

The Run Up To Easter

We are about to enter the period in the Church's calendar known as 'Lent.'



Lent is the six week period leading up to Easter.

It's one of the most important times of year for many Christians around the world, particularly those within the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox traditions, held at a similar level of importance to Advent, the build up to Christmas.

While Advent is a celebration and a time of great anticipation, Lent is more frequently seen as a time of solemn observance and preparation for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. From its start on Ash Wednesday until its conclusion on Easter Sunday, Lent has been a traditional time for fasting or giving something up or abstinence.

Just as we carefully prepare for events in our personal lives, like a wedding, or birthday, Lent invites us to make our minds and hearts ready for remembering Jesus' life, death and body resurrection.

Because Lent follows the liturgical calendar, the exact date that Lent falls each year changes.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is always held 46 days (40 fasting days and 6 Sundays) before Easter Sunday.

Ash Wednesday is the day after Shrove Tuesday, which is more commonly known as Pancake Day. Elsewhere in the world Shrove Tuesday is known as Mardi Gras (meaning 'Fat Tuesday' in French).

These days, Christians around the world observe Lent in many ways.

Many from traditional denominations will still observe the fast strictly, beginning with the wearing of ashes on Ash Wednesday and abstinence of meat, fish, eggs and fats until Easter Sunday.

Others will choose to give up just one item for Lent, more commonly a 'luxury' such as chocolate, meat or alcohol. It is also becoming increasingly common for people to give up other things in order to refocus their faith during this time, such as watching TV, going to the gym, even social media.

Many Christians also use Lent to study their Bibles and pray more intensively, making use of the many devotional books and courses now available.

On Palm Sunday Christians everywhere remember Jesus' triumphant arrival in Jerusalem. Palm crosses will often be distributed on this day, to be kept until the following year's Ash Wednesday as a reminder of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

As Holy Week draws to a close and Easter approaches, we have Maundy Thursday, commemorating the Last Supper Jesus shared with his disciples in which he predicts his betrayal by the following denial by Peter; and Good Friday, the day on which Christians around the world remember Jesus' crucifixion and burial.



With Good Friday over, Christians look forward to Easter Sunday, the day on which Jesus rose from his tomb.

As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" (Mark 16:5-7)

Because of the on-going pandemic of Covid-19, we are still having to do things very differently from what we have been used to in the past. We worship each Sunday at 10am and 6pm on Zoom, we hold Bible Study each Wednesday throughout Lent, again on Zoom at 7pm, although on Ash Wednesday we will have a special Zoom Service, also at 7pm. At the time of writing, nobody knows for sure if we will be able to physically celebrate Easter in our Churches. Please check our Website at A Church Near You to find out information nearer the time.

One thing we can be sure of though is that of the true message of Easter, that Jesus conquered death and was risen, giving a pathway for each of us into God's eternal kingdom of Heaven.

No matter whether we are worshipping on Zoom, or physically in Church, we can still celebrate the real fact that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever!

With love and blessing to you all.

Geoff Pinnington,
Lay Minister, St Michael & All Angels Church, Ravenstone

Cllr Sheila Lunn

I became Chair of Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council in 2018 and have been a council member since 2010. I have lived in the village for 36 years, I have three children and nine grandchildren and retired from my job as an educational rep. 15 years ago. I enjoy walking, singing in two choirs and playing the ukulele. Much of the villages upkeep and appearance is the responsibility of the Parish Council and my role is to work with the council clerk, fellow members, villagers and service providers to ensure that this happens. There have been many changes in the village over the past few years with probably more to come, so it's up to us all to ensure Ravenstone becomes a better place to live.

Cllr David Lunn

I have been a parish councillor since 2019 and although not originally from Ravenstone after spending half of my life in the village feel a fully fledged Ravenstonian. My main interests in my retirement are following football and rugby, keeping up with national and world news and parish council business with a special interest in green issues, biodiversity and our natural environment. I've always tried to listen and understand all points of view in most things which I think is very important when dealing with matters affecting a large group of people. I am a wheelchair user and because of this I feel that I often have a contrasting view of things which is important when acting in a parish councillors role.

Elliott Allman

'Parish and District councillor for Ravenstone and Snibston North. Living locally on The Limes. Married to Rebecca and father to Robyn.

Running a long established Surveying company in Ashby de la Zouch.

My favourite parts of the village include the Pavillion and the pub. Both areas that allow the public to support one another. I have specific interests in planning, local facilities and helping to enrich the community.

Angela Bexton

Hi, I am a newly appointed Parish Councillor, but not new to the village. I have lived in Ravenstone all my life, and have seen the village evolve, grow and change over the years. I am proud to say I live in this village. I really look forward to helping and listening to you the villagers to see how we can make sure we have a great community to live in. My dad, Aubrey Brown was also a Parish Councillor for many years before his death at a young age, and he had also lived in the village all of his life too. So I feel that I am carrying on tradition of living in the village and serving as a Parish Councillor.

As a keen sports person, my main sport is tennis and for many years we had a fantastic Sports set up at the Recreation Ground, with Cricket, Football and a Tennis Club. What a lovely asset to the Recreation Ground is the new play area.

I have served in the Ravenstone Sports Management Committee, and have been involved with the Ravenstone Events Group. I know that the St George's Day event on the green has been well supported in the past. Let's hope when this pandemic is over that we can look forward to events taking place on the green in the future.

My main interests are playing tennis, walking and I enjoy going on holiday too (hopefully again soon).

Cllr Tina Meredith

Hi there, I am Tina and live on the St Michaels Gate (Davidsons) development in Ravenstone with my husband and two children. We have lived here for 3 and a half years now - time does fly.

We absolutely love this village, so if there is ever anything you would like taking to the parish council or would like clarification on; please feel free to give me a shout and I will aim to do my best.

You will often find me running after our two little ones, on their little scooters around the village, we always welcome a wave!

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Quarterly Newsletter



Chairs Update

A belated happy and prosperous New Year to all Ravenstone residents. There is nothing I can say about coronavirus that has not already been said. Lets just hope that things improve in the near future. I do stress that if anyone in the village needs any help at all please contact me.

On a more positive note the playgrounds are now finished, we had a great article in the Coalville Times and have had a good response from villagers. The new benches are on the Green, and, some good news, we have been given a grant from NWLDC

and are having picnic benches on the Green and on the recreation ground.

The lights looked super on the Christmas Trees at the Institute and a few of us went round the village carol singing which was really magical.

The council continues to meet once a month via zoom and business is conducted as usual. We will carry on working hard for the parish and if anyone wishes to join a meeting please contact me for details.

Sheila Lunn

Chair, Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council

In this Issue

Ravenstone Castle

Rewilding

Easter

Ravenstone Village Hall

Benches



New playgrounds opened in Ravenstone

The new playgrounds on the recreation ground were finally handed over to the Parish Council by the contractors in November. The work, which was started in June but badly delayed by Covid and the weather, has at last been completed replacing the old, worn out rides providing a great place for children to exercise, let off steam and play with their friends. The planning and outlay has been a substantial undertaking in both time and cost and those involved are rightly proud of the outcome.

The contractors worked very hard over the build time to deliver this modern, state of the art playground resource to overcome the difficulties. This high cost project is a sound investment for the future in providing a quality facility to the village

It was hoped to be able to have a grand opening of the two playgrounds but as this was not possible a simple handover with a few people present was arranged. Those directly involved with the refurbishment thank the people of Ravenstone for their patience. From the reaction of the many children who have used the finished product it has been well worth the wait.

Bun Loaf Recipe

Now that we have fully recovered for the Christmas over indulgences a keen village baker suggested spoiling ourselves with this traditional, simple and delicious bun loaf.

Ingredients

2 cups of self raising flour
1 ½ cups of milk
1 cup of mixed fruit
1 tspn baking powder
1 tblspn golden syrup
½ cup of sugar

Method

Boil the milk, fruit, sugar and golden syrup for ½ minute.
Leave to cool.
Add the flour and baking powder.
Mix well.
Using a lined and greased loaf tin cook for 1 hour at 130° fan.
Serve spread with butter

Ravenstone Castle

A 'castle' in Ravenstone was documented in 1149 – 53 when a treaty between the Earls of Chester and Leicester agreed to destroy it. No positive evidence of where the site of the castle was or of its construction but field investigations in the 1970's found fragmentary evidence of fish-ponds on the north side of the village at or near the the site of Ravenstone Hall. The fact that no evidence remains would indicate that it was of wooden construction a rather stylised version shown, although it was likely to have been a simple wooden building on top of a mound and surrounded by a moat or more likely a dry ditch, but why was it destroyed?



The Earl of Chester held a position of power with land all over England, controlled salt production in the Cheshire basin and the salt trade routes all the way through the Trent Valley then onto the Mease Valley into West Leicestershire. The eastern part of Leicestershire would have been supplied from the east coast so the spheres of control between the Earls of Chester and Leicester would have crossed, so perhaps due to the treaty Leicester agreed to destroy the castle at Ravenstone as it threatened Chester's salt trade coming into the west of Leicestershire.

Maybe one day more evidence could be found but for now we can only imagine exactly where it was, what it looked like and why it was destroyed. But perhaps it's enough to know that almost a millennia ago there was a castle in Ravenstone.

Next Parish Meetings: 25th March, 29th April and 27th May 2021

Ravenstone Village Hall Centenary

The Village Institute in Ravenstone, as it was called, was built at the end of the First World War and will be celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The land on which the building stands was purchased from the Creswell family for the sum of £6 and 7 shillings with support from the YMCA, the Rector, Miss C Creswell and others. The new building and a skittle alley were used for companionship, education and training especially for men returning from war as there was severe unemployment in the 1920's. A second transaction took place on 9th June 1949 between the YMCA and Mr Frederick Hewes of Ravenstone. Mr Hewes was representing a newly formed group known as the Trustees of Ravenstone Village Institute. The Hall is still run by the Trustees and has a new



Scheme of Practice agreed with the Charity Commission dated 9th February 1970. It is the Trustees responsibility to maintain the building in a suitable condition for use by the community and since that time it has remained at the heart of village life currently used for many diverse activities. More recently the Hall has been comprehensively refurbished including new toilets, replacement windows, work on the roof and improvements to the thermal efficiency. There is a new kitchen

and heating system, redecoration and the floor has been restored. Last year work to the outside of the building was started with new soffits and gutters and a new porch and paved area. In due course new doors will be added along with rendering and painting the front and sides of the building the final job being new signage and outside lighting.

The Village Hall is a registered charity and receives no external funding except applied for grants, which is getting more difficult each year. There is a web site www.ravenstonevillageinstitute.org so log on and take a look. Smile Amazon will give 0.5% of every pound you spend with them to a charity of your choice. Will you support the Institute by registering with Smile Amazon and nominating the Institute as your preferred charity? The registered charity number is 217951.

Robin (Erithacus rubecula)



Few wild creatures are more loved by us than the robin.

And there is good reason for us to think of our bird as special; it is actually a subspecies. The European counterpart is a shy woodland dwelling introvert, while our robin is the classic bold suburbanite, which will feed on the bird table, sing from the handle of a garden fork and nest in a potting shed plant pot.

It may seem obvious but the red on robin is the most magical colour in nature and with a heart rate of 1000 beats a minute, there is genuine fire in that small puff of bright feathers. Robins are one of the few birds that routinely sing in the winter the British subspecies is even called melophilus, meaning 'song loving'.

The robin is one of the few birds in the English language with a human name. Robin is really a contraction and diminutive of Robert, it's original name being ruddock or redbreast now personalised due to it's friendly nature. Another endearing feature of the robin is its choice of nest sites building in peg bags, abandoned kettles, rolls of wire and in the pocket of a gardener's jacket.

There are many historical taboos to harming robins, such as the belief that killing one would cause your cows to produce bloody milk and taking eggs from a nest would develop bent fingers. It was believed the the red breast was the result of the blood whilst it pulled the thorns out of the crown of thorns during Christ's crucifixion. The association with Christmas was developed in the 19th century when the staff of the newly created postal service were dressed in red uniforms delivering Christmas cards and nicknamed Robins. It's known that Robin sing all night especially with increasing street lighting sometimes the song being mistaken for that of

the nightingale. Some question whether the popular 1940 song 'A Nightingale sang in Berkeley Square' hinges on a similarly faulty identification.

So we have the nursery rhyme which reminds us of how loved the robin is:

**Who killed Cock Robin?
I, said the Sparrow,
with my bow and arrow,
I killed Cock Robin.
Who saw him die?
I, said the Fly,
with my little eye,
I saw him die.
Who'll dig his grave?
I, said the Owl,
with my little trowel,
I'll dig his grave.**

**Who'll toll the bell?
I, said the Bull,
because I can pull,
I'll toll the bell.**

**All the birds of the air
fell a-sighing and a-sobbing,
when they heard the bell toll
for poor Cock Robin.**

Benches

Three new recycled plastic benches have now been fixed into place on the Village Green, two of which were generously donated by their families as a commemoration to Nic Sedden and Val and Peter Pulford all long-time servants to the village.

Nic proudly served as chair of the Parish Council for a number of years and was a member of the Village Institute committee. He founded Ravenstone Events Group chairing its committee during it's early years. He loved the Village being dedicated to its conservation, a true character and sadly missed.



Val and Peter Pulford lived in the village for many years, Peter will be remembered by many having taught Biology at Ashby School for over 30 years, he was involved in local elections and, along with Val a governor of of Ravenstone Primary School.

Val was involved in local politics throughout her life having been a member of the Parish Council and Chair in the early years returning as a member in 2013. She was also a member of the District Council serving on several committees. During her 5 year term as a member on the LCC she sat on Education, Employment and Special Education & Welfare committees.

The benches, being of recycled material, will last for a very long time and will be a fitting tribute to the memory of three people who have left an indelible impression on Ravenstone.

In these difficult times a message from a villager

"Always look on the bright side of life" it's easier said than done I hear you say. It seems that the challenges of 2020 have demonstrated that despite everything the world keeps turning, the stars keep casting their glow and the birds keep singing. So how can you find your own way to drink in the positives of life and grasp happiness? Latest research, from psychology and related fields, suggests there are ten keys to forging your own happiness.

Doing for others - Doing good for others makes us feel happier and gives meaning to our lives. It's not about money - we can give time.

Connect - Relationships are an important contributing factor to happiness. So build on the relationships you have to forge a sense of belonging.

Care for yourself - Our body and mind are connected. Being active makes us happier (endorphins) and keeps us fit. Being active every day is simple, get up and get out doing what you enjoy - Remember to eat well and get enough sleep.

Live Mindfully - Mindfulness is taking notice of what we're doing i.e. enjoying and tasting the food we eat, listening to others. This helps us be aware of what's important now, stops us dwelling on the past (we can't change this) or worrying about the future (we can't control this)

Keep learning - Learning activates our brains and keeps us curious and engaged. Whatever we learn gives a sense of accomplishment and boosts our confidence.

Have a goal - Goals help motivate us. We feel success when we achieve them. Therefore they need to be challenging enough to excite us but also achievable and realistic.

Resilience - How we manage things is individual - We've all experienced stress, loss, or trauma in our lives. We often cannot choose what happens, but we can choose our attitude to what happens. Responding with resilience gives us confidence, empowerment and self-belief.

Positive Mental Attitude - Emotions like joy, hope, contentment, make us feel better. Recent research shows that living a "glass half full" rather than the "glass half empty" way of life promotes our own resource to cope better and feel happier.

Be Kind to Yourself - No-one's perfect and we are our own worst critics. Therefore being kinder to ourselves is fundamental to our self-esteem. Remember be careful of the words you use to yourself as you are listening.

People who have meaning and purpose in their lives are happier and feel more in control. They experience less stress, anxiety and depression. So whether your 'meaning and purpose' is your religious faith, walking the neighbour's dog, being a parent, volunteering or doing a job that makes a difference keep doing it.

Rewilding

Starting in April there will be two areas in the village left to go wild, these being the two outer banks on the Green, and the land beyond the playground on the Davidsons development. The first year will simply mean no grass cutting to see what 'comes up' with a view in future years to create wild flower areas. Mowing will take place in October to clear the ground for the following year and encourage natural seeding.

It has been found as many as 31 species of plants and bugs result in re wilding which in turn encourage small mammals and bird; insects are also important pollinators which in turn helps to promote biodiversity.

Many town and parish councils throughout Leicestershire are undertaking rewilding initiatives all being aware that there may be complaints about the way these areas look but for the first year it will be purely experimental and can be returned to normal cutting in future years. The grass will be cut a metre in from the footpaths where necessary.

So lets look forward to seeing diverse wild plants and bugs in the spring and summer and not just, what regularly cut grass creates, a green but barren piece of ground.

The Newsletter

The aim of your quarterly parish newsletter is to keep the people of Ravenstone and Snibston up to date of what's happening in the village, what's going to happen, and interesting facts past and present. We would be interested in anything that you think would be informative for inclusion in future editions. The article should be relatively short, say about 300 words or fewer and include an illustration or photograph if possible.

Please email to;
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