

# Honeybourne Village News



Info : Local : News

May 2026



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Welcome to May 2026

The daffodils are blooming and the trees are blossoming which can only mean one thing - spring is well under way! This time of year represents new beginnings and offers new starts in lots of ways. Maybe that project you've been saving until the weather's better? Will 2026 be the year you finally grow your own courgettes? Or maybe it's time to take out that kayak you bought last year that has been collecting dust. Whatever your spring goals are, we wish you all sunny weather for your bright new adventures.

**LOCAL - COMMUNITY:** Worcestershire CC's Library Service has launched a new online Reading Pledge Wall to encourage readers of all ages to engage with new interests and old favourites. Whether it's finally finishing the LOTR series, or simply reading at bed-time with your children, everyone is invited to set reading goals together. You can join via the website or in a local library.

**UK - WILDLIFE:** A year after being reintroduced, beavers have transformed a Dorset woodland into a thriving wetland ecosystem. A single pair have built a 35m long dam, and already the site has become an lush habitat for numerous rare species of amphibians, birds and bats. The National Trust plans to release more pairs after this promising initial success.

**INTERNATIONAL - SPORT:** A breakthrough was announced concerning the gender debate in sport: the International Olympic Committee has established new rules for classification in women's competition. A simple new test, designed to determine biological sex, involves only a cheek swab and will be used to test for the SRY gene, which is present only in biological males. This comes after years of concern around gender eligibility on the Olympic stage and increasing calls to ensure women's sport remains fair. If you would like to share your good news stories here, please get in touch. All the very best from the Honeybourne Village News Team.

**Contact details for the HBVN:**

Comments & contributions e.g. photo's around the village or area, jokes or puzzles , ideas for the Spotlight On... feature, articles, letters to the editor. [editor.hbvn@gmail.com](mailto:editor.hbvn@gmail.com)

**ALL ARTICLES OR ARTWORK MUST BE PROVIDED READY FOR INCLUSION AND PRINT USE**

**A5 WORD, JPEG, PNG OR PREFERABLY POST INFO DIRECTLY INTO EMAIL**

**Deadline date for inclusions in 2026 is the 17:00hrs on 17th of the month**

# ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**DATE** Tuesday 12 May 2026

**TIME** 6:30 pm

**VENUE** Honeybourne Village Hall

**Harvest Close, Honeybourne**

*All electors of the Parish are warmly invited to attend.*

*Local groups and organisations are welcome  
to give a brief report on their activities.*

## LADIES WALKING GROUP!

Walking Keeps You Fit. Join our walking group and make new friends. We do a two-mile walk on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. For more information, call Ann on **01386 830517**



*We look forward to seeing you.*

## Mobile Library Timetable

The **Mobile Library** on the 4th Friday in the month as follows:  
**12.05-12.20** Grove Avenue **12.25-12.40** Perrie Drive **13.15-13.30** Village Hall  
Enquiries: **01905 822722** or emailing [mobilelibraries@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:mobilelibraries@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### Wednesday over 60s Club

At our April meeting was on 1<sup>st</sup> April (no Joke), we had a lovely afternoon being entertained by the Badsey Shanty Group, who gave us renditions of various nautical folk songs, some were well known and some were less so, but still enjoyable. Thank you again to the Badsey Shanty Group for giving up their time to spend it with our Club.

On concluding business matters, we rounded the afternoon off with Tea, Coffee and Cake, and our usual monthly raffle.

Our next Trip is planned for 20<sup>th</sup> May, which will be our annual trip to the seaside of Weston Super Mare. The trip cost will be £15 and non-members are welcome. If you are interested in coming on the trip, then please call Pam on 07966 871862.

The Club meet on the first Wednesday of the month, our next meeting our will be on 6<sup>th</sup> May, at the Village Hall @ 2.30pm, where our Guests will be from The Freedom Day Centre from South Littleton. New members are always welcome, so why not pop along, meet and make new friends, as always, we would love to see you.

### Honeybees W.I. March Meeting

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Medieval Ladies due to give us a talk, were unable to attend at the last minute. We had guest members from Littleton W.I with us, so we gathered our thoughts and decided on an impromptu Quiz.

Chris volunteered to be Question Master, and dealt with any queries promptly. It turned out to be great fun and made us all think. After counting up, joint winners were announced, one from each W.I. A social time finished the evening with refreshments and raffle. Our next meeting is May18th when our speaker is Sue Ablett, talking to us on Travel. Anyone interested in joining us will be most welcome, for more information, you can check our Facebook page or Call 0138683051



## Parish Council News

The Council would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete our Neighbourhood Plan Review survey, whether in hardcopy or online. We were delighted with the response and our thanks also go to the One Stop Shop and the Thatched Tavern for kindly hosting our survey collection boxes. The results are now being carefully analysed by our planning consultant and will inform the next stage of the review process.

As we enter the new financial year, the Council has been pleased to support a number of the village's voluntary organisations through its grants programme, as well as making a financial contribution to South Worcestershire Citizens Advice, which provides valuable services to Honeybourne residents.

Spring has brought a splash of colour to Honeybourne Station, where the Friends of Honeybourne Station have installed two beautiful flower planters on the platform — a wonderfully welcoming touch and a real credit to the group.

With the planting season now under way, we are pleased to announce that a small number of allotment plots are available. We also warmly welcome the newly formed Honeybourne Allotment and Garden Association. If you are interested in a plot, please contact the Clerk at [clerk@honeybourne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@honeybourne-pc.gov.uk)

Finally, the Council has agreed to install house martin nesting boxes on its own buildings — watch this space!

*To view Parish Council agendas and minutes, please visit our website at [www.honeybourne-pc.gov.uk](http://www.honeybourne-pc.gov.uk)*

*Heath Jobs*

Chair of Honeybourne Parish Council

### Members of Honeybourne Parish Council

**Heath Jobs (Chair) 07375085116**

**Balbir Dubb (Vice-Chair) 07795670707**

Andrew Attridge 01386 830744	Amy Mathias 07956076271
Graham Clelland 01386 832500	Stephen Sidwell 07815311432
Colin Clear 07702105737	Sandra Walsh 07714237336
Judith Mellor 07770983522	-

Clerk contact details: Mobile: 07951 429652 [clerk@honeybourne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@honeybourne-pc.gov.uk)

Honeybourne Village News have received a request to publish promotional details of the planning development on the field opposite Owl Homes. We do not publish such items and if you want to find out about it, please contact Wychavon District Council Planning.

# HONEYBOURNE COMMUNITY *coffee morning*

HONEYBOURNE VILLAGE HALL | EVERY THURSDAY 9.30 - 12



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cake, and a good  
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to seeing you!

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## Swifts and Swallows

Encouraging swifts and swallows to return to the countryside is vital for the health and charm of our rural landscapes. Both species are iconic summer visitors, travelling thousands of miles from Africa to nest in the UK, yet their numbers have declined due to habitat loss, modern building designs, and a shortage of insect food.

One of the most effective ways to support them is by providing suitable nesting opportunities. Swifts prefer high, sheltered cavities under eaves, which are increasingly scarce on modern houses. Installing swift boxes or leaving access to roof spaces can make a real difference. Swallows, meanwhile, favour open barns, sheds, and outbuildings where they can build mud nests on beams and ledges. Avoiding the closure of these spaces during their breeding season helps sustain local populations.

Maintaining a healthy insect population is equally important. Reducing pesticide use, encouraging wildflower meadows, and leaving patches of long grass provides the flying insects these birds rely on to feed their young. Ponds, wetland areas, and hedgerows also create thriving insect habitats.

Community engagement can play a role too. Local projects to monitor returning swifts and swallows, alongside awareness campaigns about nest protection, foster a sense of stewardship. By making our countryside more welcoming, we can ensure that the skies of spring and summer remain alive with their acrobatic flight and joyful calls.

Swallows typically return to the UK from late March to April while Swifts arrive later, generally from late April to early May. Swallows usually depart by October, but Swifts have a shorter stay leaving as early as July or August.

Protecting these birds not only preserves a cherished sign of the season but also strengthens the biodiversity of the British countryside. More information available on the RSPB website.

If you have Swifts or Swallows nesting on your property, please let us know with a photo to the Honeybourne Village News Team.



Artwork by  
Oscar Mellor. Aged 6



Honey Tots  
Baby & Toddler  
Group

# Honey Tots Baby & Toddler Group



**THURSDAYS, 9.30-11.30AM  
HONEYBOURNE VILLAGE HALL**

**Stay, play & weigh!**

**Bring your little one and their red  
book and get baby weighed.**

**Thursday 14th May  
Thursday 11th June**





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## May Gardening Tips

May is one of the most rewarding months in the garden. With longer days and warmer temperatures, plants begin to flourish, and gardeners can finally get stuck into sowing, planting, and tidying after the slower spring months.

### Planting Out & Sowing

Once the risk of late frost has passed, it's safe to plant out tender vegetables such as tomatoes, courgettes, and runner beans. Harden off young plants first by gradually introducing them to outdoor conditions over a week or so. You can also sow directly outdoors—carrots, beetroot, lettuce, and peas will all do well now.

### Flower Power

Summer bedding plants like petunias, marigolds, and geraniums can be planted into borders, containers, and hanging baskets. For continuous blooms, remember to deadhead spring flowers such as pansies and primroses. It's also a great time to sow hardy annuals like cornflowers and calendula for a colourful display later in the season.



### Lawn Care

Lawns grow vigorously in May. Mow regularly, but avoid cutting too short during dry spells. If you haven't already, apply a spring lawn feed and tackle weeds before they spread.

### Weeding & Mulching

Weeds thrive at this time of year, so stay on top of them while they're still small. Applying a layer of mulch around plants helps suppress weeds, retain moisture, and improve soil health.

### Greenhouse Jobs

Ventilation is key as temperatures rise—open doors and vents on warm days to prevent overheating. Keep an eye out for pests like aphids and whitefly, and water regularly as plants will dry out more quickly.

### Wildlife-Friendly Gardening

Encourage pollinators by planting nectar-rich flowers and avoiding pesticides where possible. Consider leaving a small patch of your garden to grow a little wild—it can provide valuable habitat for insects and birds.

### Final Tip

Keep an eye on the weather forecast. A late cold snap can still catch gardeners out, so have fleece or cloches ready just in case.

Happy gardening!

# Make every day **WILD**

## Season Passes for 2026 are now on sale



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## Do you want to try Pilates?

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Group Pilates classes are held at Honeybourne Village Hall on Mondays at 9am, Tuesdays at 6pm, Wednesdays at 8.45am & Thursdays 6.30pm.

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MAY  
2026



## Deb's Open Mic Night

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May

*From poetry to the spoken word  
Singing to dancing*

*Have you got a talent you would like to show the world? Come and show us!*



## Fish & Chip Tuesdays

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## Quiz Night

Cancelled

## Live Music

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May  
7:30pm



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YEARS

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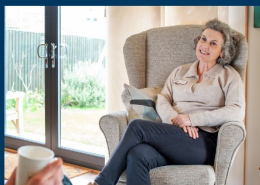
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**Karl Thorpe** BA(Hons), DipPFS  
Independent Financial Adviser

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FUTURE EVENTS

**\*\*Movie Night – Hamnet**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> May @ 7:30pm \*\***

**\*\*Country Music night – save the date 4<sup>th</sup> July – more details to follow\*\***

**\*\*Gin Tasting Event – Date to be confirmed ☺\*\***

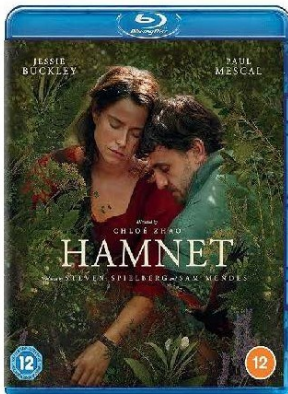
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Pilates with Nicky 9am – 10 am ~ Fitness with Jae 10:30am – 11:30am	Yoga with Jae 10am – 11am	Pilates with Nicky 8:45am – 9:45am ~ Art Group 10am – 12:30pm	Coffee morning 9:30am-12:00pm ~ Embroidery Club 9:30 – 13:30 7 <sup>th</sup> May ~ Toddler Group 9:30am – 11:30am	Gentle Yoga 9:45am – 10:45	Zumba with Lesley 9.30am-10.30am	
		Wed Club 2:00pm – 4:00pm 6 <sup>th</sup> May	Senior Stretch Class 1pm- 3pm			
Kids Theatre Group 3:45pm – 5:45pm				Healthy Worcestershire 2:00pm – 4:00pm		
WI – 18 <sup>th</sup> May 7:00pm - 10:00pm	Pilates with Nicky 6:00pm- 7:00pm	Men's Pilates with Nicky 7.00pm - 8.00pm	Pilates with Nicky 6:30pm – 7:30pm ~ Life Drawing 21 <sup>st</sup> May 7:45pm – 10:00pm	Short Mat Bowls Group 7.30pm-9.30pm		

All classes require booking to attend.



# Honeybourne Village Hall

## May Film Night



**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May**

**Doors open 7pm**

**Tickets £5.00 pp**

**Refreshments and Raffle on the night**

**Tickets available on the night or online at**

[www.honeybournevillagehall.org](http://www.honeybournevillagehall.org)

Based on the New York Times best-selling novel, Academy Award®-winning director Chloé Zhao (Nomadland) directs a powerful story of love and loss. William Shakespeare (Paul Mescal) falls for the free-spirited Agnes (Jessie Buckley). Their whirlwind romance leads to marriage and three children, but as Will's theatrical ambitions draw him to London, Agnes remains behind to manage the household. When tragedy strikes, their bond is deeply tested—but through grief and resilience, their journey inspires the creation of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, Hamlet.

12A

## Help u3a celebrate their 25th anniversary in Evesham

The members of the u3a in Evesham and District are celebrating their 25th Anniversary in 2026. From small beginnings in November 2001, they have grown to over 1,200 members and now offer over 90 different interest groups, everything from Archaeology to Italian to Board Games, as well as numerous walking and physical activity groups. The u3a is open to all who are no longer in full-time employment. Look us up on Facebook or find details of groups and activities on our website Evesham. Why not come along to our Open Meetings that take place on the first Wednesday of each month at 2 pm in the Methodist Centre on Bridge Street, with an outside speaker followed by tea and biscuits? ***Did you know that there are u3a branches across the Cotswolds and Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, and if you are a member of your local branch, you are welcome to join u3a groups in Evesham.***

For the Silver Anniversary year, we are contacting founder members who may still be in the area. Were you or someone you know a member of Evesham u3a in the early years? If you have any information regarding founder members, we would like to hear from you. Please contact Lorna Slaughter via the u3a Evesham website <https://evesham.u3asite.uk/25-years/>

**LEARNING TOGETHER**

Help us celebrate the founding of Evesham u3a in 2001

**u3a** Evesham & District  
25th Anniversary  
[evesham.u3asite.uk/25-years/](https://evesham.u3asite.uk/25-years/)

**25TH ANNIVERSARY**

Were you or someone you know a member of Evesham & District u3a in the early years?

## A VISION OF LOVELINESS IN LYCRA by Tim's Mum

My ten year old son Tim was an excellent athlete with the build of a distance runner- tall and pretty skinny. He was reasonably good looking with a lovely personality and more energy than the Duracell bunny. At that time he wasn't interested in girls and spent most of his spare time training. But Tim had charm, charisma, call it what you like but of which he was totally unaware.

So I was a bit surprised when I answered the door one day to two attractive young ladies who I recognised as being from the year above Tim and who excitedly asked if he was home. Yes, he was in his bedroom so I called upstairs to say that there was someone at the door for him. We lived in an old cottage with rather steep stairs which, when coming down them, obscured your view of the front door until you were at least half way down.

And I knew what Tim was wearing.

As he started down the stairs the girls' first view was of a pair of enormous Dennis the Menace slippers supporting two thin white legs encased in skin-tight lycra cycling shorts! Tim didn't care what he looked like but, judging by the looks on their faces, I think the girls did. The days of Tim wearing lycra shorts has long passed but he still loves running.

## What 'pay' did the vicars of Honeybourne get just before the Dissolution of the Monasteries?

We know this as the Worcestershire Historical Society recently published the priors' registers of Evesham Abbey for the early sixteenth century, up to its dissolution in 1540. The documents reveal village life and its farming practices.

Evesham Abbey owned the estate of Church Honeybourne. Amongst the rewards its vicar received were the 'small tithes' of the parishioners, which were payable on livestock, wool, and non-cereal crops: the vicar was entitled to a tenth of each of these. He also received tithes of flax and hemp, indicating both of these were being grown in Honeybourne at the time. (The 'great tithes' of corn and hay went to the Abbey.) He had a house of two bays, which he was to share with the vicar of Cow Honeybourne; and they were responsible for the upkeep of the parts they used. The tithes might well have been paid in kind, but he also had real money in four marks a year, paid quarterly by the Abbey (a mark was worth thirteen shillings and four old pence: 67p in today's money; four marks would be £2 67p), and possibly also received money when he was paid altar dues. In addition he received three yards of cloth in the style of the Abbot's chaplains whenever the Abbot was providing clothing for his servants. He was also entitled to a cartload of beans and peas from the Abbey's manor of Middle Littleton: the Abbey's tithe barn at Middle Littleton still stands today and is well worth a visit.

Although Cow Honeybourne was owned by Winchcombe Abbey, under a twelfth century agreement Evesham Abbey was responsible for providing the priest at Cow Honeybourne. He (and all priests were male then) did not receive any tithes, but he did have a house, and received an annual stipend of a hundred shillings paid quarterly (£5 p.a. in today's money). In this case, we are told what was expected of him in return: he was to celebrate the divine service on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, and also on any other feast days, and provide other 'customary functions' such as confession. If he was ill or infirm, then he could provide someone else to perform the duties.

*Lesley O'Connell Edwards.*



## Annual Plant Sale—St Egwin's Church

We look forward to seeing you at this year's popular Village Plant Sale!

We would be very grateful if you could kindly plant a few extra seeds now, and bring the resulting plants along for us to sell on the day. All proceeds go towards the Friends Charity for upkeep of the church building.

Thank you. Date: Sat 6<sup>th</sup> June Time : 10am -12 noon

### Ribbons for Remembrance


This year we are planning to do Ribbons for Remembrance at the church.

Please find/save any ribbon you may have and watch this space for further information

Thank you.



## Church Services - May 2026

	Church Services - May 2026		
	Pebworth	Dorsington	Honeybourne
 VALE & COTSWOLD EDGE			<b>Willersey</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> May Easter 5</b>		9.00 am Holy Communion (Traditional language)	10.00 am Morning Prayer (Modern language)
<b>10<sup>th</sup> May Easter 6</b>	11.00 am Holy Communion (Modern language)		9.00 am Holy Communion (Traditional language) 4.00 pm Prayer & Praise
<b>Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May Ascension Day</b>		11.00 am Family Morning Praise & Baptism	
		7.00 pm Benefice Service for Ascension Day at Willersey	
<b>17<sup>th</sup> May Easter 7/ Sunday after Ascension Day</b>			11.00 am Holy Communion (Modern language)
<b>24<sup>th</sup> May Pentecost/ Whit Sunday</b>			11.00 am All Age Service
<b>31<sup>st</sup> May Trinity Sunday</b>		11.00 am Benefice Service of Holy Communion (Modern language) for Pentecost at Willersey	
		11.00 am Benefice Service of Holy Communion (Modern language) for Trinity Sunday at Dorsington	

### Sidesmen, readers and intercessors at Honeybourne:

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> May</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> June</b>
Anne Jones	Sylvia Matthews	Anne Magee	Sylvia Matthews
Teresa Banks	Lesley O'Connell Edwards	Lawrence Schroeder	Elizabeth Rose
Minister	Minister	Minister	Minister

## Team Rector's Letter May 2026 – 'Physiotherapy / Little and Often'

I have right-sided trochanteric bursitis which is likely due to a tight Iliotibial band ... Years of walking mean that the balance of my muscles is out of kilter. I am very good going straight but do not have corresponding strength or flexibility with lateral movements. Fortunately, through the skill and expertise of a physiotherapist I have some exercises which will mean, as long as I am diligent and careful, my discomfort will disappear in a few weeks.

This is good news as I have a sabbatical in the summer, and I am hoping to walk from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean across the Pyrenees, walk a bit more of the South West coast path and climb a few more Scottish hills ...

Physiotherapy has ancient roots and can be traced back to the Hippocrates, a Greek physician, sometimes called the 'father of medicine.' The modern discipline emerged in 19<sup>th</sup> century Sweden, but it was the two World Wars that saw physiotherapy expand significantly as therapists helped rehabilitate injured soldiers. Several times I have had cause to consult a physio – all related to sport or walking. When I have followed the prescribed exercises the ailments have disappeared.

All of this has made me think about the church's teaching which generally isn't prescriptive. Do this and you will become more patient or less selfish. Do that and you will be more joyful or less anxious. One of the satisfactions of the Lent course on prayer was by sharing different ways and techniques of praying, practicing them and then reflecting our experiences together we were able to develop our prayer lives.

The Marriage Course we have just started offers a series of exercises and reflections that enhances relationships. The exercises are practical, tried and tested, cheap and achievable – it sounds as if I'm on commission – I'm not.

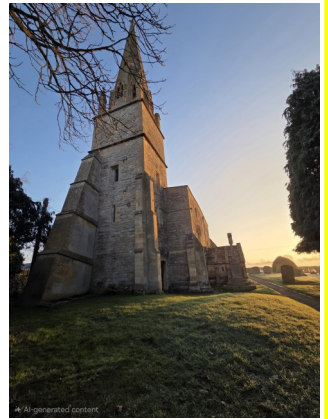
There is wisdom and insight on how we can develop as disciples and deepen our faith but like a course of physiotherapy we must commit ourselves and our time. I have been learning to identify bird species over several years. It's something I do regularly, a little and often, it's not something that develops when I neglect it. I am faithfully plodding along with the language app Duolingo – I am by no means fluent, but I am better than I was last month and much better than I was last year. This is true in all aspects of our lives our intellects, our fitness and our spirituality.

The best way to get ready for walking up hills on my sabbatical is to walk up hills. In the next few months, I need to make sure I create time to walk up hills. The same is true for my prayer life – if I want to have a more fruitful prayer life, I need to practice prayer.

Is there an aspect of your life you would like to enhance – is there an aspect of your spiritual life you would like to develop? Practice, little and often, be realistic – and with your faith if you're not sure where to start ask me or someone else who leads worship in our churches - there are a plethora of resources to help us grow.

This month may you enjoy practicing

May you grow and become more fully alive



Every blessing, Revd Craig Bishop

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## W is for window

There are fifteen window openings in the main part of Honeybourne church, plus seven small glazed windows in the tower as well. These all date to different periods. The earliest openings are the ones in the chancel, which date to the church's foundation in 1295. Those on the north and south walls are relatively narrow; the East window is a stepped group of three, making it much wider. The two on the south wall were refurbished in the mid-twentieth century with nineteenth century stained glass depicting Hope and Faith.

Some of the windows in the nave are much larger, and date to a later period. The original windows on the south wall would have been demolished when the (now gone) south aisle was built, and the ones that are there now have been dated to the nineteenth century. The perpendicular window on the south wall to the west of the porch dates to the fourteenth century, and was restored in 1953 to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II: the inscription is still visible. The small clerestory windows high on the south wall have been dated to the later seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

But how do you actually count the windows in the church? A recent visit from Honeybourne School showed this isn't as simple as it seems. There are lots of little windows with a stone surround within a bigger window opening: so does one count these individually? For instance, does each clerestory window count as one window, or as three? And is there one East window or three? In total, there seem to be fifty-three smaller windows, each in its own frame, in the main church.

*By Lesley O'Connell Edwards*



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Tue 12 May, 8pm - Fleecey Folk: The Ocelots, £16

Sun 17 May, 10am to 3pm - Makers Market

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Fri 22 May, 7.30pm - Belle d'Vain & Friends Dance Out

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## The Healing Powers of Nature

There is nothing more cathartic for me than to go on long, rambling country walks with my nearly three-year-old dog Malaika.

We have discovered many wonderful routes in and around Honeybourne. No people, roads or traffic. Navigating over styles and looking out for the many marked PROWs.

Just the wonderful sounds of birdsong, insects, babbling brooks and the rustling of leaves. Now that Spring is here, we have the added bonus of seeing and hearing frolicking lambs. Of course, I always ensure that Malaika is on lead when near any farm animals.

I would encourage everyone to try to get out more, and to experience the sheer beauty of being surrounded by mother nature. Take the kids, have a picnic and collect some interesting leaves, moss and feathers for a project at home.

No matter your mood or the weather, it truly is so beneficial for all of us, both mentally and physically.

In an often uncertain and unsettled world, keeping 'the monkey chatter' of our minds clear, is powerful and calming. Take a phone for safety, but don't use it other than to capture beautiful scenery.

Carpe diem.

Love and light to you all.

Nikki



## Beetlemania by Honey Wildbourne

I like facts and data, especially the astonishing and surprising variety. Did you know that, worldwide, there are approximately 400,000 described species of beetles that together account for about 25% of all known animal life-forms. That's a lot of beetles. So, finding seven ladybirds in my house the other day doesn't seem as noteworthy as I had at first assumed. Prompted by a rise in temperature, dormant ladybirds reemerge in spring – I'm guessing, in this case, from the vents in the top of my windows - to seek food, aphids being the main thing on their menu. I am glad to say that there are no aphids in my house, and so the Gu pot and postcard technique was applied in order to capture and then release them into the garden.

The fact that six of them were harlequin ladybirds – a non-native variety that arrived in the UK a little over 20 years ago – along with a single *Adalia bipunctata* (or native two-spot ladybird), shows just how successful these invaders have been. Deliberately introduced into Europe and the USA as a biological control of aphids and mealybugs in orchards and greenhouses, the harlequins have spread rapidly, often outcompeting the native varieties. Along with the many other introduced species – hares by the Romans, rabbits by the Normans and grey squirrels by wealthy Victorian landowners – it looks as though the harlequin is here to stay.



In other beetle news: unexpected whirligig beetle in greenhouse trough! To keep my greenhouse plants safe from low night temperatures, I have a 40 litre trough set up in there to absorb daytime warmth, in theory, to be released during the night, to lessen the chill. It probably doesn't make that much difference, but I enjoy releasing the inner nerd every now and again. What I didn't expect was to find a whirligig beetle pootling about the water's surface less than 24 hours after I had set my "experiment" up.



These busy little beetles fly, between dusk and dawn, at this time of year to find new habitats in which to breed. Attracted by the shiny surface, they home in on bodies of water. I can only guess that this individual came in through the open vents after seeing the reflection on the water of the open trough. The idea that a suitable mate will also find it's way to this "mini pond" in the greenhouse seems very unlikely, so, Gu pot in hand, I scooped it out, placed the pot, water and beetle outside. I'm glad to report, the next morning the whirligig had disappeared, off to more salubrious accommodations I expect!



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