SOUTH NEWINGTON NEWSLETTER



Flower Show illustrations by Angela Burns and Dorcas Cassimjee Barbour



Editor: Nicky Smith, SouthNewingtonNewsletter@gmail.com

Parish Council News

Progress is slowly taking place on the project to renovate the Poleaxe and putting in disabled access. As I mentioned at the Annual Parish Meeting in April this year, we need to get three quotes for the work which we now have, at last, received.

At our recent Parish Council meeting we agreed that we should pursue one of the quotes, subject to clarification of costs and a plan being produced so that we can keep the village fully informed of our progress. We intend to have an Extraordinary Village Meeting when we have all the details we require in order to submit our application to Viridor for funding.

The village bonfire at the bottom of Moor Lane is becoming a concern due to the fact that people are adding large amounts of material to the fire stack, including fresh greenery which will not easily burn. I have requested that people stop adding to the fire in the meantime and we will consider the long-term future of the fire at our next parish council meeting.

Peter Thomas,
Chairman, Parish Council

Church News

South Newington Church, St Peter ad Vincula, celebrated St Peter's Day, its patronal day, on Sunday 30th June by hosting a united benefice service of Holy Communion. Parishioners from Milcombe and Bloxham swelled the ranks on the festive day and enjoyed fellowship and refreshments after the service. It was a very convivial occasion enjoyed by all.

On 11th August St Laurence, Milcombe celebrates their patronal festival with a united benefice service at 11.15 followed by a bring & share lunch, Teddies from the tower (a zip wire this year) and games. There will be no morning service in South Newington on that Sunday, but the church will be open throughout the South Newington Flower Festival with displays. Always a cool place to catch one's breath, appreciate the beautiful surroundings and collect one's thoughts.

The 3rd Sunday @ 6 service will be 18th August with music, readings, poetry, prayers and silence on a summer's evening. All are welcome.

Dale Gingrich,

Vicar

The Flower Show Saturday 10th August

The day of the 2019 Flower and Produce Show is nearly upon us and the Committee, with the help of volunteers, will soon be setting up the marquee, putting out the tables and chairs and hanging the bunting, which has contributed to the atmosphere of the Show for so many years.

We have already enlisted the help of a number of villagers but we always need more …….. Claire Swan and Amanda Hall are still looking for volunteers to take a shift on the tea tent so do drop them an email claire_ainley@hotmail.com or call07711720135 if you can help on the day. We will be sending out another village email asking for donations and help.

The theme for this year's display in the Church is SHOES and we are hoping as many of you as possible will put your shoes out, together with an explanation of their importance, in the church on Saturday morning from 10 – midday.

This year there will be a special raffle, as well as the usual one which has been advertised. Charles Ludlow of Dubarry has kindly donated a voucher for a pair of boots worth £400. Full terms and conditions will be on display at the Show but briefly, the voucher entitles the winner to choose a pair of boots or other footwear from the current Dubarry collection. This can be redeemed at any of the Company's outlets or indeed from the offices/warehouse which are close by.

Tickets for the special raffle are £10 each and we will supply a small envelope to put the money in. The person buying the ticket just puts their name and address on the front!
You can buy raffle and special prize tickets in advance on 'Entries evening' on Wednesday in the village hall from 6 – 8pm or of course from the raffle stall during the show.

Other interesting new activities this year will be, weather permitting, a display of vintage/veteran cars which will be set up in the yard of Julian Barbour's house, College Farm next to the church yard.

Donations of bottles, cakes and books would be gratefully received and these will be collected during the week before the Show. If you have books to donate, please put them in the porch of Nicky Catton's house, Barretts, in Green Lane.

How to submit your entries

- Check out what you can enter in the Flower Show guide, copies available from the plastic box on the bench by the church and village notice board or to download online http://www.southnewington.co.uk/download/south-newington-flower-show-brochure-2019/
- Submit your entries in person – the village hall on Wednesday 6 – 8 pm
- Or submit them online – email to snflowershow@gmail.com
- Late entries accepted online until Thursday 8th at 8 pm
- Then on Saturday between 8 – 10 am bring your entries and show card to the marquee on the poleax, ready for judging. Don't forget to bring your entry card with you!

All we need now is good weather and the stage will be set for a successful Show. Do take part and invite friends and fmail to support this wonderful village tradition.

Sue Thomas, Secretary

LIFE IN SOUTH NEWINGTON

In our last issue Janet and Phillip Page described their life in the village as the last working farm in South Newington. In this issue Derek Charles has kindly shared some stories about growing up in South Newington. I am very grateful to Derek for his time, it is fascinating to hear about life in the village, and how different it was not that long ago. I could have spent all day listening and hope you find this extract of a very enjoyable few hours spent chatting together..

Derek was born in Moore Lane in what is now North View Cottage. He now lives a few doors up in Aubrey's Barn at the end of Moor Lane. Derek's father Aubrey, who built the barn with Derek, and after whom it is named, was a mason by trade.

Aubrey's father Albert bought the five cottages which are now three on Moore Lane where Derek was born. Aubrey was one of four children, Mabel, Arthur, Aubrey and Sydney who were all born in South Newington.

When Aubrey's father bought the cottages, they were all tiled in Stonesfield Slate, but he then replaced the slate with thatch and sold the slate. Originally the cottages were one property, with the end nearest the brook being where Aubrey stored his tools, and which at one point became, for a while, the village post office.

The family lived on the ground floor, while rabbits were kept up stairs. Aubrey converted them eventually into three separate cottages. You can see the cottages and Dean House when it was thatched in the photo below, which shows them from the back.



Cottages on Moor Lane, South Newington. View of the back gardens, with the barn at Dean House which was later demolished.

Derek remembers that the family, like most in South Newington, supplemented their war and later rations with rabbits which were abundant in the village begore myxomatosis, and also fish which

were plentiful in the river in those days. On a dark night when the moon light wouldn't give them away, and when the wind was blowing in the right direction they would go out and catch rabbits to eat.

The brook was much deeper once, and the children would dam the stream and swim in the summer, and spend hours catching fish too. Modern farming practices, especially the use of fertilisers and herbicides, has transformed the brook, and many other across the country, so now there are few fish in it. There used also to be lots of moorhens and water voles popping in and around the banks. Nowadays there is are many American crayfish living in the brook but not much else.

Derek also remembers catching birds, mainly sparrows, to eat. They went out with a clap nest which was held up against one side of a hedge, while another person crept round the other side of the hedge. They would startle the sleeping birds which would fly out and into the net. His father would then roast them on a metal plate by the fire, and they were apparently delicious. Rather like the swifts which Julian Barbour mentions later in this newsletter that Italians used to eat…

As we celebrate our village Flower Show it's interesting to hear how growing vegetables has changed in the village. Before and during the war there were many allotments in the village with families depending on what they could grow to eat. The field immediately next door to School House was allotments and during the war, the first part of the field at the bottom of the former council house gardens next to the footpath was turned over to growing potatoes and vegetables by the Barbours and they called that area the 'Dig for Victory', the government slogan to encourage more home grown food.

Derek went to school in the village, and remembers happy times there with the teacher Mrs Upton. Mary Dean was the school cook. She made lunch every day in the village hall and the children would walk over there for lunch.

Dean House on Moor Lane was actually named after the Dean Family who lived there, by Derek when he eventually bought the house off them and moved into it. He remembers a funny story about the Deans, when electricity was brought to the village in 1935. If people wanted electricity to their house, they had to pay for their own electricity pole. The Charles family wanted electricity and bought their electricity pole which you can see on Moore Lane. The Deans refused to pay the £20 cost which was quite a lot in those days and didn't have electricity for several years. Eventually however they decided they would like electricity and had it in put in, making use of the pole but without paying any of the cost for it! I imagine that happened quite a lot in those days.

Derek had a variety of jobs working in Banbury and Moreton in Marsh and other parts of the UK and travelled regularly to Ireland where he met his wife, Betty. Amazing to think that Derek cycled twice a day to Banbury for his work, for a morning and late shift, but then later changed jobs and moved to Moreton in Marsh where he also cycled to work for several years. Eventually he became a postman, a position he held for 25 years.

It's not hard to see how people were much more fit and cars weren't contributing to global warming and destroying insect life as they are now… Something I contemplate regularly as I drive to Chipping Norton and consider what it would be like to cycle those hills four times a day.

Another fascinating insight into local life and work was a story Derek told about a man who was almost bent double in his old age, who used to live in Mill Stream Farm where Charles Ludlow now lives. Derek asked his father, Aubrey, why the man couldn't just stand up straight. He replied it was because he'd spent his life shovelling iron ore on to the train wagons at Wroxton were it was mined.

Those quarries and trains are gone now of course, but there are plenty of signs where they used to be when you drive to the dump at Alkerton. Derek remembers getting the train from Bloxham to Adderbury with this mother. He also remembered how the butcher would deliver meat once a week and a carrier on market days would deliver other items you'd ordered to the village; how most people made their own bread, although there was a bakery on the Slibber, the house which is now called, of course, The Old Bakehouse.

Derek says he has travelled all over the world but has always felt most comfortable and happy in the village. It has a special quality to it which I think we are all lucky to enjoy to this day, despite many changes. Derek's son Liam with his wife Avril now live in the village and are the fifth generation of the Charles family to live here.

Your house history

Do you know who lived in your house before you, or anything of its history?

Ned Shebbeare lived in Sands House from his retirement until his death in 1964. His sisters lived next door in the Barn House. Ned was an extraordinary man, dedicating his life to understanding and protecting the environment, creating a legacy which is only now being fully understood. He played a vital role but unreported role in the first successful Everest expeditions, protected vast areas of the Bengal Forest from destruction and was responsible for saving the Indian rhino from extinction. After being released from Changi prisoner of war camp in Malaya he set up the first nature reserve in Malaysia, Taman Negara, which is now the largest area of protected rainforest in the country. In his obituary he was described as "one of the most loveable, imperturbable, and knowledgeable of men". He was survived by a son and daughter.

There is more information about E.O. Shebbeare in the village archive held in the village hall.

If you know any interesting facts about your home please do share it with us for future issues.

WHAT'S ON Diary Date for Villagers – regular events

What	When	Where	More info
Table tennis	Monday eves	Village hall	Gill Brounger
Art class	Tuesday morning	Village Hall	Bridget Reed or Lin Brecknell
Circle dancing	4th Weds evening of the month	Village hall	Stella Darke
Supper club	2nd or 3rd Weds eve of the month	Duck on the Pond	Gill Brounger
Coffee mornings	Thurs morning most months	Village hall	Gill Brounger
Yoga	Thursday eves	Village hall	Sue Robertson
Singing	Sat morning 10-12.30 am	Village hall	Elizabeth Wheeldon
Parish Council Meeting	See village noticeboard	Village Hall	Peter Thomas
Flower Show Committee	Now and then	Committee members house	Sue Thomas
Film Society	Quarterly-ish	Village Hall	Rob Lawrence
Church Services	Sunday morning 11.15 am or 6pm	Church	Tim Catton or Venetia Eliot

49 Club Winners

The 49 Club is always happy to welcome new members! You can join at anytime and pay online, by cheque or with cash. £52 a year, £26 half yearly, £13 quarterly.

Contributions go towards paying for the church insurance as well as covering prize money. You do not have to be a church goer to appreciate how fortunate we are to have such a magnificent building in our midst.

June			May			April			March		
£35	42	Julia Streeter	£35	41	Judith Denby	£35	21	Michael Pritchard	£35	54	Rollover
£20	43	Zoe Davidson	£20	24	Carey	£20	30	Pat Ebdon	£75	2	Honeybones
£20	29	Catton	£20	3	John Britten	£20	4	Mary Adams	£20	38	Andrew Wells
£20	11	Swan Family	£20	24	Carey	£20	10	Peter Thomas	£20	27	Perry
£20	27	Perry							£20	24	Carey

Thank you to all who support the club.
Carole Brierley.
carole.hancock@btinternet.com 01295 722996

Supper club at our village pub, The Duck on the Pond

The supper club, held in the Duck on the Pond is going well. Kindly organised by Gill Brounger with a special meal provided by Gordon and Penny, it meets once a month on Wednesday evenings. Every one is welcome, including people from other villages!

Gill also organised a wonderful meal in the village hall in June, a "Supper Club Summer Special" which included a delightful performance by Jenny Rudnay with fine food and acting enjoyed by all.

Next supper is on Wednesday 14th August. It's a lovely way to make new friends or chat with old chums, enjoy a good value meal and support our local pub so do come along. Just call or email.

Gill Brounger 01295 721029 or email gillian.brounger@btinternet.com

Table Tennis

Another thriving group is table tennis, also coordinated by Gill. The group plays on Monday evenings in the village hall from 6.30 to7.30.

Last Monday they had an excellent sunny summers evening at Colin Galloway's playing outside (together with drinks) which was certainly enjoyed by all,

"We could definitely do with a few more regular players to join our very happy band of wiff waffers so please come along on Mondays or give me a call to find out more". Gill

Village email list

Don't forget, if you have any important or urgent news to communicate to the village, Sue Robertson kindly sends out messages to a village email list.

If would like to be on the receiving end of emails about events or useful village information please send your email contact details to Susan Robertson: susanrobertsonsnem@gmail.com.

Coffee mornings

The coffee mornings raise money for the village hall up-keep, but most of all, offer a lovely way to meet people, have a good natter and nice piece of cake with tea or coffee.

There are no coffee mornings in August and the next one will be on Friday September 27th hosted by Margaret Braithwaite for MacMillan World's Biggest Charity Coffee morning.

Margaret Braithwaite

Candle-lit Circle Dancing in the Village Hall

Do come and join us for these delightful evenings of gentle exercise, beautiful music from all over the world and a relaxed friendly atmosphere. We hold hands in a circle and all the dances are taught at every session. No such thing as mistakes, only variations. No need to bring a partner, just a willingness to have a go and some comfortable soft footwear. Every fourth Wednesday in the month 7.30 – 9.00pm Fee £5. Contact Stella Darke, Chapel House

Art Group

The Art Group meets on Tuesday mornings from 9.30 -12.00 in the village hall through Autumn Winter and Spring. In the summer we paint in members gardens or in outside places of interest. It is a friendly, informal group with 12 members. Most people work with water colour, but others use acrylic, pastels or crayons.

We take it in turns to suggest a subject each week, or to set up a still life, and to provide the coffee and biscuits. If you would like to join the group do get in touch with Lin Brecknell 720982 or Bridget Read 720389 or Mary Rose Goodwin 01608 685786



Can you work out where the art class went to capture this scene? This lovely painting is by Angela Burns who swears she couldn't paint before joining the South Newington Art group!

SNIFTA

A lot of people have said how much they've enjoyed the films put on by *SNIFTA* (South Newington Independent Film Theatre Association) in 2018-19.

After the summer break *SNIFTA* will be back with a new season of films for 2019-20, so keep an eye out for news of screenings. Depending on ticket sales, the plan is to show three or four films between October and March and we aim to publish dates and titles soon.

In the meantime, if you'd like to get involved or have any comments or questions please get in touch with one of the team or email roblawrence500@btinternet.com
Rob Lawrence (on behalf of the SNIFTA team: Rob Lawrence, Geraldine Thomas, Nicky & Tim Catton)

Ride + Stride Saturday 14th September

This is an annual event organised by the Historic Churches Trust which raises money to maintain the fabric of church buildings ie the actual building or church yard. The charity has supported South Newington church regularly in the past.

The idea is that people are sponsored to ride (any form of riding: horse, bike, car etc) or walk (aka 'stride') between churches and are sponsored for either how many churches they visit or how many miles they travel. Fifty per cent of the sponsor money goes straight to your nominated church, the rest to the charity to be shared among other churches in need of repair.

If you would like to take part, all sponsorship forms, badges etc are available from Nicky Smith at The Barn House. If you could help welcome sponsored visitors on the day to the church please sign up the rota which will be in the church from September.

Many thanks to people who have supported the day in the past. Nicky Smith. 07771 785228.

South Newington Occasional Singers

Still wondering if you should or could find your singing voice? Everything you hear about singing is true, the way it cheers you up, makes you laugh, be more sociable etc.

If you'd like to try singing occasionally, and discover just why people love it so much, do come along any Saturday during term time. We sing in four voice parts, soprano, alto, tenor and bass, with a professional conductor, Stuart Dunlop and pianist Kieran. No auditions and no need to read music - just bring yourself and your enthusiasm for singing.

We sing in the village hall from 10.30 – midday on Saturdays, it's £5.00 including a cup of coffee. The new term starts on on Saturday 16th September so do come along. Elizabeth Wheeldon

South Newington Weather Report

The spring season can be a mixture of all sorts of weather depending upon the way the winter leaves things. There is an old saying that if March comes in like a lion it will go out like a lamb and that applies in reverse as well. 2019 certainly came in with hail on 10th, 14th and 15th.

Storm Gareth passed through stronger than Freya with higher windspeeds 17th March saw the first of the first long dry spell with no rain until first April another dry spell ran from 12th April to 23rd and most recent 18th May to the end of the month. All this resulted in a very dry season. Three months rain this year totalled 126 mm against less than 270.8 mm less than half!

The river has been very low throughout spring only reaching double figures in early March and a negative reading from 12th May. We all remember the very warm spell which got up to 23.1C on 22nd April warmer in other parts of the country, but the interesting fact that I found, was that when everyone was enjoying the warmth, South Newington recorded the coldest night in the British Isles on the night of 21st April also 26th April and 19th May. Gardeners will know that we have had quite a lot of ground frost all through the season but at the time of writing this in June we should soon see the end of it

We had a faulty sensor at the weather station which was quickly fixed by the Met office in the usual way. I am sorry that this report is somewhat shorter than usual but I think I have covered most items of interest except perhaps one more named storm Hannah on 27th April - she brought gale force winds and an end to the very warm spell.

I am not forecasting what summer will be like I would just like a typical English one. A little bit of everything!

John Britten

Rewilding and the environment

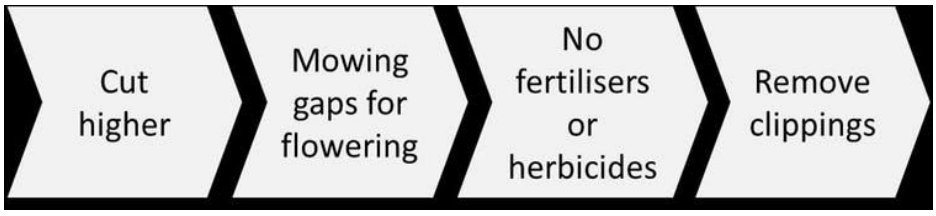
Edwina Lovelawrence, current resident in School House submitted a wonderful article for the newsletter about the impact of rewilding on the environment. Unfortunately, there isn't room to include it in this issue, but it raised the important issue of how to help protect and preserve what is left of our wildlife. She was struck by the photo in the previous issue where flowers were growing in the verge by the polax.



Wild verge wildlife in South Newington. Photo courtesy of Janet Page

I will try and include Edwina's feature in the next issue, but meanwhile would any one like to organise a village verge wildflower planting party? Or perhaps set up a group to manage the wildflower meadow in the churchyard extension field? All going via the Parish Council of course!..

These are four steps Edwina found from Ecologist Adam Bates from Nottingham Trent University to help support more wildlife in your garden



Swifts

Do you love to hear the sound of swifts swooping round the village in the summer? We are very lucky to still have our community of visiting swifts, and Julian Barbour has kindly contributed this information about them for us.

I'm pleased to say swift numbers this year have held up well compared with last year. There are at least four nests under the tiles of College Farm and one entered through a tiny hole in the masonry into a cavity in the east gable. The one nest just below the west chimney of Wingate Cottage is also occupied, as it has been for several years. So there are definitely six nesting pairs.

Also, I have seen what I take to be young swifts checking out possible future nesting sites flying up to the entrances of the two nesting boxes put up a few years ago on the south side of the chancel of the church (two nests under the roof could not be saved when it was repaired at that time).
The first three weeks of July are the best time to see the swifts. This year there have at times been up to 25 swirling around over the house and circling the thatched barn, with they seem to use as a race track, screaming as they go and performing manoeuvres that put the Red Arrows to shame. With six on the nest, that puts the total around 30.

Sadly, swift numbers are declining. About eight years ago I was seeing over 40. Nationally numbers have declined by about 50% since the mid 1990s, one factor being repairs to roofs, which block entrances.



It would be a great pity to lose them as has happened with cuckoos. Here are a few facts about swifts from RSPB facts sheets and elsewhere.

As a group, swifts are the fastest of all birds in level flight (the peregrine is the fastest, but only in the steep dive called a stoop). They are a very ancient species, having separated from other birds 65 or 70 million years ago. Our swifts are only here for three months, leaving in the first week of August, when they migrate to South Africa.

For its size, the swift has an exceptionally long life-span – averaging about 5.5 years. One bird in Oxford was found dying in 1964, 16 years after it was ringed as an adult, and therefore likely to be at least 18 years old. It's reckoned that this bird flew, in its lifetime, about 4 million miles, the same as flying to the moon and back 8 times! Swifts virtually always return to the same nest. I had a pair that nested at College Farm for at least 10 years, so they probably 'went to the moon and back' four or five times, perhaps even more because swifts only mature and breed when they are four years old (before that they fly day and night without interruption once they leave the nest). One RSPB rerport says the oldest ringed bird actually lived for at least 21 years.

Swifts pair for life, meeting up each spring at the same nest site. They normally lay two or three eggs at two or three day intervals. Incubation starts with the first egg and lasts for 19–20 days per egg. The adults share all the nesting duties equally.

Swifts can sleep on the wing – a French Airman in the 1914-18 war glided down with engines off behind enemy lines. At 10,000 feet he found himself amongst birds apparently motionless. One of them caught in the machine was found on the following day to be an adult male swift. Swifts are also the only birds known to be able to mate on the wing (as well as in the nest).

Not many predators can catch a swift – hobbies may take a few, and so may kestrels, tawny owls and barn owls. However, it's likely that many of the swifts they manage to eat were weak for other reasons, for example, starvation. The RSPB claims very few mammals ever catch a swift, except perhaps rats or weasels that can climb to nests. However, in the early 1990s my daughter Dorcas brought home her black cat Lucy from university in Newcastle. Lucy was a phenomenal hunter. She regularly caught grey squirrels (leaving just their tails under the kitchen table). She could also leap six or seven feet in the air and catch swifts in flight. She was seen doing it twice, and on several occasions my late wife Verena found the outermost wing feathers of unfortunate swifts laid out neatly by the back door when she opened it in the morning. Lucy came to a bad end. She was run over on the A361 opposite the pumping station. At least her demise must have helped swift numbers.

In Tuscany people used to eat young swifts, even building special towers to house them – the swift equivalent of a dovecot. Apparently they are delicious!

Swifts can't feed in wet weather in the UK, so fly around storms to find dry areas – the only UK birds to do this. In rough weather, large numbers of swifts feed over water where insects are easier to catch. They tend to avoid low pressure centres and other areas of bad weather. They fly into the wind in search of better weather and to get round an area of rain, and can thus fly more than 800 km each day day. They regularly fly from Scotland to Loch Neagh in Ulster to catch the great number of insects there.

There have a remarkable adaptation. Food can be scarce in bad weather – the chicks can go cold and torpid and survive for days without food, then regain weight rapidly once supplies resume. Most baby birds can't do this and would simply die within hours. Only one other kind of bird can lose temperature control and become torpid each night – the hummingbird

Trades and Craftsmanship in South Newington

Driving past South Newington on the A361 recently you might have noticed, if dared to take your eyes off the road for a minute, someone on the roof thatching. That man is none other than Miles Colegrave, whose business is featured this month.



Miles Colegrave, Colegrave Thatching

Having grown up on the family farm at Swalcliffe, I studied agriculture at Moreton Morrell, but I wasn't destined for life on the farm, instead working for a toolmakers in Chipping Norton, manufacturing precision engineering parts for Formula 1 teams. The recession saw redundancies at the workshop and I took the opportunity to spread my wings and travel to the other side of the world to work in and explore New Zealand.

On returning to the UK a year later, it seems I couldn't stay away from straw any longer and a four-year apprenticeship with Chipping Norton-based Master Thatcher, Grant Batchelor ensued. I have learnt my craft on rooves across Oxfordshire & neighbouring counties, into Leicestershire and as far afield as Norfolk, thatching cricket pavilions, pubs and duck houses as well as homes.

With my apprenticeship complete, I was keen to secure some jobs of my own, setting up Colegrave Thatching in 2015, a couple of years after moving into South Newington. I'm delighted to say that my first job 'going it alone' was in the village, thatching *The Thatched Cottage* on Barford Road…as short a commute as I'm ever going to get!

Every thatched property is different, but interestingly, all are listed buildings and need to be re-thatched in the same materials as are already on the roof. I thatch in both straw and water reed, trying to source in the UK as much as I can. Some rooves have a flush ridge and others have the more ornate, raised pattern along the top; a scalloped ridge. Most thatchers stick to a specific pattern that becomes a bit of a trademark. We wire the roof to protect it from the birds, who are partial to it for nest-building material and will often add straw birds such as an owl, as further deterrent.

People often think it's just a seasonal trade, but I'm out in all weathers and throughout the year. It's certainly easiest at this time of year and I know I'm lucky to be working out in the fresh air and thatching the properties which are so synonymous with this beautiful part of the world.

I take great pride in delivering work of the highest standard to ensure my customers' thatched properties remain the apple of their eye.

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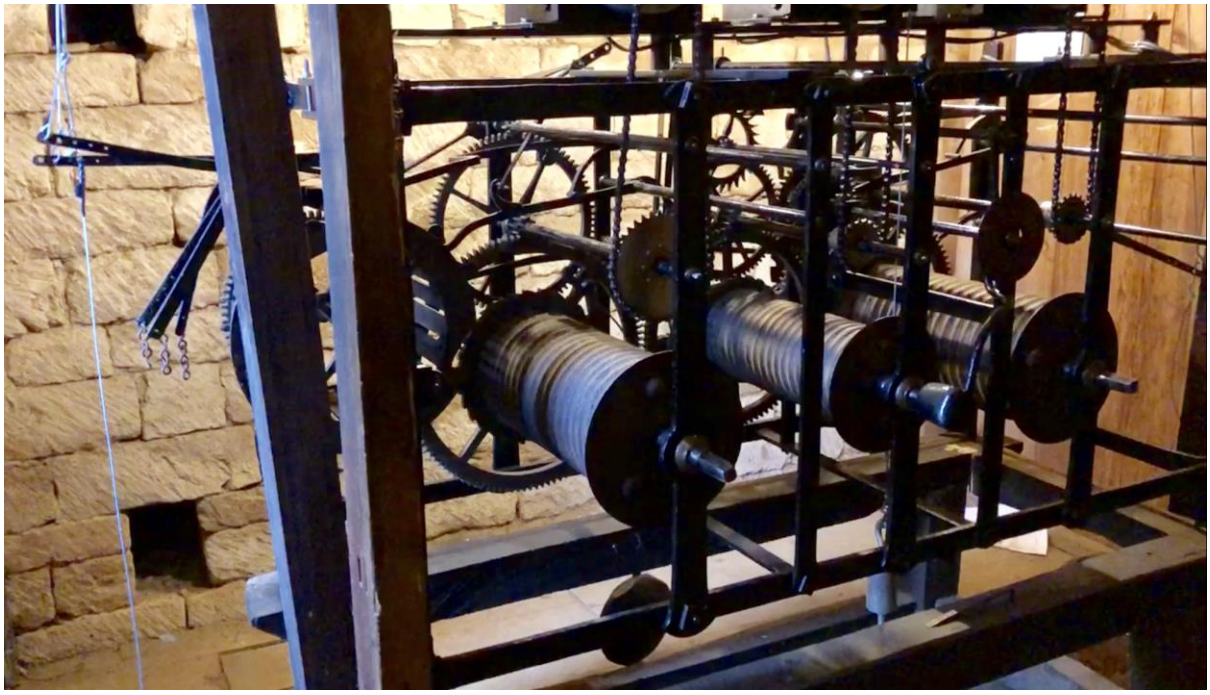

South Newington church clock.

Photo taken by Tim Catton who has taken over clock duties from Vince Burns.

