://www.stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/events-and-concerts-at-st-leonards). Tickets for concerts will be available from [boxoffice@parishofbengeo.com](mailto:boxoffice@parishofbengeo.com).

St Leonard's Sunday tea and tour starts on the 29th June. All help to keep this lovely church open to the community is very welcome. Please get in touch if you want to have a chat about it. You can also follow us on Facebook (search for St Leonard's Bengoe and you will find us).

**Helen Fleming**

**Secretary**[friendsofstleonards@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofstleonards@gmail.com)

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# Hollywood comes to Bengoe

Sophie Golding tells us how her family came to have a crew of 60 including Hollywood stars in their house for a week to shoot the film *'Preschool'*.

*Preschool* is a comedy about the rivalry between two fathers vying to secure the last place in a prestigious prep school. One parent lived in a cabin in the garden and the other parents lived in the house.

Sophie says, "It all started with my friend who runs a nearby location agency. We have been on their books for a few years, but it has mainly been little shoots for Argos and Sainsbury's adverts and things like that. Then this big, big filming job came in.

The film company normally do a recce to see 3 or 4 houses. When they came round the first time we were all a little bit starstruck. We were overwhelmed by the American crew and we didn't even know who the lead actor Josh Duhamel was. But we got the job! We had a few meetings with the art department first and they were here for three days prepping before the filming. They painted the front of the house and came with big lorries to take loads of our furniture out and bought their own stuff in which was quite daunting. I remember them taking my desk out and had to run and rescue my laptop from it. It was amazing how much equipment and huge trucks they had.

Then they built the cabin in the middle of the garden so that it was visible from the kitchen. We moved out from Monday to Friday when they were actually filming as we couldn't really stay when there were about 50 people milling around. We hired a

cabin for a week at Roydon Marina while they were filming.

When they finished on the Friday, we moved back in and then they came on the Monday and Tuesday to take everything down and restore the house to normal. I understand they filmed in other places in Hertford: Hertford House Hotel, County Hall and as far afield as Xscape in Milton Keynes.

We saw how making a film is not glamorous. It was so cold and the crew were all standing about outside working from 8am. They did also hire the house next door as a Green Room for the actors, and another house over the road for the children to play in.

When can we see the film? As it was made by an independent company, I don't know where it will be released but it is probably out sometime next year. It was a lot of work for only 8 minutes of film, but I hope our neighbours will think it was worth it for the disruption caused along the road. Maybe we can get a local showing to invite people in Bengoe.

And afterwards – well, they took pictures beforehand and put everything back exactly the same in our house. Would we do it again? We did not mind the disruption as it is an old house and we are not precious about things. We have a really nice community in Duncombe Road, but we do not think our neighbours will thank us for letting huge crew film come here again soon. We hope it will be worth it when they see the finished film."



Filming in Duncombe Road by day and night.



Photo credit: Chris Attwood

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## Canvas 25 Art Event

Canvas 25 is back at Courtyard Arts and you can be part of it! Simply purchase your 25 x 25cm canvas for just £10 and get creative in your chosen medium to transform it. Open to all of any

age, whether new to art or with many years of experience, all finished canvases will be exhibited together in the beautiful gallery space as part of a 2 weeklong charity event.

**CREATE** – Get creative in your chosen medium and transform your canvas (or canvasses – there is no limit to how many you buy) We just need to be able to hang it on the wall.

**EXHIBIT** – Return your finished canvas to us and see them exhibited in our gallery space along with the other artists as part of a charity event from 3rd to 14th June 2025.

### FUNDRAISE –

Canvasses will all be for sale for £40 each during the exhibition and proceeds will be used to support our ARTREACH programme. Bringing Art to all in the community.



## Hertford Adult Learning Group News

We are currently mulling over 'The rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany' but change tack in September 2025 when we have a 10-session course on 'Victorian England'.

The Autumn tutor will be Adam Smith who has taught several popular courses in Bengeo. We revert to a 10am start, finishing at 12 noon with a 15 minute break. We meet on Tuesdays from 23rd September to 2nd December with a half-term break on 28th October. The venue is the Church Hall, Duncombe Road, Bengeo. Fees TBA.

The emphasis is very much on learning for pleasure in a sociable atmosphere. Do come and join us. To join our mailing list send your contact details to [halg.contact@gmail.com](mailto:halg.contact@gmail.com). Further information 01992 589538.



## COPS Theatre

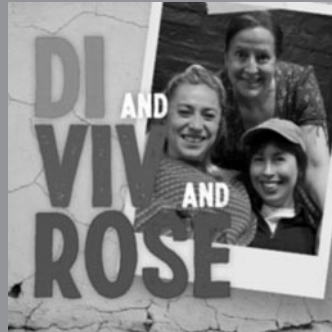
presents

**Di and Viv and Rose**

By Amelia Bullmore

13th–21st June 2025, 7.45pm

Matinee 21st June, 2.30pm



Aged 18, three women join forces. Life is fun. Living is intense. Together they feel unassailable. From their first awkward meeting at university in the mid-80s, this warm, charming, comfortable

drama follows their ever-strengthening friendship over the ups and downs of the next thirty years.

Crackling with wisdom and wit, Amelia Bullmore's play is a funny and thoughtful exploration of friendship's impact on life and life's impact on friendship. It's heart-breaking at times and hilarious too. Just like life itself.

## Bengeo Parish Handbells

Back in September 2022 we were able to start a new community handbell team, with six people learning the art, using the refurbished bells belonging to the church. Over the last two years, we have managed to maintain a core group. Unfortunately, this year we have had to pause, due to the sad loss of past member Alan Cracknell, and more recently, Jennifer Newton, who was particularly keen to learn and was willing to help out with another team, The Fuller Bells.

The remaining three members would like to continue, but we can only do so if we can recruit at least one other person. Could that be you? If so, please let me know if you would like more information and would like to give it a go. We will meet at the church on the second and fourth Friday of each month from 10.30–11.30am.

And... to hear the superb East Anglian Regional Handbell Team, playing with over three hundred instruments, come to our concert at 7pm May 17th at Christ Church, Ware. See the poster on page 27 for details. You will be guaranteed an incredible experience.

**Jackie Downs**

07534 434900 | [jacqueline.downs94@gmail.com](mailto:jacqueline.downs94@gmail.com)

# Change and continuity at The Avenue Shops

## Good News

It is 20 years this March since Ash (pictured) took over Good News, the newsagents, tobacconist and confectioner's shop on The Avenue.

Ash has developed the merchandise over the years to accommodate the needs of local people as lifestyles and residents have changed. Many of the population on the Molewood estate moved in with young families in the 1960s and 70s so the shops are serving an older clientele. Ash is catering for this changing community and refurbished his shop about three years ago to find room for new supplies.

Ash is now stocking more household goods, stationery and cards, frozen food, ready meals, wine and spirits, petfood, bread and milk for those on the estate who find it more difficult to travel into Hertford.

Ash still runs newspaper deliveries although fewer people now use the service. Even though many on the estate are older, there are still enough young families to provide a steady supply of newspaper delivery boys and girls.

Having Ash to cater for our needs is 'good news' for residents and for dogs in Bengoe as Ash is always ready to give them a treat, even if they are not allowed in!



## The Secret Garden Café

Jo has been running the establishment for 21 years now and, like Ash, has accommodated changes over that time. She started out selling greengrocery and flowers, then developed into a wedding florist.

Nowadays, Jo runs a successful café which is open from 8am to 2pm from Tuesday to Saturday. Breakfast, cakes, pastries and light meals are on offer with cosy inside seating and outside seating when weather permits.

Jo is keen to support the local community and hosts the Bereavement Café every month. She also gives room to local crafts people, jewellers, ceramicists, silversmiths, candle makers and artists, to display their goods. There are also occasional Art Classes in the afternoon. The local company Memory Scents has a range of lotions, candles and diffusers there. All the profits from this company go towards Alzheimer's charities.

The pop-up Cheese Shop, specialising in British artisan cheese, is also on the premises on Thursday afternoons from 2pm to 5pm.

## Walton Vets

The branch of Walton Veterinary practice has been in The Avenue for 12 years, taking over from the launderette. It mainly deals with vaccinations, check-ups and over-the-counter remedies for pets. Diagnostics are carried out on the premises by the vets who are there from Tuesday to Friday but any operations, blood tests and more complicated procedures are dealt with at the main Ware Office.

They saw an overwhelming demand for puppies during Covid, when people were at home and could take a dog for walks, but now they cope with more anxiety issues as dogs are left at home and their



owners are back at work. Many dog owners have bought a second dog as a companion.

The vets treat mainly small furry animals, such as dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs, but occasionally they have more exotic visitors like birds, tortoises, iguanas and sometimes even a snake. Fortunately, their main vet Helen (pictured) has training in dealing with these pets.

## Avenue Pharmacy



Pharmacist Saran Sachdeva (pictured) took over the premises 8 years ago and it has been a welcome and well-used facility during that time. It is always busy and local people appreciate having this service on their doorstep. Because of the good service and availability of local parking a number of clients come from outside Bengoe to pick up their pre-ordered prescriptions.

Other medical services have been developed since establishing the pharmacy. They can now offer travel vaccinations, as well as flu jabs and Covid jabs when in season. Pharmacy First is a new service for providing diagnostics and prescriptions for common viral problems, such as throat or ear infections, carrying out blood pressure checks and dispensing contraceptive pills. They are increasingly seeing more private prescriptions as more people go down this route for treatment.



## Headlines

Sue Sexton (pictured on the right with her team) set up the hairdressers in The Avenue over 40 years ago and has seen many changes over that time in colouring and styling. The salon still has some of the original clients and are now serving their children and grandchildren. Over the years the salon has expanded into another unit with more staff and the addition of Indulgence beauty salon.

The staff keep up with new trends and techniques and Sue is very keen on investing in young people. She takes on apprentices starting at age 16 who have a three-year training scheme qualifying at age 19. For the whole team, there is training on new L'Oréal products and techniques five times a year.

Sue is well-known for her charity work and is a trustee at QEII hospital. The salon has raised an amazing amount of around £750,000 for charity over the last 30 years, with the Isabel Hospice and Herts Breast Unit the main benefactors. The fundraising events have included bike rides, zip wires, treks to Machu Pichu and Nepal, skydiving and cake sales.

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# The Academy of St Martin the Fields in Beng eo



Robert Salter (violin), Juliet Welchman (cello), Fiona Bonds (Viola), Judith Herbert (cello), Catherine Morgan (violin) at Holy Trinity, Beng eo on the 28th March.

A large audience in Holy Trinity church last month was treated to wonderful performances by musicians from The Academy of St Martin in the Fields. This included a Haydn quartet, a modern piece by Caroline Shaw, a new arrangement of Amy Beach's *Dreaming* and a superb rendering of the Schubert Cello Quintet in C Major.

Fiona Bonds, Associate Principal Viola with The Academy of St Martin in the Fields, developed the concert and other outreach music programmes in Beng eo with colleagues from the orchestra. These are part of the Marriner Project (named after Neville Marriner, the founder of the ASMF). The project supports initiatives of orchestra members to put on concerts and carry out community ventures. Locally, there is a series of three concerts for Holy Trinity, Beng eo: an ensemble for last Remembrance Day, the above performance and a trio with flute, harp and viola to come on the 6th June. Further outreach takes place at Beane River View on the morning of the concerts where the group play pieces from the evening performance.

The concerts are an opportunity for these groups to do some really imaginative programming and we get to hear talented musicians which have been funded by the project. The church benefits from the proceeds of tickets sales but also carries out the publicity for the events. As a further development of the Project Fiona also presented the Schubert quintet at the Sacred Grounds Caf  in Soho with an extended talk on the piece and a Q and A session afterwards.

At Beane River View on the 28th March, Ralph, one of the residents, was there with his recorder and Fiona explained, "We were playing a concert to the residents and Ralph wanted to join in so we said, OK, that's fine. But the problem was that Ralph was sitting down at the other end of the room from us, so when he started up the other residents didn't find it as easy to hear what we were doing and they and Ralph started to get annoyed which was a shame. I said to him, come and sit up with us while we play. We were about to start and then he just launched into this really beautiful little folk melody on the recorder. He played so well, it was perfectly in tune, lovely sound. We just joined in and started improvising around him and did a little kind of drone base and just some accompaniment. It was quite a simple tune so it was quite easy for us to kind of make something up around it. He played it and everyone burst into applause, and it was really moving."

Fiona continued, "it has inspired us the next time we go in June do something a bit more interactive with the residents rather than just playing to them perhaps they can join in with songs. Because I'm playing with the flute and a harp, I am sure Ralph will enjoy joining the flautist. Our visits have been really rewarding as it is such a warm and considerate place with a nice atmosphere."

We are so fortunate in Beng eo to have visits from such dedicated and talented musicians who take time out of their busy lives to give us wonderful performances and support the community.

## Bengeo Community Garden

The daffodils are out and practically shouting Spring as you walk past or come to sit in the garden. What next? Well, thanks to East Herts District Council's Community Fund, work will start shortly on the beautiful, but battered, cast iron perimeter fence. We're not aiming for neat perfection, just gentle restoration to preserve it for years to come. Meanwhile Mudlarks will continue their regular maintenance and our thoughts will be turning to how best we can water the garden through the summer months. We're looking for water butts and watering cans so let us know if you have any you can donate.

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone involved in our fundraising quiz evening in March and a special thank you to our Treasurer Annette for organising the evening.

**Veronica Fraser**

## Annual Pet Service

**Sunday 6th July at St Leonard's Church at 4pm**

This is a delightful Family Service for all ages. All pets are welcome, of course, also teddy bears and other cuddly creatures. Please stay for refreshments and a chat after the Service.

This year we will be raising money for 'Alfs' a local Charity supporting the community and their pets and also the people and animals of Ukraine.

Any queries please contact Libby Shillito on **01992 583979**.



After raising a magnificent £2,400 at the White Lion, the charity Hearts for Herts is installing defibrillators in the White Lion and The Greyhound.

## Christmas Quiz 2024

The three winners were: Glenys and Bryan in Bengeo, Jo and John from Waterford, Martin from Ware. There were 39 correct answers entered in the draw. We raised £420 for church funds. Thank you to all who took part in the quiz.

### Libby and Peter

Here are the answers:

1. *Dover Castle*
2. *Aintree Racecourse*
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8. *Tower of London*
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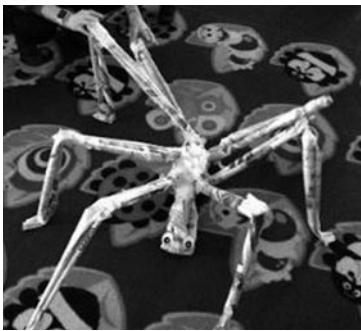





# Mill Mead Primary School



**Ducklings** enjoyed celebrating world book day and dressing up as our favourite characters and sharing lots of stories together. We have been reading the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk* and the children have been growing their own beans, observing changes in our bean diary, and we are observing the changes that happen over time in our bean diary.



**Birds** have been learning about Shanghai and we have been comparing it to Hertford. In Art we have been learning about 3D sculptures and we used these skills to make a huge spider! We have been very lucky to have a walk to our local church, to learn more about why Christians celebrate Easter, and we had a great workshop with Darcy from The Dogs Trust, who taught us how to be safe near dogs.



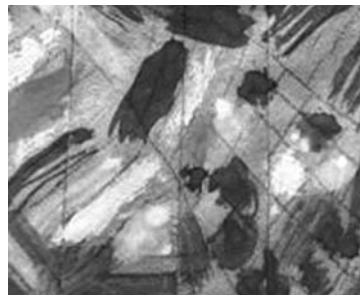
**Mice** have been learning about events such as Shrove Tuesday, St David's Day, St Patrick's Day and Easter. We have been exploring more of the world around us, and then journeying into outer space. We learned about our solar system, the planets and the astronaut Chris Hadfield.



**Hedgehogs** have been tackling the properties of 2D and 3D shapes in Maths, creating artistic and patterns. We have written some beautiful, thoughtful poems about migration. We enjoyed discovering micro-habitats and have found minibeasts in our school grounds, as well as building a wormery and carrying out observations on woodlice!



**Owls** have learned about how Vikings lived and what archaeologists actually do. In Science we have been learning about teeth and digestion, which included modelling the digestive system using a pair of tights, a Weetabix and some orange juice. In DT, we are designing and making cars, and in PE learning the skills for basketball.



**Squirrels** class have created their own papyrus paper in Art as part of the topic on Ancient Egypt.



**Badgers** took part in an Ancient Greek workshop with arts and crafts inspired by Greek history and exploring the world of Greek theatre acting out famous Greek myths with enthusiasm! In English and Geography, we have been learning about the Great Barrier Reef and how and why corals become bleached. In Maths, we have been exploring transformations, including translation and reflection.



**Foxes** have read *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell, an adventure-

filled novel that captivated our imaginations and *Survivors*, a gripping collection of real-life stories showcasing individuals who triumphed against the odds. Our focus has been reporting on the bravery of two incredible individuals. We have explored how light travels and have built periscopes to decipher secret messages. Our local studies have focused on why population figures are changing globally and we conducted fieldwork in Hertford, observing traffic and analysing how human activity shapes our surroundings.



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## A Word from The Rectory

# Jennifer's peace piece

From The Vicar, The Revd Robert Thompson



Bengeo's longest ever serving parish organist died on Ash Wednesday. There was always something rather special about Jennifer Newton, but it took me a while to notice. The clues were there from the start.

Very soon after I arrived as vicar here I noticed a rather unusual habit of Jennifer's. Come Sunday morning, her rather smart car would pull up over the road from the church, always in the same spot. The hand

brake would go on and the engine would stop. But Jennifer would remain sat in her car, quite still, sometimes for quite some time.

What was going on, I wondered? Was she summoning the muse to carry her through a Sunday morning leading God's praises? Was she summoning patience to endure the new vicar's dreadful choice of hymns? I couldn't be sure of anything until Jennifer eventually emerged from her driving seat and reappeared on the organ bench ready to play so wonderfully as she always did. And she did. Crisis averted.

And then came a Saturday afternoon and a wedding, a grand musical occasion when the clergy play second fiddle to the parish organist, I always think – so you'll understand my nerves when I turned up at church to find Jennifer once again sat in her car, apparently rooted to the spot.

By this time I had got to know this rather demure lady a little better, and some reasons for her sitting in her car could now be ruled out. She wouldn't be waiting for the racing results. She wouldn't be checking her pools coupon or catching the football commentary. Whatever it was that kept Jennifer in her seat I now had confidence that she'd emerge when good and ready, appear at the organ perfectly

on time and deliver yet another glorious performance.

So far, so mysterious, until one Sunday evening when all was revealed. Arriving at church for evensong I pulled up behind Jennifer's car, and there she was – engine off, perched behind the steering wheel, quite still. It was a wonder that I'd noticed as much, because I was in a bit of a reverie myself at the time, sailing to church, swept along by some beautiful music on the car radio.

I'm sure there's many a time when the power of music has transported you somewhere close to God before ever you've got through the front door of a church. And it seemed Jennifer thought so too. The music finished, I sighed and leant forward to switch off the radio and noticed the lady in the car in front doing the same thing too.

We both stepped out of our cars. We looked at one another. 'Have you just been listening to that wonderful music, Jennifer?' I asked. She smiled in assent. 'Stuff like that gets you to God, doesn't it? Maybe we should just go home now.'

To be able to attend to beauty – to make time in our lives to sit very still in awe and wonder – that's a gift. Overloaded and distracted generation that we are, rarely do we ever espouse the benefits of doing nothing but listening and quietly attending to the world around us, to something beautiful, something greater than ourselves.

Jennifer paid attention to life, and through patience and humility learnt that it is a vastly richer, deeper, more mysterious business than it ever occurs us to suspect on our human journey. She did not let it pass her by. She had wisdom enough to take notice, and talent enough to join in.

Despite her long service to Bengeo there's every chance you've never heard of Jennifer Newton. Though in complete command of the organ console of her local parish church for many thousands of services over the course of 56 years, Jennifer was herself almost notoriously quiet. That in itself makes for a lasting epitaph. It humbles me to think that here in our increasingly noisy and raucous culture

was a lady whose dedication to music and to public service stood as a gentle witness to the ultimate end of life.

All good musicians know that sense of completion that comes after the closing cadence when the music stops. All those notes that went before create the stillness after it.

Peace. That peace piece, Jennifer. It was the very best you played.

*With my prayers,*

**Robert Thompson**

## Daily Prayers

The Daily Prayers on page 24 have been a feature of this magazine for over 20 years, certainly before I started compiling them.

Looking back over the diaries I have kept since being called to take up and continue the Daily Prayers in 2005, we have prayed for our Parish, street by street, local business, schools, environmental concerns, and Christians in other parts of the world. This includes those called to practical service in the name of the Gospel message or those Christian communities which are marked out and persecuted by the state or others.

Since 2013, we have also included Prisons in the UK as this ties in with St Leonard, a patron Saint of prisoners. Jesus's Gospel message states that we should include in our prayers those whom we do not like and those who have done us or our communities harm. These are amongst the hardest prayers we are called to offer.

This daily list cannot respond to the national or international events of each day nor does it include named individuals, but even so our prayer is that it prompts prayerful thought. If you wish to investigate and take each Daily Prayer further then that can only be a good result.

**David Cramphorn**



Jennifer Newton at the Holy Trinity organ.

## With thanks from Jennifer's family

May we, as Jennifer's family, share our heartfelt thanks, not only for your warm welcome and all the thought that went into her funeral, but also for the way she was able to feel a valued member of your community for so many years.

We were really touched by all the care that had gone into the arrangements, for the lovely flowers, for the support we received and for the number of folk who gathered to remember her life and share memories afterwards. Knowing the love and affection in which she was held has been a great comfort. *Thank you.*

And thank you, too, for all that she gained from being a member of the church over the years. It really was her spiritual home and it was very obvious to my father when they met that they must settle near Bengoe so she could maintain that vital link. Thank you for all you did to embrace her in your community over all these years.

Finally, our grateful thanks to all who contributed donations to the Friends of Danesbury and QVM; Jennifer spent many weeks in the Danesbury Neurological Centre having physio and occupational therapy, receiving exceptional care and support, before she died. In total, £465 was raised in her memory.

*With very best wishes*

**Ian, Fiona, Meg and Alastair**

# Parish Calendar MAY 2025

Thursday 1st May	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 4th May <b>Third Sunday of Easter</b>	
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 6th May	
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity
Wednesday 7th May	
2pm	Bengeo Afternoon WI – new members always welcome
2.30–4pm	Bereavement Café at The Secret Garden Cafe, The Avenue
Thursday 8th May	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
2.30–4pm	Bereavement Cafe at The Oasis Cafe, Ware Road Methodist Church, Hertford
Sunday 11th May <b>Fourth Sunday of Easter</b>	
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 13th May	
8pm	Quiet Time, St Leonard’s Church
Wednesday 14th May	
10am	Craft Club, Church Hall, Duncombe Road – all welcome
Thursday 15th May	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
6.30–8pm	Bereavement Café at Secret Garden Café, Bengeo
Sunday 18th May <b>Fifth Sunday of Easter</b>	
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 20th May	
8pm	Quiet time, St Leonard’s Church
Thursday 22nd May	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 25th May <b>Sixth Sunday of Easter (Rogation Sunday)</b>	
9am	Holy Communion
10am	All Age Worship: ‘God’s Green Things Sunday’
Tuesday 27th May	
8pm	Quiet time, St Leonard’s Church
Thursday 29th May	
10am	Holy Communion for Ascension Day
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road

# Parish Calendar JUNE 2025

Sunday 1st June		Seventh Sunday of Easter
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
Tuesday 3rd June		
8pm	Quiet time, St Leonard's Church	
Wednesday 4th June		
2pm	Bengeo Afternoon WI – new members always welcome	
2.30–4pm	Bereavement Café at The Secret Garden Café, The Avenue	
Thursday 5th June		
10am	Holy Communion	
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
Friday 6th June		
7.30pm	Chamber Music concert at Holy Trinity Church with The Academy of St Martin in the Fields – Music for flute, harp, viola (book at <a href="http://asmf.org">asmf.org</a> )	
Sunday 8th June		Pentecost
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
Tuesday 10th June		
8pm	Quiet time, St Leonard's Church	
Wednesday 11th June		
10am	Craft Club, Church Hall, Duncombe Road, all welcome	
Thursday 12th June		
10am	Holy Communion	
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
2.30–4pm	Bereavement Café at The Oasis Café, Ware Road Methodist Church, Hertford	
Sunday 15th June		Trinity Sunday
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
Tuesday 17th June		
8pm	Quiet time, St Leonard's Church	
Thursday 19th June		
10am	Holy Communion	
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
6.30–8pm	Bereavement Café at Secret Garden Café, Bengeo	
Saturday 21st June		
10.30am–4.30pm	'Little Trains for a Little Church' Model Railway Exhibition at St Leonard's Church	
Sunday 22nd June		First Sunday after Trinity
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
10.30am–4.30pm	'Little Trains for a Little Church' Model Railway Exhibition at St Leonard's Church	
Tuesday 24th June		
8pm	Quiet time, St Leonard's Church	
Thursday 26th June		
10am	Holy Communion	
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
Sunday 29th June		Second Sunday after Trinity
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
2.30–4.30pm	St Leonard's Church: Tea and Tour	

# Parish Prayers

## Daily Prayers for May

1. HMP Swaleside, High Security Prison, Isle of Sheppey
2. Local Cricket Teams
3. Victory Europe Events this weekend
4. Friends of St Leonard's
5. Bengio Mews
6. The Royal Family
7. Christian Churches in Gaza and Lebanon
8. Victory Europe Memorial Events
9. HMP Swansea, Wales
10. Local pubs and clubs
11. Christian Aid week
12. Bengio Street
13. Christian Aid work with Women's Micro Enterprise Groups
14. Christian Churches in Burundi
15. HMP Swinfen Hall, West Midlands
16. Christian Aid work with Refugees
17. New Members of Hertfordshire County Council
18. Our Choir
19. Bengio Wick
20. The Prison Warders Association
21. Christian Churches in Myanmar
22. HMP Thameside, London
23. The Salvation Army Refuge Centre
24. Victim Support Counsellors
25. May Bank Holiday Events
26. Bourn Honour
27. Fire Service Chaplains
28. Christians in Bangladesh
29. Ascension Day
30. HMP Mount, Hertfordshire
31. Gloucester Cathedral

## Daily Prayers for June

1. All who teach
2. Boundary Drive
3. Herts Rape Crisis, Hatfield
4. Christian Churches in Mexico
5. HMP The Verne, Dorset
6. All who keep allotments
7. Our friends
8. Holy Spirit at Holy Trinity
9. Buckwells Field
10. Church Army Marylebone Project and Sanctuary for Homeless Women, London
11. Christians in North Korea
12. HMP Thorn Cross, Warrington
13. BREAK, the Road Safety Charity
14. Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust
15. Our Church on Trinity Sunday
16. Hyde Street
17. Mothers Union Support for Victims of Domestic Violence
18. Christians in Yemen
19. HMP Usk, South Wales
20. Guildford Cathedral
21. Small Trains in St Leonard's
22. Our Memorial Garden
23. The Pens
24. [Victimsupport.org.uk](http://Victimsupport.org.uk)
25. Christians in Nigeria
26. HMP Wakefield, High Security Prison
27. St Alban's Deanery Synod
28. Afternoon teas in St Leonard's Volunteers
29. Our Church Wardens
30. Chapel Court

### Register

Burial of Ashes 5th April

**Margaret Williams**

Funeral 7th April

**Jennifer Newton**

Funeral 9th April

**Laura Ross**



### Quiet Time

All are welcome to join Quiet Time which is on Tuesday evenings at 8pm. During the months of May and June Quiet Time will take place in St Leonard's Church.

# Church Contacts

**Team Vicar:** The Reverend Robert Thompson  
The Rectory, Byde Street, Bengoe, SG14 3BS  
T: 01992 413691 E: [info@parishofbengeio.com](mailto:info@parishofbengeio.com)

**Associate Priest:** Fr. David Pepper  
T: 07583 985266

**Reader:** Bob Kelly  
T: 01763 274653

**Churchwardens:**  
Diana Howarth T: 07711 571272  
Graham Squires T: 01992 553465

**Parochial Church Council**  
*Chairman:* Rev Robert Thompson  
*Honorary Secretary:* David Greely  
T: 01920 412485

**Director of Music and Organist:**  
Dr Andrew Sentance

**Assistant Organist:** William Sarjeant

**St Leonard's Church**  
Friends of St Leonard's  
*New Member Secretary:* Sue Patterson

**Addresses**  
Holy Trinity Church  
New Road, Hertford SG14 3JJ  
St Leonard's Church  
St Leonard's Road, Bengoe, SG14 3JW

## Local Contacts for Help and Advice

Below are links to local services.

**Medical and Health Advice**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Domestic Abuse

**Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline**  
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For more information about the support on offer for residents both locally and national, please visit [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/costofliving).

**Money Advice Unit**  
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**Out of Hours Helpline 0800 144 8848.** Monday to Wednesday, 4–8pm, Thursday and Friday 4–9pm, and Saturday 10am–4pm.

Local contact centres: **Hertford Sele Community Hub, 18 Fleming Crescent, Sele, Hertford, SG14 2DJ.**  
Open Wednesdays 11am–1pm. **Ware Contact Centre, Ware Priory, High Street Ware SG12 9AL.**  
Open Tuesdays 11am–1pm.

**National Debtline**  
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**NHS Mental Health Services in Herts**  
Call for free 0800 644 101 this number is open 24/7 or call 111 and choose option 2  
E: [hpft.spa@nhs.net](mailto:hpft.spa@nhs.net)

**Herts Mind Network**  
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