

# The Bridge!



Produced by Elmore Parish Council  
Issue Number 43 August 2025

## From the Editor

The summer edition of this magazine is often a little thin but not in this case, and I am grateful to all those who have contributed. Without them there would be no magazine and you also would not receive it without those who push it through your letterbox. Since the very 1<sup>st</sup> edition of **The Bridge!** in 2014 Val Overton has distributed it in Elmore Back, but she has reluctantly had to give up this service due to ill health. Thank you for 11 years of service, Val. Her 'area' will now be taken over by Clare Stewart. I am grateful to her for volunteering and also to John Field, John Tooth and Dorie Jones who undertake the distribution elsewhere in the village.

I'm sure most of you, like me, are having a poor year in the vegetable garden. The spring and summer has been so dry and at times very hot that very little has grown well despite the daily trudge round with the watering can. I have not been able to plant out my later crops as the ground is too hard to dig. It brings back memories of 1976 though, sadly, no one has said we should bath with a friend as was suggested then.

One person in the village has urged me to suggest that no one should have a bonfire because, although we have now had some rain, everything is still very dry.

Trevor Jones

## Letters to the Editor

Sir,

***Can you hear me mother?***

This was the catchphrase of Sandy Powell, the popular Music Hall and radio comedian. This catchphrase came to my mind when I was considering the attendance at the coffee morning at Elmore Church on Saturday 12th July this year.

It was so good to see just over 20 local residents visit the church for light refreshments and to see the village history documents presented by Tony

Leach, Michael Watts and myself. Many thanks to those who provided family photos and to those who helped put names to partly captioned records. These village documents are live records which are updated when new information becomes available. I am always happy to receive photos of people and buildings that any of you come across or create. Photos show how the village is changing.

Now back to Sandy Powell's catchphrase. Instead of '*Can you hear me mother?*' I wondered if it could be '*Can I get more information about events in Elmore?*' The reply is likely to be '*Yes but how?*'

I would suggest that there are many ways that event organisers can get the word out to all residents. **The Bridge!** of course leads up the distribution of event notifications. Specific poster and house delivered sheets help. Maybe organisers would get better coverage by using **The Bridge!** with other hard copy sheets combined with the various social media group communications such as email, WhatsApp, FaceTime, etc. Word of mouth is somewhat restrictive but nevertheless effective.

So event organisers, why not try the above combination of methods to ensure that at least all Elmore parishioners receive notification of your upcoming event. The recipient can then decide whether or not to attend the event.

They can always say '*Yes I can hear you organiser!*'

Colin Ellis

## **From the Parish Council**

There's little new to report this month, but we're pleased to share that the Highways Agency has recently carried out work to flush out the culverts around the village. This should help improve drainage and reduce surface water issues when the rain returns.

If you're interested in getting involved with parish council activities, please contact one of us — our details can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Best Regards,

Matt Brandon (Chair)

## **The Island Book Club Book Review**

### **The Socialites by Caroline Lamond**

The socialites is fictionalised account of three well known figures of film, theatre and media circles: Maureen O'Sullivan, Vivian Leigh and Sonia

Brownell. As girls they entered a strict and cheerless convent school in the 1920s & 30s in a quiet London suburb. They left six years later to change the world over the next four decades.

Maureen O'Sullivan became a film actress known for her pioneering role as Jane in the Tarzan films, and helped rewrite the rules of cinema censorship.

Vivian Leigh was at first a theatre actress but later became a film star, known for her roles as Cleopatra and more famously Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*.

Sonia Brownell, an aspiring writer, became George Orwell's wife and guardian of his literary legacy.

Together, their careers encompassed glamour, tragedy, triumph, and scandal; from the cafés of Paris to the theatres of New York, they pushed boundaries and defied expectations. The book gave a glimpse of the heady world of theatre, film and society in the time of the star-studded movie era and I loved this fictional take on some of the most legendary women of Hollywood's golden age

Clare Stewart

## Why Fernhay?

The Paper Boy, in the late 1960s, Tony Leech, spoke about his 'Elmore Round' which I found most interesting. (see *The Bridge* issue 41, February 2025, Ed) That was back in the last century of course when we also had milk delivered to the door. Now we are fortunate enough to be able to buy, not only milk but also Gelato on our doorstep in the village. One of Tony's delivery spots on his daily round was to Fernhay where Laurie & Diana Duirs, my parents, lived.

Elmore villagers of that time will recall our house was called 'The Ferns' & for many years it was still known as that by most of the villagers. Perhaps the milkman & paper boy were the first people to truly come to terms with the new unusual sounding 'Fernhay', whilst others would have questioned the purpose of altering a well-established Elmore name!

Until quite recently there were residents who still referred to our house as 'The Ferns'. The change of name came about after many variations were put forward in family discussions once we moved into the village in 1967, as basically none of us were keen on the name we had inherited! However, it was felt that somewhere within the new name we

should keep 'fern', not only because there were many ferns growing around the house but also in order to assist the postman, milkman & paper boy.

Fern Hill, a beautiful poem written by Dylan Thomas, has references to 'the lilting house' and 'under the apple boughs' and his 'carefree' country existence, all most significant to our small corner of Elmore. But we were hardly on a hill! (*Tell the residents of Elmore Back that, Ed*)

We had recently arrived from abroad having lived on a large farm in Kenya surrounded by hay & here we were in Elmore surrounded by hay - So the new name was born.

Incidentally for those who didn't know, The Village Players were created over 50 years ago by Diana & Laurie Duirs with the initial play readings regularly taking place in our front room at 'Fernhay'. The first Pantomime was finally launched in The Village Hall and The Players never looked back. The main intention of forming this group was to bring people together from surrounding villages, especially the young, to offer a different activity to local inhabitants and to add extra purpose to people's lives. This resulted in much hilarity, years of pantomime performances in addition to a great social side for all age groups, which continues to this day. This mantra has continued over the past 50 + years and both Diana and Laurie would be more than happy with their legacy which has flourished over time and was created here at Fernhay.

Jenny Field

*In Jenny Field's piece, above, I referred readers to a previous edition of **The Bridge!** I'm sure many of these have long been assigned to that great paper recycler in the sky, so this is a reminder that all previous editions (and lots of other good stuff) can be found on the Parish Council website: [www.elmoreparish.co.uk](http://www.elmoreparish.co.uk) Ed*

## **News from St John the Baptist Church Elmore**

At present the church is still without a vicar but the good news is that we have been told we can soon advertise for a new vicar for our Benefice. The benefice is made up of three Parishes. Elmore, Hardwicke and Longney.

Elmore Church is operating as normal with a Eucharist at 9.30am on the first and third Sunday of each month and an Evensong on the second and fourth Sunday at 4.00pm.

We will be holding several events to help fund-raise for our Church in the Autumn and would greatly appreciate your support.

Our first Event is a Concert on Friday 19th September, Churchdown Male Voice Choir will be entertaining in the Church. Concert starts at 7.30pm On Saturday 11th October we will be holding our Harvest Supper in the Village Hall 7.00pm for 7.30pm. Tickets cost £18.00 This event is always popular and tickets can be obtained from Jennifer Watts Tel 720233 or Jill Hurran Tel 720539

On 14th December we will hold our Christmas Lunch in the Village Hall in aid of the Church. 12.30pm for 1.00pm. Tickets cost £25.00. Please order your tickets early to avoid disappointment, also from Jennifer Watts or Jill Hurran

### **Christmas Services**

21<sup>st</sup> December Nine Lessons and Carols at Elmore at 6.30pm

24<sup>th</sup> December Midnight Mass at 11.15pm at Longney

25th December Eucharist at Elmore Church at 9.30am

If you fancy coming along you will be most welcome.

Jill Hurran

## **A Plea from an Oldie to those Young Screen Addicts out there.**

Time may well turn out to be endless, who knows? What we do know is that it is linear and flows along at precisely 1 second per second, and only ever in one direction. As it came marching past our one and only window of opportunity, we have all been unbelievably lucky. Against odds far greater than getting 10 jackpot lottery wins in a row, we were born into existence and have all been granted a tiny portion of time to use as we see fit. One tiny portion, but one amazing chance of life.

There are a few restrictions. It starts off well with endless opportunities and infinite horizons but don't be fooled because eventually it all has to end in the gloomy, cramped reality of ill health and death. It takes a while but we will all at some time have to come to terms with this fact, that all roads lead to the same final destination.

But hey! Not to get down, we're given enough of it to cram in lots of fun along the way, right?

But do we?

How many of us realise this fact early enough to make the most of our journey as we travel and hence extract all the available experience from the potential it has to offer? It is a shame but the facts are that one day you will wake up and be too old and frail to attempt anything adventurous anymore and when that point arrives, all you will have, to come to terms with the life you have lived, will be your "memories". Memories - the conscious collection of events captured and stored in the mind.

Event? – Well surely that's just a change from the norm. Something different, something that isn't "Routine". The changes may not always be good, but none the less changes are "memorable" and that's the important bit here because memories are life's markers along our personal time line, something we can later use to measure our breadth of experience (and worth) during this short existence.

Routine – Routine is BAD. It consumes time, your time, your short, precious time. Like some monstrous grub chomping away, creating large empty cavities in what would otherwise be a collection of healthy memories, void of accountability and leaving you with little to reflect on when it's time to look back.

Can you remember what you did two weeks ago last Tuesday? Unless something happened out of the ordinary (an event) I doubt it. Remember what you did on the first day of your last holiday? .....there you go.

I know, it's all too easy to find excuses. "Wish I could find the time but..." then curl up on the sofa in front of your screen...yet again! Well that won't help you justify your actions to yourself in those final years. Then you'll wish, like so many before you, that you'd done something with your life. Don't sit and watch it, living your life through others on the screen. Be a person that's out there doing it. Don't dream about it – Do it.

Far too many go through life with a wishbone where their backbone should be. Think hard and don't leave it too late. Don't allow your "What ifs" to become your "If only's". Life is not a rehearsal. The curtain's up and you're already out there, and one day it'll be you, the critic, judging the performance after the show –

So what are you going to write? - How is that performance coming along?

Tony Leach

# **Book Review:-Mansfield Park**

**by Jane Austen**

This is Jane's longest book and possibly her least well known. When it was first published in 1814 it was not a commercial success. However, it has stood the test of time and is well worth a read. It deals with several themes still very relevant today.

The book concerns three sisters; Mrs Price, Lady Bertram and Mrs Norris (we never learn their maiden name or their first names) Mrs Price married for love rather than money and lives in relative squalor with her nine children and husband in Portsmouth. Lady Bertram is the wife of Sir Thomas Bertram, the owner of Mansfield Park and lucrative estates in Antigua (so he must be a slave owner, though this is not mentioned in the book) Lady Bertram is indolence itself and seems to care more for her pug than anything else. Mrs Norris, the embittered widow of Rev Norris, who had a living in the gift of Sir Thomas, has now moved out of the Parsonage and lives in the 'Big House', Lady Bertram's lack of 'grip' gives Mrs Norris a disproportionate amount of influence in the Mansfield household.

Enter our heroine, Fanny Price. Fanny, aged 10, is brought from Portsmouth by Sir Thomas as an altruistic gesture to live at Mansfield, but she is treated badly by Mrs Norris, made to live in an attic room, is allowed no fire and is effectively a servant. She is continually put down and is made to feel decidedly inferior to her Bertram cousins, Tom, Maria, Edmund and Julia. Her only consolations are the extensive Mansfield library and her cousin Edmund, who is the only one who treats her kindly.

The action jumps 8 years, Fanny is 18 and in love with Edmund, though he in turn is in love with Mary Crawford, the beautiful sister of Mrs Grant (wife of Rev Grant, the new parson). Mary and her brother, Henry are staying with their sibling. The Crawfords have decidedly more liberal views than was normal in aristocratic families of the time and soon draw in Tom, Maria, Julia and eventually Edmund and lead them into mischief. Fanny refuses to be drawn into their schemes so Henry decides to woo her, initially as a bit of fun, later more seriously. Despite her refusal, he pursues her relentlessly in a way which today would be called 'stalking', making her very unhappy.

I cannot say more without giving away too much of the plot but I can encourage readers to give 'Mansfield Park' a go. I have been a devotee of Jane's other novels for a long time but now feel that Mansfield is her best book.

TJ

## **Village Hall News**

The Hall activities are mostly 'on hold' until September, when user groups are up and running again for the new season.

Some repairs and upgrades to Hall will be done during August.

Harvest Supper (in aid of Church funds) will be held in October. More information in this copy of **The Bridge!**

Village Players Panto from end of November. See details elsewhere in **The Bridge!**

Christmas Lunch (in aid of Church funds) will be held in December. More information in this copy of **The Bridge!**

Demand for space in our Hall is steadily increasing, early bookings (or enquiries) are advisable. I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks to all users and supporters of the Hall.

John (Hardisty) Chair

Elmore Village Hall Committee

01452 721798 or [pikelett@hotmail.com](mailto:pikelett@hotmail.com)

## **Elmore WI**

Our coffee morning and plant sale in May raised an astonishing £850.

Many thanks to all who supported us.

In May we welcomed the well know florist, Katherine Kear who spoke about the many sayings and folklore surrounding flowers and the month of May.

Our member's night in May saw us doing gentle Pilates followed by a delicious supper.

In July we were entertained by Kate Peak and her mother Angela Randal who specialise in period costumes which Angela authentically reproduces. The period of this talk was the time of Jane Austin.

We will be holding our annual skittles match at the Anchor in August.

September 9th our talk will be by Rosemary Barron on the work of the MOD war detectives.

October 14th Metal detecting and finds in Gloucestershire.

November 11th Living confidently with hearing loss by Gloucester deaf association.

We are currently booking speakers for 2026.

We always welcome visitors to our meetings at the village hall on 2nd Tuesday of the month.

## **1st Elmore Brownies**

The Brownies have been continuing to work on UMAs (*'Unit Meetings Activities', Ed*) from the Take Action, Be Well and Know Myself themes. We have also been working on some of the Lions at Large activities, 1st Elmore Brownies had the winning design in the county for one of the lions on the trail. A few of the Brownies over the Easter break helped paint the lion sculpture, we are looking forward to our trip in July to see if we can spot it! We also had a trip to WWT Slimbridge; we took part in an activity day where we made bug hotels and got to explore the reserve. We are working on our Jobs badge and Dancing badge this half term.

## **1st Elmore Guides**

After the Easter break we started the term learning how to make salsa as part of our Skills for our Future UMAs. We also have been working on the Lead Skills Builder badge where we all got the opportunity to lead our Patrols through different activities, practice different ways of voting and think about our leadership skills. We have had the opportunity to work with the Canals and River Trust to build a hibernaculum at Saul Junction. Before the half term break we enjoyed a pamper evening. This half term we will be visiting Frampton Tennis Club for a coaching session and enjoy an outdoor games night at Elmore Village Hall. We will finish the term with a summer themed celebration. In July we will be having a trip to Gloucester to see if we can spot the lions as part of the Lions at Large trail. Over the summer holidays we will be having a residential to London to stay at Pax Lodge, one of our five World Centres to meet Guides from around the world and to do some sightseeing around London.

*If your daughter is interested in joining Brownies (7-10 years), Guides (10-14 years) or if you would like to volunteer as a Young Leader/ DofE Helper (14-18 years) or Adult Leader (18+) please contact [1stelmore@gmail.com](mailto:1stelmore@gmail.com).*

## Severnside Singers

We held our annual concert in St Peter's church Framilode at the end of July. Despite the heat it was well attended. We sang a variety of songs learnt over the previous year and shared with our audience a sociable interval with nibbles provided by our members. Several local businesses contributed vouchers for our raffle which provides funds towards our running expenses, musical director and hall hire.

We start practising on Thursday September 11<sup>th</sup> in Frampton Village Hall at 7.30pm. No auditions required, we are a community choir and all are welcome.

## Village Players

A big thank you to everyone who came along to watch Village Players' latest production of Sinister Synaster. We hope you all enjoyed it as much as we enjoyed putting it together. Thank you to everyone who made it possible too.

Our next show is our annual pantomime. We're making the final decision on the show in the next few weeks, so check out our facebook page (@VillagePlayersElmore) to hear what it is. We'll of course keep updates in the coming issues of **The Bridge!** too. If you'd like to get involved on or offstage, please email [villageplayers@outlook.com](mailto:villageplayers@outlook.com). We're a great group with all sorts of jobs to be done and a huge range of ages. If you're looking forward to coming to watch instead, the show runs 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November and 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> December at Elmore Village Hall.

## Stroud & Cotswold Citizens Advice

Do you want to save on your energy bills?

Do you live in Gloucestershire or South Gloucestershire?

Is your home hard to heat (EPC rating of D, E, F, G)?

Is your total household income under £36,000 per year?

If you answered yes to all these questions, you could qualify for free energy-saving upgrades to your home fully-funded by the government's Warm Homes Local Grant. .Call 0800 500 3076, or visit [severnwyke.org.uk/upgrade](http://severnwyke.org.uk/upgrade) to find out if you qualify.

'I'm very grateful to have received the grant and I hope others will take advantage'. This local resident's home was fitted with solar panels and an air source heat pump.

## **Volunteer Drivers Wanted**

We are Community Connexions - a transport charity providing a service to the elderly, infirm, socially & rurally challenged of the county of Gloucestershire. Using either professional drivers in minibuses or volunteers in their own cars, we collect and deliver our passengers across the county to ensure that they can get to, for example medical appointments - hospital (in or out of county), clinic or GP day centres

dementia clubs

shopping trips

hairdressers

visit family

days out to the country or the seaside

We would love your help to promote our service to your parishioners and offer opportunities to volunteer to help us provide this much needed facility.

We do rely heavily on volunteer drivers. If any of your parishioners are keen to find out more about volunteer driving, please contact our volunteer manager Ed Turnill via email

[volunteer@communityconnexions.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@communityconnexions.org.uk)

## **Big Numbers**

The UK's national debt is about £2.8 trillion. It's difficult to envisage what this means but if you convert each pound into a second and use a calculator it's easy to work out that a million seconds is more than 11½ days. A billion seconds amount to more than 31½ years while a trillion seconds comes to just less than 31,700 years. So 2,8 trillion seconds come in at more than 88,700 years. This huge number reminds me of a house I saw called 'Wai Wurri' built beneath a huge overhanging cliff near Punakaiki in New Zealand.

*I hope I've worked this out correctly or I will be getting some more 'letters to the Editor'*

## **Elmore Parish Council Contacts**

Matt Brandon Chair	07894070511	matt_brandon@hotmail.com
Vince Meredith Vice Chair	07951199313	meredith2fn@btinternet.com
Ed Watts	07887548326	ed_watts@hotmail.com
Alison Inwood	07990523153	alison.inwood@outlook.com
Zahra Sadry	07793679033	zahra.sadry@yahoo.co.uk
Dorie Jones Parish Clerk	01453722034	elmore.parish@hotmail.co.uk

**Parish Council website:** [www.elmoreparish.co.uk](http://www.elmoreparish.co.uk)

## **Parish Council Meeting Dates 2025**

September 2025	Monday 15th	
December 2025	Monday 8th	

All the above in the Village Hall at 7pm

## **Copy Dates for The Bridge 2025**

Friday October 10th 2025

Please send copy to the Editor on or before the above dates. Regular contributors will be warned of each of these dates 2 to 3 weeks in advance. Handwritten copy should be sent to Rose Cottage, Elmore, GL2 3NS and electronic copy to [rosecottage1818@gmail.com](mailto:rosecottage1818@gmail.com)