

St John's Church

serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde



October / November 2025 £1



Photos from St John's @3 'Wild Worship'



The weather was kind to us at our St John's@3 Autumn Wild Worship on 21st Sept
Lots of fun connecting to God in nature.

Let's make an Autumn necklace!

I love autumn, but after the more relaxed summer months, it can sometimes feel a bit overwhelming. As light fades, diaries fill, coughs and colds reemerge, and the media feeds us with a diet of dire headlines of war, violence, and division. Unless you're fortunate enough to have somewhere warm and sunny to escape to, it can feel tempting to hide under the duvet until spring shoots appear.

This week, the writer Oliver Burkeman offered me a helpful image for navigating darker months. Picture your day as a string of beads, he suggests, with every action threading onto the necklace: some large and weighty, others small and ordinary.

Making packed lunches and cleaning teeth is a bead. Checking on a neighbour is a bead. Writing to your MP, donating to relief work, serving at a foodbank—each is a bead. So are quiet moments: a brisk walk, prayer, meditation, a cup of tea, a laugh with a child, an early night.

Life becomes the art of choosing the next right bead. We don't need to



hold the whole world in our heads or fix everything at once. We just choose the next faithful step and add it to the string. Over time, those choices shape a life that cares for both our wellbeing and the wider world.

I don't know if Oliver is spiritual, but I often find echoes of Jesus in his writing. Just as his image reminds us that the present is where we can make a difference, so Jesus says "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." He points to birds and

(Continued on page 2)

Cover Photo: Hardly needs a description - at this time of Harvest Festivals we're especially grateful for the Earth's 'bounty'

Vicar's Message - *continued*

(Continued from page 1)

wildflowers and, like them, invites us to live this day - to thread today's beads rather than worry about tomorrow's string.

This isn't denial; it's an invitation to trust. For Christians, that trust rests in God's faithful love. The belief that Christ walks with us through each ordinary moment, and will transform our small acts - our beads - into part of his larger story of love. If faith isn't your language, the invitation still stands: to value the

bead in your hand and believe that every act of goodness towards ourselves, others and the world is never wasted.

So, as we move through autumn, past Harvest, Remembrance, and towards Advent, let's remember that we don't have to carry everything at once. We can simply do the next thing in front of us intentionally and with care. And that's enough.

With love

Rev. Kathryn

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70th Wedding Anniversary Congratulations go to Gordon and Elfy Wilson!

Is this a record?

We offer our special congratulations and best wishes to **Gordon and Elfy Wilson**, who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on September 24th.

They were married here in St John's in 1955, and have remained strong and much respected members

of the church ever since. Gordon was both a school governor and PCC Secretary for many years. They were delighted to receive a special anniversary card, signed by lots of people from today's congregation.



Their fruitful working lives left many stories to tell. Gordon with a degree in chemical engineering went on to work for ICI, and later was honoured for being 'one in a million'. This was because he had clocked up one million miles travelling for the company all over the world! Elfy trained as a nurse at St George's in London and went on to a variety of medical work, always with her great sympathy and nursing skill.

They had to leave their longtime home in Coneydale, WGC, a few years ago, and are now in Autumn Vale Care Home, Welwyn. They have outlasted several vicars of St John's over the years. We hold them in our thoughts and prayers, and assure them that they are not forgotten.

'Happy Anniversary, and God bless you both'.

Rev. Edward Cardale

Rev. Ron Ingamells adds:

Over my years at St. John's, Gordon and Elfy Wilson were regular members of the congregation, and they became good friends. We had

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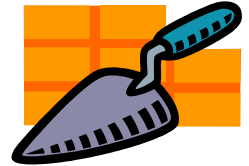
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News and People - *continued*

(Continued from page 3)

their company on many of the church outings we shared. Also, we all joined together on regular visits to concerts at the Royal Festival Hall in London.

Gordon was a great support when on the PCC. He was always so positive when I suggested new projects like the building of the Annexe and the development of the Garden of Remembrance.

When my full-time work with the YMCA came to an end, Gordon and Elfy were among a lovely group of people who made it possible for me to continue at St. John's for another 10 years. They were very kind and supportive to Janet when my new work often took me to Romania. When our son died, it was people like Gordon and Elfy and others who made it possible for me to feel able to continue my ministry – simply by being the best friends possible. Congratulations to them both!

Sponsored Bike n'Hike 2025 - by Kevin Earl

Last year we had the perfect weather for the Bike n'Hike event, after an absolute scorcher the year before (30 centigrade!), and a bit of a washout the year before that (cold, and gloves needed too!).

This year could be considered pretty much ok. There was heavy rain around lunchtime, but thankfully we had just completed



the trek around all the churches of Hertford and were just seated in a restaurant for lunch when the heavens opened. Lucky, I hear you say! Not at all, for we had our “secret weapon” with us this year, in the form of the Vicar! Kathryn, of course, had arranged good weather for us for whenever we were walking or cycling. And so it was. We remained dry all day and

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Alice Coralie Glyn Homes

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Alice Coralie Glyn was an author and early advocate of women's rights a decade before the Pankhurst sisters were active.

After her death, she was described as "a woman of word and deed", a fitting epitaph for a woman who spoke up for the less fortunate and offered practical help which continues to this day through the Alice Coralie Glyn Homes charity.



Alice's Homes

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More information about can be found at alicecoralieglynhomes.co.uk and about Almshouses in general at www.almshouses.org

News and People - concluded



the coats stayed in the rucksacks. Many photos were taken (nearly one at each church), apparently because Kathryn said they look good on social media, or something.



We all had a fun day, so thanks are due to Kathryn, Gina and Paul for joining Lucy and I on our travels,



and a huge thanks to all those who sponsored us. Over £500 was raised, half for St John's



and half for the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust.



Services

October 2025

5th The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

8 am	HC (BCP)	11 am	All Together Harvest Festival - HC* followed by Bring & Share Harvest lunch*
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12th The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

8 am	MP (BCP)	11 am	HC with Sunday Club
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19th The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

8 am	HC (BCP)	11 am	Reflective Worship
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26th The Last Sunday after Trinity

8 am	HC (BCP)	11 am	HC
		4pm	Service of Thanksgiving

November 2025

2nd All Saints Sunday

8 am	MP (BCP)	11 am	All Together - All Saints*
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8th Saturday!

3pm	St Johns's@3: Light Party!*
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9th Remembrance Sunday

8 am	HC (BCP)	11 am	HC with Sunday Club
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16th The Second Sunday before Advent

8 am	HC (BCP)	11 am	Reflective Worship
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23rd Christ the King - The Sunday next before Advent

8 am	HC (BCP)	11 am	HC
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30th Advent Sunday

8 am	HC (BCP)	11 am	HC
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** Children are welcome at all our services, but these services and events are especially suitable for families and children (as well as people of all other ages!)*

HC Holy Communion; MP Morning Prayer (Matins); BCP Book of Common Prayer; NB Kathryn's day off is Friday each week

'Special Services'

We like to think all our services are special, but in this section we mention what you might call services 'with a difference'. Even if you don't normally come to church you might like to try one of these.

All Together Harvest Festival followed by Bring and Share Lunch - Sunday 5th October at 11am

We'd love you to join us on Sunday 5th October at 11am for our All-Together Harvest Festival with Communion, followed by our Bring and Share Harvest Lunch with activities for children.



This lively, joyful service is a wonderful chance for all ages to come together — giving thanks for the gifts of creation, and for all that we can share with others.

We'll be collecting for our local foodbank and the Bishop's Harvest Appeal, so if you're able, please bring along tins or packets to donate, and any spare change to support these good causes. If you're able to bring some food to share in the lunch, drop us a message or sign up on the list in church.

A warm welcome awaits for everyone — come and celebrate the season with us!

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SUNDAY CLUB FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

**Join us for Bible stories,
crafts, games,
friendship, and fun!**

During the 11am service on

14th September

12th October

9th November

14th December



Children and Young People at St John's *by Jo Brooks*

Summer is lovely, but it's great too to be back in the routines of school and work and church, seeing friends again and learning new things every day. We've had our first Sunday Club of term (finding lost 'sheep' in the church gardens!), and also our new St John's@3 Sunday afternoon celebration for everyone. There's loads more to come this term at church, even as the long, light days make way for more dark and cosy nights.



When I was little, I loved a book called 'The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark' by Jill Tomlinson. In each chapter 'Plop', the baby barn owl meets a different character who tells him that the dark isn't just scary, it can be exciting or useful, and beautiful too with the moon and stars. Plop took some convincing and for lots of us it can still feel scary sometimes. But we can listen too to Jesus who tells us that he is the LIGHT in our world, and we don't ever need to be scared of the darkness when we're with him.

On **Saturday 8th November** it's the St John's@3 LIGHT party! A whole community celebration of light in the darkness with games, tasty treats, music, and crafts. Do join us. Not sure what St John's@3 is? Check out the pics [inside front cover] from our September event 'Wild Worship' [and Special Services - St John's@3 Light Party on P17]

But before that is **Harvest Festival on Sunday 5th October**, a wonderful celebration of God's goodness to us, for all ages. Join us for the service at 11 and afterwards for lunch together – there'll be harvest themed activities for children (and adults too!). The first Sunday of the month is always set aside as time for all ages to worship together in our 11am service.

Our theme in **Sunday Club**, as we explore more stories of Jesus, is 'lost and found' ; come and find out more on the **second Sunday of the month at 11 during morning service**. This term we're meeting on October 12th, November 9th and December 14th. There'll be Bible stories, games, crafts, friends and time to play.



So whether you love the restful, cosy, starry dark, or not, join us at St John's in October and November and meet Jesus, the light of the world!

For more information contact
revkathrynalford@gmail.com

**St John's School
Year 6 Young Leaders
practising their skills
with children in year 1
and 2**



News from St John's C of E School - September 2025

We have had a great start to the new school year. Our fifteen new Reception children have settled in well and are already coming along to our Friday Celebration assemblies as well as playing with the older children at break and lunch times. Our buddy system of pairing an older child with a much younger one works so well. It is lovely seeing them playing together and looking out for one another.



With Revd Kathryn's help we have put together the plans for our Collective Worship for the term. We are working our way through the bible, finding out about the main events, characters and chronology. For each story that we explore we are relating them to our own life, so that the stories of the bible become our own stories. In exploring the stories in Genesis so far, we have explored looking after our world, forgiveness and making promises.

We will soon be thinking about Open Days for prospective new children and their families. These are opportunities to look around our school with a view to begin with us in September 2026. Our Open Days are:

Tuesday 21st October 1.30 p.m.

Friday 24th October 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday 4th November 1.30 p.m.

Wednesday 5th November 10.00 a.m.

If you know families with **Reception aged children** do please tell them about our lovely school and direct them to our website or forward them this link:

St John's Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School - Home
- <https://www.stjohns561.herts.sch.uk/>

We have had lots of lovely things going on at school in September already. These have included year 5 taking part in a Fun Run at Stanborough, Young Leaders training for year 6 [see left] and voting for our School and Eco

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News from St John's School - June 2025 - Continued

(Continued from page 13)

Councils. Clubs have started again including Choir, Art, Netball, Lego and Dance!

With summer turning once and for all to autumn we are looking forward to joining you for the Harvest All-age service on Sunday 5th October as well coming to St

John's Church for our own school Harvest festival on Thursday 2nd October.

Best wishes,

Michelle Boylan

Headteacher at St. John's Church of England School



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'Special Services' - continued

(Continued from page 9)

A Special Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance Sunday 26th October, 4pm



You are warmly invited to our Autumn Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance on Sunday 26th October at 4pm.

This short, reflective service offers us a gentle space to give thanks for the lives of those we have loved and lost — whether recently or many years ago.

For our Autumn gathering, we'll be meeting in the church to keep everyone warm!

After the service, everyone is warmly invited to stay for tea and cake.
[Rev. Kathryn is very fond of cake - Ed.]

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'Special Services' - concluded

(Continued from page 15)

St John's@3 Light Party! **Saturday 8th November, 3pm**



This event will be held in St John's Church and the Annexe

St John's@3 is our informal, all-age gathering on some Sunday afternoons — a relaxed time of worship, stories, crafts, activities and cake, designed for children, families, and anyone who doesn't fancy sitting still in a pew!

This month we're having a **Light Party**.

As the afternoons grow darker, come and join us for a bright and joyful time together, with games, crafts, songs, activities, tasty treats and plenty of fun.

It's a celebration of **light, hope and friendship** for the whole community. Everyone is welcome — whether you come regularly or it's your very first time. We'd love to see you!

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Lemsford Local History Group - *Andy Chapman*

In the last edition of the Parish Magazine, I promised you I would expand on the Williams family who moved to Mill House, Lemsford in 1943 from Cheshire. Edmond Williams was a research chemist doing top secret work for ICI and the government. A short recap on the history of the Mill.

The Mill - Lemsford Mill - is probably one of four mills on the River Lea at Hatfield recorded in the Domesday Book¹ in 1086 and is known to have milled flour since the 12th century. Owned in the 12th Century by the Fitzsimon family of Simonshyde. From then until the 19th century its history is obscure, though the village was referred to as Lemsford Mills from the 17th century. For many years it remained in the ownership of the Brocket Estate and amongst its 18th century and 19th century lessees were George Garrett (who also worked at Welwyn and Codicote Mills), Thomas Crane and the Hill family (farmers), of which Alfred Hill was the last and died in 1925.

The ancient wooden clad mill collapsed in the mid-1800s but was quickly rebuilt in 1863. It is reputed that upon seeing a beautiful young maiden on the village bridge, J.P. Skelly wrote the music hall song 'Nellie Dean' whilst visiting The Mill. The Mill was taken over by the Sheriff family in 1907 and milling continued right up until 1913 when Lemsford Mill became a private residence when the waterwheel was adapted to generate electricity for The Mill House, making it one of the earliest houses in the area to have electric power. In 2004 it was purchased by Ramblers Holidays Ltd and converted to offices.

The following article was written by Sandra Jay who kindly promised to record her memories and send them to the group. The daughter of Edmond and Elinor Williams and sister Lindy who moved to Lemsford Mill in 1943 and left the village 31 years later in 1974.

'The Williams family move into Mill House, Lemsford in 1943 Our family moved to the Mill House, Lemsford in 1943 from Cheshire. Our father Edmond Williams was a research chemist doing top secret work for ICI and the government on the development of Polythene, a polymer of ethylene which had been discovered by his team in ICI Cheshire in 1935, and which was found to be the perfect insulator for radar cables. ICI set up a plant to manufacture large amounts of polythene in Welwyn Garden City, and relocated our dad, our mum

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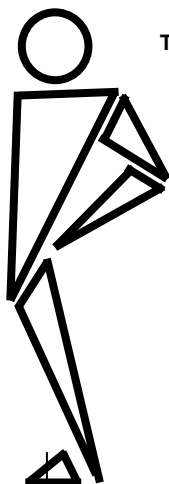


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(Continued from page 19)

Elinor, Lindy then aged 4 and me, Sandra aged 1. My brother Charles appeared in September that year. Our nanny Rebecca Coatsworth came too and lived with us until Charles went to boarding school aged 8. We also had a housekeeper called Marjorie who came from the east end of London with her baby daughter Patsy, glad to escape the bombing. How strange it seems now for one family to have so much help!

We leased the house from Brocket Estates, and, in spite of my father's best efforts they never agreed to sell it to us, although my mother remained there until 1974.

Our mother was a wonderfully enterprising war wife. Half the garden was given to vegetables and an industrial sized fruit cage. There was a large flock of chickens and at one time a pig. She was the gardener, butcher, plucker, preserver, bottler, seamstress, dressing us with clothes made from her pre-war dresses on her manual sewing machine (often asking us to wind the handle). During the war we were allocated a German POW called Ronnie to help us 'Dig for Victory'. Also our downstairs larder was used as a locked food store in case of emergencies and contained among other things large crocks of preserved eggs. Our diet was supplemented by pigeon pie made from the wood pigeons shot by our mother through her bedroom window, and rabbit stew made from rabbits snared in the park by the keeper Mr Harper who lived in the cottages just by the Park wall (now pulled down). One of our favourite activities was to get up at dawn and go with him to check the traps.

Our mother was also car mechanic and puncture mender, not to mention queuer! I still vividly remember waiting in the Ford 10 (our lovely car FMB 102) for hours as she progressed up the fish queue in Old Welwyn as we called it, and then, one day, letting the handbrake off on a slope, but without major disaster. When my sister and I became 5 we went to school in St Albans on the Green Line bus which stopped outside Mrs Carter shop (just where the bus stop is now) and went up the hill and through the lanes to St Albans.

We learned to ride on a lovely wicked pony belonging to Geoffrey Sherriff called Toblet (when we could catch him) and, when I was 10,

(Continued on page 23)

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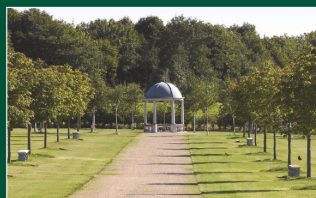
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Lemsford Local History Group - Continued

(Continued from page 21)

I became the proud owner of Goldie a chestnut pony who lived partly in a shed at the top of the Mill House orchard, and partly in the field now called the Archery field. There were so few cars and so little perceived danger that I was allowed to ride around the countryside on my own with great freedom. Also we children would take sandwiches and go out for a bicycle picnic. I don't remember any suggestion that an adult should accompany us.

We had great fun catching stickleback fish using jam-jars attached to bits of string. The river was very polluted when we were there and also full of thick mud, but despite the pollution we were instructed never to go in the river or the reeds, but otherwise like most country children at that time, after breakfast we were told to go out and play. We would disappear and reappear for elevenses and lunch.

When we were in our early teens our dad's immediate boss, who was the Chairman of the ICI Plastics Division in WGC called John Swallow, came to live in Bridge House with his family. Our dad and their son were both county tennis players and both families made grass tennis courts on their lawns. A major part of our teenage social life was around these courts with tennis parties and cucumber sandwiches!

We children gradually moved away, first to university and then to work in London, I was married in 1969 in St John's Church, Lemsford. Unfortunately in 1972 my father died of a brain tumour. He was 59 and Chairman of the ICI Plastics division at the time. My mother decided to pursue their retirement plan of moving to Ashridge in Buckinghamshire, now sadly on her own, and in 1974 our family left Lemsford after many happy years.'

Yet again a wonderful account of our past in our small sleepy village.

After purchasing the Mill in 2004, Ramblers Holidays moved to the Mill in 2006 which was a special year for them in two ways. In addition to relocating their offices, they celebrated 60 years of business success.

Their holidays started in the early post-war years when travel was still something of an adventure and many clients from those early years can recall hair-raising experiences!

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Recently Kathryn gave an excellent sermon (as always), this time on the Cross of St George. I vaguely remembered (incorrectly) that a window in the Bocket Chapel had an image of one so had a look after the Service. To my surprise I discovered a small brown object on the tomb of Lady Bocket - a bat!

It was motionless but on close inspection appeared to be breathing. Not having a clue what to do, I thought it might be thirsty so went to the Vestry to get a saucer full. On return the bat had of course legged it.

Bats are exceedingly interesting animals. They are the only mammals that can fly.

Contrary to popular belief ("blind as a bat") they can see quite well; their use of echolocation allows them to catch insects at very low light levels.

The Celts had a festival, Samhain, on the 31st of what we call October when they believed that the boundary between the living and the dead was thin, allowing spirits to cross over. To ward off these spirits, they would build large bonfires, which attracted insects and in turn, bats; swooping near the flames, so they were seen as the spirits of the dead. The early Church celebrated the dead on 1st November, the Feast of All Hallows (Saints) so Samhain became All Hallows E'en which has now been commercialised as Halloween. Bats still play a significant part in this annual ritual which has become very popular (although not in my curmudgeonly house).

Later, Shakespeare reflected a dark view of bats by including them in the Witches' Brew ("wool of bat") which caused Macbeth to change from noble hero to tyrant.

Bats though were never associated with bloodsucking until European explorers discovered vampire bats in the Americas. Bram Stoker's Dracula, published in 1897, had Count Dracula transforming into a bat, which firmly established the link in popular mythology.

Nowadays bats are seen as a Good Thing and are highly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1972. For example, it is an offence to: "Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection." The bat I saw may well be lodging in the Church. But where?



All Geoffrey's Nature Notes are at geoffreyhollis.com/nature-notes

Prayer for our Leaders

Lord of all,

Turn the hearts of leaders toward peace. Bend pride into wisdom and power into protection of the weak.

Let plans that harm be exposed and plans that protect be strengthened.

In Jesus' name, amen.

prayerism.com

And finally ... some batty questions:

Q: How do you make a bat stew?

A: *Keep him waiting.*

Q: What is the best way to hold a bat?

A: *By the handle.*

Q: What do bats do for exercise?

A: *Aerobatics.*

Q: Where does a bat go when it loses its tail?

A: *A re-tail store.*

Q: What is even smarter than a talking bat?

A: *A spelling bee.*

Q: Why are bats like false teeth?

A: *They come out at night.*



Lemsford Local History Group - Concluded

(Continued from page 23)

Before Net Zero, Ramblers Holidays were ahead of the game and installed a new waterwheel to generate electricity by hydropower. The breast-shot wheel is the first of its kind to generate electricity in Britain. On average over half of their daily office usage is generated and any excess in the evenings and at weekends goes into the National Grid.

I note next year is Ramblers Holidays 80th anniversary. Lets hope we can all join in and celebrate.

While writing this article I have found out the Long Arm and Short Arm has been demolished. A sad day when a classic landmark in the village has gone forever. The next edition will celebrate the L & S and the people who made it special.

The group is happy to share its archive and research with the community and provides walks and talks to groups for more information contact us on info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk. The same email address is available if you want to share memories

Inside Back Cover Images L to R [opposite]:

The Mill 1900s – The Mill 1950s – The Williams at Play in the 1940s – the Mill - 1960s – The Mill on a winter's day 2003 - The Mill today.

100 Club August & September Results

Thanks to everyone, parishioners and friends, who are supporting the '100 Club'. If you'd like to join contact Nigel Johnson - see directory

Month	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
August	Number 9 - £91.80	Number 41 - £55.08	Number 80 - £36.72
September	Number 105 - £92.70	Number 108 - £55.62	Number 95 - £37.08

Then and Now: Lemsford Mill 1900 - Today



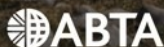
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