

# Kidlington and Hampton Poyle 800

Celebrating 800 years of history and community life



# *Marking 800 years*

*Ann and I moved to Kidlington just over three years ago when I became the Bishop of Oxford. I love living here and I'm still learning new things. Kidlington is always changing. The airport, new homes and Oxford Parkway station have all brought their changes. But Kidlington and Hampton Poyle have a long story to tell.*

*800 years ago, St Mary's, Kidlington was built on the site of an earlier church. St Mary's, Hampton Poyle was built just to the north at around the same time. Both churches have been at the heart of their communities ever since.*

*An 800th birthday deserves a party, and in 2020 Kidlington and Hampton Poyle are celebrating in style.*

*It's a party with a purpose as together we reshape both churches for the future and play our part in this long story. Take some time to celebrate and get to know these ancient buildings. Come to the big events in both church and community. But take some time as well to come and sit in the quietness and stillness of the churches, as I have. They are both open much of the time.*

*I look forward to seeing you at the celebrations through the year.*

***Rt Revd Steven Croft***

*Bishop of Oxford*



# *Celebrating the past, present and future*

*In the 800th year of St Mary's, Kidlington and St Mary's, Hampton Poyle, this booklet is offered in celebration of both villages, past, present and future.*

*The churches have their own stories to tell, written in their stones. Their walls have sheltered the local community in times of joy, transition and grief, and they have stood solidly through political and religious change.*

*Through it all, these two beautiful churches stand for us as places where our own histories play out; our family stories and the stories of our communities.*

*But the year of celebrations is not only about the churches and their history. It is about celebrating our two villages as wonderful places to live nowadays. There are many celebratory events happening across the year, from open gardens to concerts, and a raffle to ride a camel through the streets at Christmas! We intend to have fun and we hope you will be part of it.*

*We also have three building projects to benefit the local community in the wider use of these churches. The projects are outlined on page 32. If we can raise the money to make these happen, we will truly be leaving a lasting legacy for the people of Kidlington and Hampton Poyle.*

*If this booklet gives a flavour of the richness and diversity of village life here, it will have done its job. We hope that in these pages you will find something new that enriches your experience of Kidlington and Hampton Poyle: a new walk, a previously undiscovered society or activity, or a deeper understanding of the history under your feet.*

*If like me, you love living in Kidlington or Hampton Poyle, let's celebrate together and raise a glass to everyone who contributes to making Kidlington and Hampton Poyle such special places.*

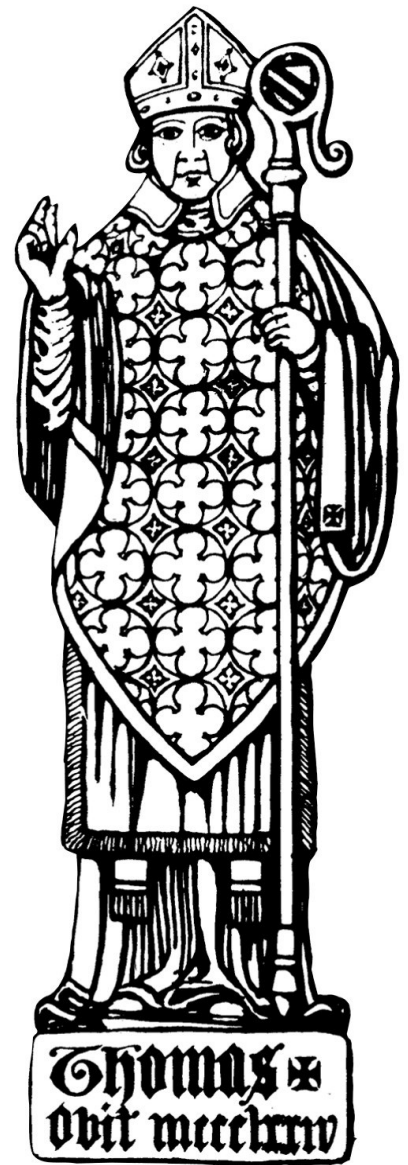
***Felicity Scroggie***

*Team Rector, Parish of Kidlington with Hampton Poyle*



# St Mary's, Kidlington

Tucked away on the north-east edge of the village, the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kidlington is a magnificent architectural gem. The mellow limestone church we see today dates from 1220, when a new church was built on the site of a smaller Saxon church. There are many fascinating features inside, including a superb collection of ancient woodwork.



*Thomas of Kidlington*



*A bench end in the chancel depicting a kid (young goat), a ling (fish) and a ton (measurement of wool)*

## *Our Lady's Needle*

The spire of St Mary's is one of the most distinctive and well-loved landmarks in Kidlington. Visible from afar across the Cherwell Valley, the octagonal spire rises 220 feet (67 metres) above ground level. The weathercock or 'cockerel' at the top dates from 1812.

## Medieval St Mary's

In medieval times, much of Kidlington was under the control of Osney Abbey in Oxford (see pages 6–7), and it was masons from Osney who built St Mary's. The church was designed in the shape of a cross, with a nave for parishioners, a chancel for monks, two transepts and a low tower. Many of the features date from the 14th century, when Thomas of Kidlington, who became Abbot of Osney in 1330, remodelled the church. The spire was added in the 15th century.

## Ancient woodwork

The carved oak bench ends in the chancel are among the finest in Oxfordshire. Dating from about 1430, they include two rebuses, in which the syllables of the word 'Kidlington' are represented in the carvings. The misericords (hinged seats originally used by monks) date from the early 13th century and are thought to be among the oldest in the country.

## The windows

St Mary's was originally built in the 'Early English' style, characterised by pointed arches and narrow 'lancet' windows. Two 13th-century lancet windows can still be seen intact in the north transept. The magnificent east window in the chancel contains medieval stained glass. The window in the north wall of the nave was inserted in 1898 in memory of Dr Henry Parry, a well-loved local doctor. It is a copy of a window designed by Sir Joshua Reynolds for New College Oxford.



*Medieval stained glass in the east window in the chancel (detail)*

## Recent times

The organ (see page 29) was rebuilt and moved to its present position in 1975, and the nave altar, designed by Kidlington-born artist Nicholas Mynheer, dates from 2012. The sculpture above the entrance door is by Walter Ritchie, and a niche inside, supported by a 'Green Man', contains a figure by former churchwarden Stanley Meyer. The marble relief in the Lady Chapel was carved by local sculptor Doug Nicholson.

## St Mary's today

St Mary's was built for the whole community and the church continues to be a focus for village life today. For more on the activities of the Parish churches see pages 20–21.

### *Eight bells*

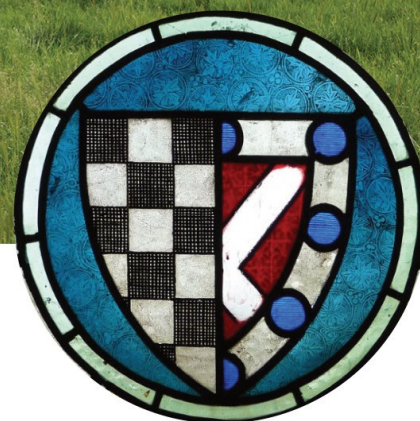
St Mary's is well known for its fine peal of eight bells, but for many years, the church had six bells like Osney Abbey (hence the name of the Six Bells pub on Mill Street). Two new bells were added in 1895, and two years later the eight bells gained a national reputation when the ringers rang a record peal of 17,024 changes in 11 hours 15 minutes without a break. Many memorable peals have been rung since then (see also page 29).



# St Mary's, Hampton Poyle



On the edge of the village, surrounded by fields grazed by sheep and horses, St Mary's, Hampton Poyle enjoys one of the loveliest settings of any church in Oxfordshire. Built of local stone around the same time as St Mary's, Kidlington, it has many interesting features inside and out.



*Window detail showing the arms of Walter de la Poyle. The arms were used in the design of Hampton Poyle's flag (see page 17).*



*One of two stone corbels by the entrance door*

## Small and simple

Two stone corbels greet you at the large oak entrance door, which opens into the south aisle. The core of the church is a simple 13th-century chapel, consisting of a nave and chancel. The north and south aisles were added in the 14th century and the double bellcote at the west end is thought to date from the early 18th century.

## The chancel

The chancel contains some fine features from the 13th-century 'Early English' period, including a lancet window and a priest's door on the south side. The three-light east window, with its geometric tracery, dates from the late 13th century. The glass was renewed in the Victorian period. Medieval stained glass from about 1400 survives in the lights at the top of the window in the north side. They represent the symbols of the four Evangelists. The ornate marble reredos behind the altar, and the tiles at the side, were added in the Victorian period.

## The north aisle

The two recumbent effigies in the north aisle are said to represent Walter de la Poyle, who became Lord of the Manor in 1267, and Catherine, Lady of the Manor, who died in 1489. The window on the left of the north wall shows the arms of Walter de la Poyle, and the brass fixed to the wall represents John Poyle (d. 1424) and his wife Elizabeth. Low down towards the east end of the wall there is a niche containing what is thought to be a 'heart-stone' for the separate burial of a heart.

## Interlocking arms

Between the nave and north aisle is an octagonal pillar with a capital showing the upper halves of four figures with their arms linked. This style of 14th-century sculpture is more common in churches further north in Oxfordshire, including Adderbury and Bloxham.

## *Condemned clergy*

Hampton Poyle's 16th-century priest Richard Thomason was condemned to hang in chains from Duns Tew steeple for his opposition to the first prayer book of Edward VI. The 17th-century rector Edward Fulham was forced to resign and flee abroad on account of his strong Royalist views and his opposition to Puritanism.



## The Parish

Previously a parish in its own right, Hampton Poyle has been served by the Kidlington Team Ministry for a number of years and was united with the Parish in 1997. For more on the role of the Parish churches today, see pages 20–21.



## *Half a mile apart*

There is a very pleasant half-mile walk between St Mary's, Kidlington and St Mary's, Hampton Poyle. The route takes you through St Mary's Fields nature reserve and over the River Cherwell at Wight Bridge (see also pages 30–31).



# *Village history - the beginnings*

The villages of Kidlington and Hampton Poyle have a history dating back to Roman times. Saxon settlements existed here before the 11th century, and the Domesday Book of 1086 tells us that Kidlington had 32 villagers and Hampton Poyle had seven. Both villages had a manor and a water mill on the River Cherwell.



*Kidlington's mill operated until 1917.*

## **Early finds**

The ancient road known as the 'Portway' passed through Kidlington, and behind St Mary's are the remains of a three-sided moat and a causeway. A Roman urn was found in a well near St Mary's in 1840 and many Roman coins have been found in the area. A Viking spearhead discovered in the River Cherwell at Wight Bridge in 1949 is now in the Ashmolean Museum.

### *What's in a name?*

The Saxons who settled in Kidlington were the 'Cudelins' or 'sons of Cydel', and their settlement, or 'tun', was 'Cudelins-tun'. In the Domesday Book it appeared as 'Chedelintone', in 1214 it was 'Kedelinton' and by the 1400s the name was Kidlington. 'Hampton' comes from the Saxon for 'home' and 'settlement', and 'Poyle' from 'Walter de la Poyle', who became Lord of the Manor in 1267.

## **Medieval times**

After the Norman Conquest in 1066, King William I gave the manor and mill at Kidlington to his follower Robert d'Oiley, builder of Oxford Castle. Robert's descendant, another Robert, founded Osney Abbey in Oxford in 1129 and four years later, he gave the mill to the Abbey, along with the tithes and fees the villagers paid to have their corn ground. Osney Abbey became the third largest monastery in England and continued to dominate Kidlington for 400 years.



## Open field farming

In medieval times, Kidlington was surrounded by large open fields, which were divided into strips and allocated to the villagers annually by lot. There was also a large area of common land known as Kidlington Green, and for many years the village was known as 'Kidlington-on-the-Green'. The open field method of farming continued until Kidlington's fields and common land were enclosed in 1818 (see page 10).

## Tudor times

Osney Abbey dominated Kidlington until the dissolution of the monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII. In 1539, all of the Abbey's property was surrendered to the Crown, including the church and mill in Kidlington. In 1564 Elizabeth I sold them to Sir William Petre, who gave them to his old college, Exeter College. From this time until 1886, the rectors of Exeter College were also the vicars of Kidlington.



*Sir William Petre*



*The Old Rectory, off Mill Street in Kidlington, dates back to Tudor times. An ancient dovecote still exists alongside the house.*

## Rural unrest

In Tudor times, landowners began to enclose some of Oxfordshire's common land – effectively privatising it. This caused much discontent in Hampton Poyle, and in 1596 Bartholomew Steer, a local carpenter, led an unsuccessful rising against the enclosures. The authorities were tipped off and four of the men were arrested. Bartholomew and another man died in prison, and the other two were hung, drawn and quartered.

*Evidence of 'ridge and furrow' ploughing near St Mary's*

### *Ridge and furrow*

In medieval times, the villagers ploughed their strips of land using single-sided ploughs, which turned the soil to the right. After working one side of a strip, the ploughman would return up the other side, again turning the soil to the right. This caused a ridge in the middle of the strip and furrows on each side.

# The 17th and 18th centuries

The 17th century brought some unsettled times for Kidlington and Hampton Poyle. A great fire swept through Kidlington in 1638, and both villages suffered from being in the front line during the Civil War (1642–51). In the 18th century Kidlington was at the forefront of England's transport revolution when the Oxford Canal arrived.

## The Civil War

The Civil War was a time of hardship for the people of Kidlington and Hampton Poyle. The villagers were ordered to supply provisions for King Charles I's headquarters in Oxford, and in 1643 Kidlington became the winter quarters for the men and horses of the Royal Artillery. There were frequent skirmishes in the area. The Royalists beat off the Parliamentary army at the Battle of Gosford Bridge in 1644, but the Parliamentarians gradually tightened their noose around Oxford. By November 1645 they had occupied Kidlington, and Oxford finally surrendered in May 1646.



*Lady Anne Morton's Almshouse*

## *A Baroque loo with a view*

The small, square Baroque-style building opposite the Six Bells in Mill Street was a privy. It was built in the grounds of Hampden Manor by Sir John Vanbrugh as a 'thank you' after staying in the manor while he was building Blenheim Palace in the early 18th century.

*The finest loo in England?*



## Manor houses

In 1662 there were about 96 houses in Kidlington including three manor houses: Bailey Manor, Hampden Manor and a manor near St Mary's. The principal manor may have been the partly moated Bailey Manor. Most of the house was demolished in the 1840s, except for the 'best parlour', which was known for many years as Moat Cottage. It is now surrounded by modern houses in Bellenger Way, Grovelands.



*The garden of The Highwayman Hotel, seen here from the canal towpath, was once a bustling coal wharf.*

## *Mother Louse*

A favourite watering hole for Oxford University students in the 1660s was Louse Hall in Gosford, presided over by Mother Louse. She was reputed to be the last person in England to wear an Elizabethan ruff and her fame was such that the building was called Louse Hall for many years. Part of it survives as the Miller & Carter Steakhouse at the end of Bicester Road.

## **Lady Anne Morton's Almshouse**

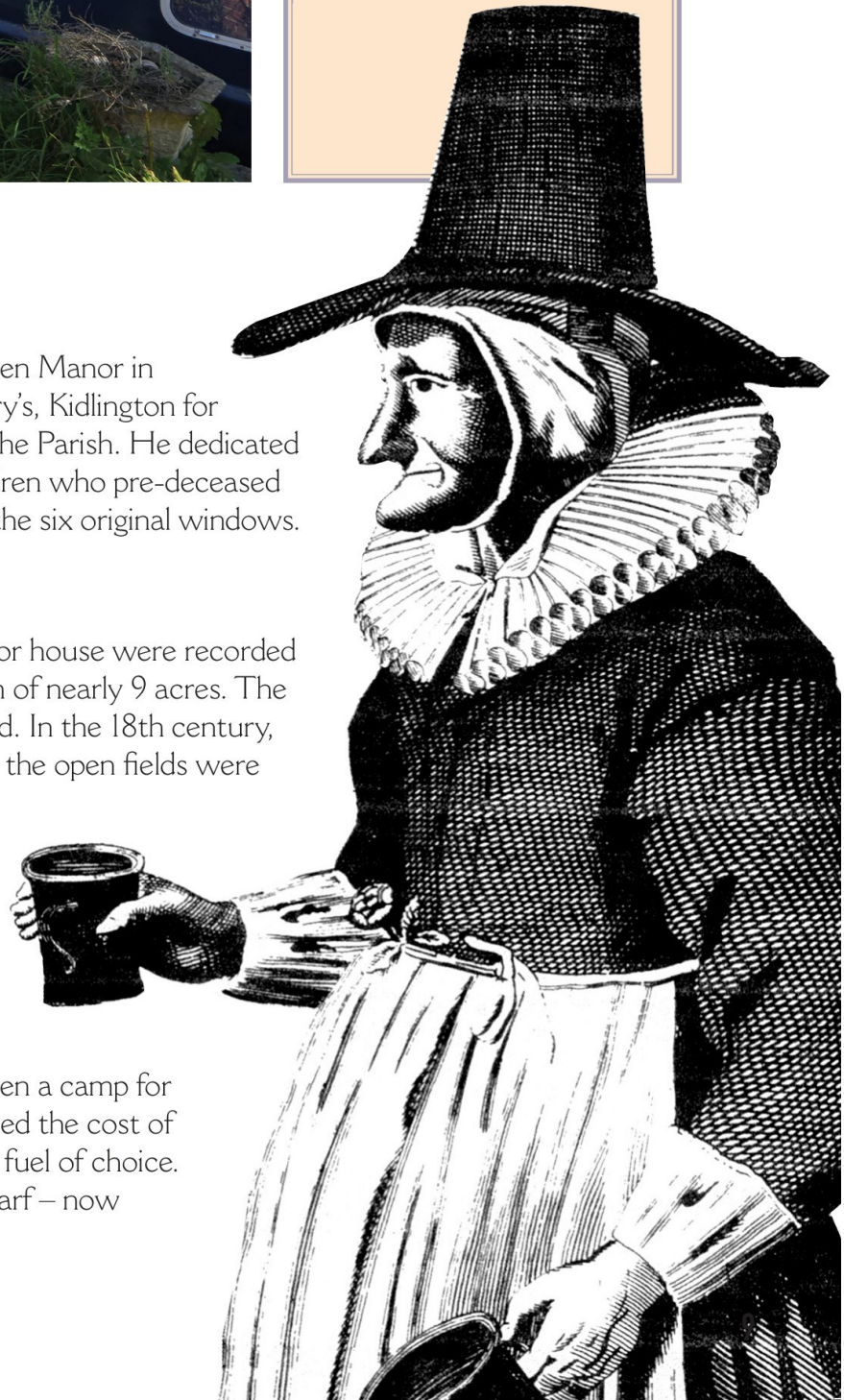
In 1671 Sir William Morton, owner of Hampden Manor in Mill Street, built an almshouse next to St Mary's, Kidlington for three poor women and three poor men from the Parish. He dedicated the almshouse to his wife Anne, and five children who pre-deceased him. Their names are carved on the lintels of the six original windows.

## **Hampton Poyle**

In 1625, ten farmhouses, a rectory and a manor house were recorded in Hampton Poyle and there was a large green of nearly 9 acres. The mill burned down in 1771 and was not replaced. In the 18th century, there was growing demand for enclosure, and the open fields were finally enclosed in 1797.

## **The Oxford Canal**

In 1788 the Oxford Canal reached Kidlington from Coventry. Cherwell Community Archaeology have found several hundred clay pipes in land opposite The Highwayman Hotel, so this may have been a camp for the navvies digging the canal. The canal reduced the cost of coal by two-thirds, so it replaced wood as the fuel of choice. The coal was unloaded at Langford Lane Wharf – now the garden of The Highwayman.



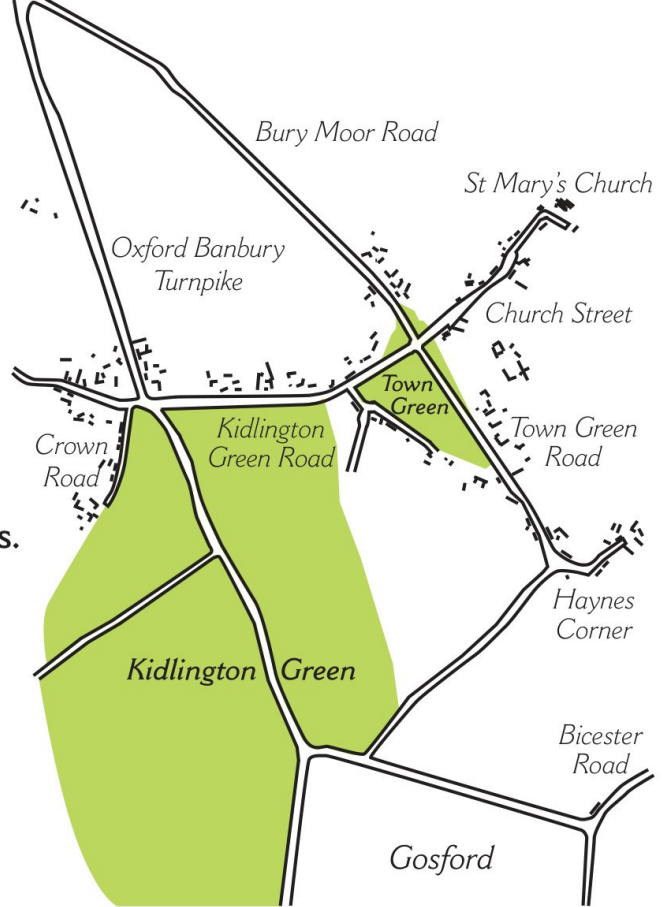
# The 19th century

The 19th century was a time of great economic and social change in Kidlington. The open field system of farming came to an end, Kidlington Railway Station opened, and by 1861 the village had almost 1,200 inhabitants. Hampton Poyle's population also grew in the first half of the 19th century.

## Enclosure

At the beginning of the 19th century, Kidlington was still a scattered village surrounded by open fields and greens. In 1818 these greens and fields – 2,624 acres in all – were enclosed, and individual landholdings were created. The enclosures increased food production but the larger landowners obtained the lion's share of the land – in Kidlington the Duke of Marlborough was the largest beneficiary with 681 acres, including much of Kidlington Green.

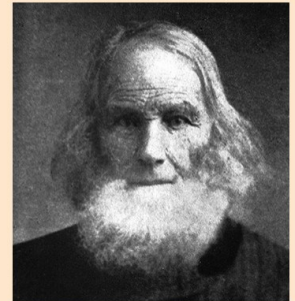
*For about a hundred years, the Bateman family ran a village store at the top of Church Street on 'Bateman's Corner'.*



*Kidlington before the enclosures, showing the large Kidlington Green and smaller Town Green. Both greens were lost to enclosure in 1818.*

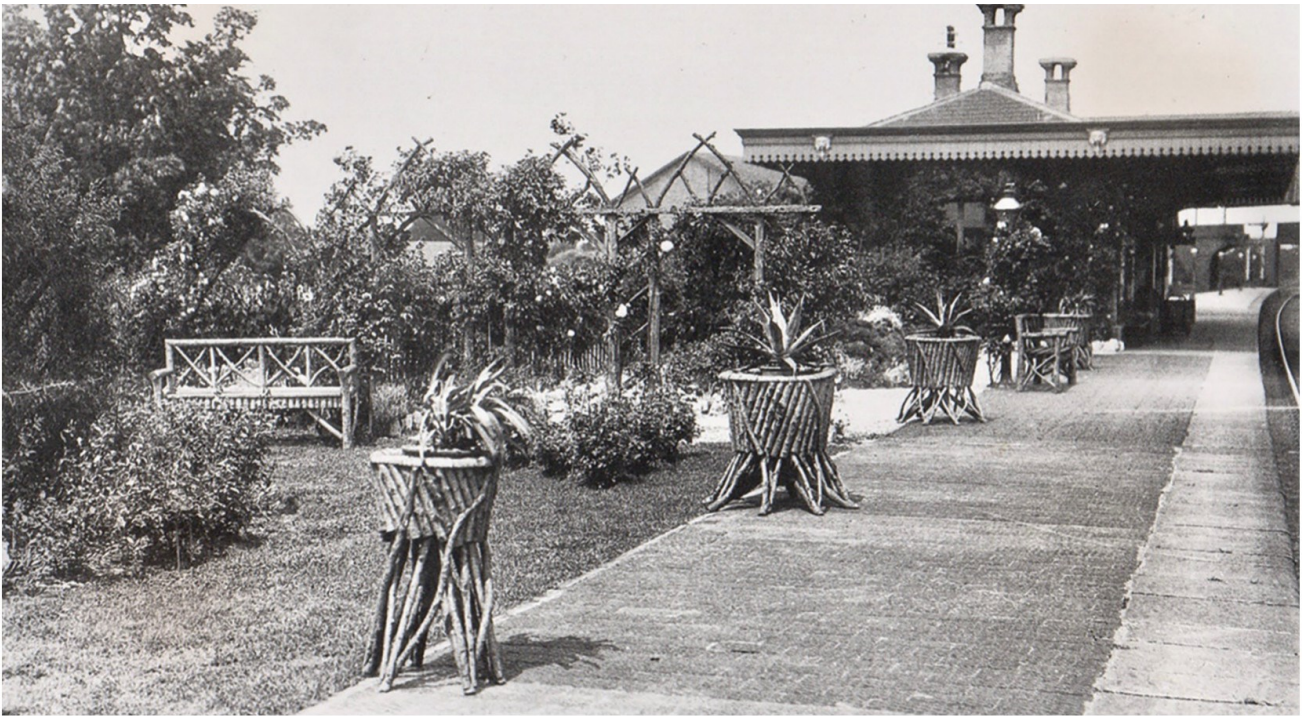
## *Beecham's Pills are just the thing!*

In 1840 Thomas Beecham came to live in Kidlington to be with his uncle, who was living at what is now 14 School Road. Thomas worked as a gardener and 'letter carrier' or postman. He had acquired a knowledge of herbal remedies when working as a shepherd, and developed a pill which was an effective laxative. In 1847 he moved to Lancashire where he founded the Beecham pharmaceutical company.



*Thomas Beecham*





*Kidlington Station won several awards in the 'best-kept station' competition.*



### *Village pubs*

Several pubs opened in Kidlington in the 19th century, and some of these still exist today, including The Kings Arms on The Moors (1817) and the Six Bells on Mill Street (about 1835). The Britannia on Church Street opened in 1863 and closed in 2001. In 1846, the New Bull opened on Oxford Road, and became the Red Lion in 1864. The pub transferred to a new building nearby in 1960.

## **Kidlington Railway Station**

Kidlington Railway Station, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, opened as Woodstock Road Station in 1855 on what is now the Station Fields Industrial Estate. The station was renamed Kidlington in 1890, when it became the junction for a new branch line into Woodstock. The goods yard dealt with coal, timber, livestock and fruit. The station closed in 1964.

## **A self-sufficient village**

Kidlington in the 19th century was largely self-sufficient. In Church Street alone there were two village stores, a baker, butcher, laundress, blacksmith, a coal merchant, a scrap metal dealer and a boot and shoe repairer. There was a timber yard at the station and Webb & Bennett bell hangers in Mill Street. A new school was built in 1828 (see page 18), and the village's first post office opened in 1868 on the corner of School Road. The village remained mainly agricultural, a speciality being the export of apples, plums and apricots from the village's extensive orchards. Old records show that at one time 6,000 dozen apricots were sent annually by rail from Kidlington to Covent Garden Market.

## **Hampton Poyle**

In the 19th century most of the inhabitants of Hampton Poyle relied on agriculture, working as tenant farmers or farm labourers. After the enclosures in 1797, food production increased, and by 1831 the population had grown to 156.

## **Population decline**

The widespread agricultural depression in the late 19th century affected Kidlington and Hampton Poyle and the population of both villages fell steadily from 1861 until the end of the century.

# *The early 20th century*

At the beginning of the 20th century, Kidlington was still a rural village with a population of about 1,100. Between the wars Oxford was a boom town, with the largest car factory in Europe. The effect on Kidlington was dramatic: by 1931 its population had risen by over 50 per cent and shops of all kinds opened to meet increasing demand. As the importance of agriculture declined, the population of Hampton Poyle continued to fall.



*Residents of Kidlington in Church Street celebrating 'Feast Day' in 1905*

## **The First World War**

The young men of Kidlington and Hampton Poyle shared in the country's response to the British declaration of war on 4th August 1914, and by September, 60 local men had joined up. The first Kidlington soldier was killed in August 1914 – possibly the first British soldier to be killed in the war. As the war continued, food shortages and rising prices made life difficult for poorer families – especially when the breadwinner had enlisted.

### *We will remember them*

Forty three men from Kidlington, Gosford, Water Eaton and Thrupp, and one man from Hampton Poyle lost their lives in the First World War. Each year, on Remembrance Sunday, a ceremony is held at the War Memorial in the corner of St Mary's churchyard, Kidlington, to commemorate the sacrifice of all those killed in the two world wars and later conflicts.

*Troops on Banbury Road, 1913*



## Kidlington grows

In the late 1920s, the Duke of Marlborough began to sell building plots along the Banbury and Oxford Roads, leading to the comment that Kidlington had 'some of the ugliest ribbon development in the county'. By 1931 the village had almost 1,700 inhabitants, and the population continued to increase throughout the 1930s. Taylor Woodrow started to build Garden City in the late 1930s, but work stopped on the outbreak of the Second World War.

## Kidlington modernises

Kidlington's first garage, selling petrol in two-gallon tins, opened in 1919, and the first regular daily bus service from Oxford to Kidlington began in 1923. In 1924, gas came to the village. Mains water arrived in 1934, but council houses had outside standpipes. Mains drainage was not installed until after the Second World War.

## Kidlington Bacon Factory

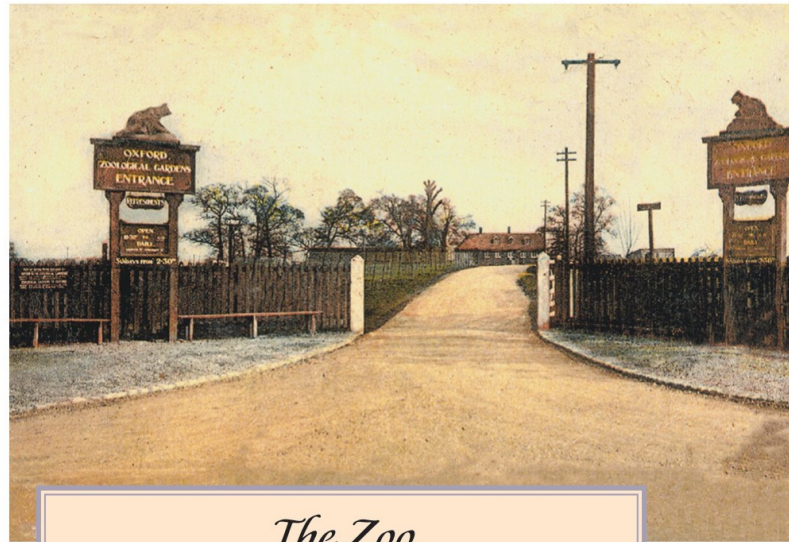
In 1923 industry came to the village in the shape of the Kidlington Bacon Factory. 560 Oxfordshire farmers had subscribed £25,000 to build a modern factory near the station to produce bacon of Danish quality (the first manager was a Dane). The factory processed 500 pigs a week.

## Methodist Church

A Methodist chapel was originally established in 1846 on Mill Street, at the junction with Evans Lane. This chapel continued in use until 1861 when a new chapel was built on School Road. The Methodist Church we see today on Oxford Road was opened in 1936, and the chapel on School Road was later demolished.



Banbury Road in the 1930s



## The Zoo

In 1931, Oxford Zoological Gardens opened at Gosford Hill Farm. The zoo became a great treat for local children and for those who came on buses from Oxford. Among the star attractions were Hanno the lion and Rosie the elephant, whose statue on the Kidlington roundabout now greets arrivals to the village. The zoo closed in 1937 and most of the animals were transferred to the new Dudley Zoo.

Route 20 ran from Boars Hill to Bateman's Corner in Kidlington via Carfax.



# The Second World War

In 1939, despite the growth of the previous 20 years, Kidlington was a very different place from today's large community. There were ten farms, and small local shops served a population of about 3,000.

## Wartime Kidlington

With the coming of war, villagers were subjected to rationing and some constructed air raid shelters. At night, lights had to be dimmed and air raid wardens patrolled the streets. The airfield was bombed several times but the village was spared. A stick of bombs fell across the fields between Banbury Road and The Moors – villagers reckoned that one bomb more would have hit the Sterling Cinema.

## Oxford Airport at War

Oxford Airport was formally opened in July 1939 by the Mayor of Oxford, but was almost immediately requisitioned by the RAF on the outbreak of war in September. The airport had several roles during the war, including pilot training. There was also a repair workshop where damaged North American Mustang fighters were repaired. In 1941, the famous pioneer aviator Amy Johnson lost her life in the Thames Estuary after losing her way in appalling weather while ferrying an aircraft to Kidlington.

## Truby's Cafe

Truby's Cafe was a transport cafe well known to lorry drivers passing through Kidlington. During the war it was a favourite stop for drivers of the 'Queen Mary' low loader trailers, which were used to transport aircraft. Local children would gather to inspect both British and German aircraft carried on these vehicles, and collect souvenirs.

### *Bomb craters*

F.W. Chamberlain was a parish clerk who maintained Kidlington's footpaths. His handwritten notebook includes the following entry for 1941.

*Path No. 13 from The Moors to Banbury Road*

*13 bombs dropped in fields and allotments, 10 May 1941. The crater in Ben Close was 46ft across. Two of the bombs dropped in the allotments failed to explode & were got (17 + 20ft deep respectively) 25 May 1941.*

*Looking towards Gosford Turn and Truby's Cafe in the late 1930s*





## Evacuees

Soon after the outbreak of war, 271 evacuees from East Ham Grammar School for Girls came to Kidlington. Villagers with spare rooms provided homes for some of the girls, and others were housed in Thornbury House (now Homewell House) on The Moors. At first they shared school premises with Gosford Hill School; later, classrooms were created in the former zoo at Gosford Hill. One evacuee recalled that her classroom had been the monkey house, and another reminisced that a 'Do not feed the animals' notice was left on the classroom wall. Most of the girls stayed until the school returned to London in 1943.

## *Sterling Cinema*

The art deco Sterling Cinema opened in the High Street in 1938. It had 900 seats and a cafe, which became popular for dances, weddings and parties. During the war, the numbers of airmen at the Kidlington RAF airfield increased, and the cinema became very popular, with long queues forming before performances. With the rise of television, audiences shrank and the Sterling closed in 1977. The building is now occupied by Tesco.



*Sterling Cinema in about 1940*



*A street party in Blenheim Road, celebrating the end of the Second World War*

# From 1945 to the 21st century

In the three decades following the Second World War, Kidlington's population tripled, from 4,000 in 1951 to over 12,000 in 1981. With the village's growth came lots of new jobs and a need for many more houses, new schools, shops and churches. After 1981 growth slowed, but Kidlington was already one of the largest villages in the country.

## Housing boom

After the war there was an urgent need for more houses in Kidlington, and the building of the Garden City estate resumed. The population and number of dwellings more than doubled between 1951 and 1961. By 1981 the built area had assumed most of its present form: solidly built up from St Mary's Fields on the east to the canal on the west.



*St John's Hall Church, Broadway*



*Kidlington Baptist Church, High Street*



*The post-war expansion of Kidlington saw a great increase in bus travel. By this time, the Kidlington to Oxford bus was No. 93.*



*St Thomas More Church, Oxford Road*

## New churches

St John's Church opened in 1948 using a hut on Gosford Hill Farm. It moved to its current building, designed by Max Surman, in 1958. The Baptists moved from their small church at Thrupp into a wooden hut on The Moors in 1953. The modern Baptist Church opened in 1966 at the end of the High Street. St Thomas More Church opened on Oxford Road in 1967 next to St Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School, which had opened in 1964 (see page 18). For more on these churches today, see page 21.

## Town or village?

On 19th November 1987 the residents of Kidlington woke up to find they no longer lived in a village. The previous night the Parish Council, with no consultation, had voted that Kidlington become a town. The new 'Mayor' argued that town status would give Kidlington more influence and reduce the risk of takeover by Oxford. But the decision provoked an outcry. Several petitions and acrimonious meetings later, the new Town Council agreed to a referendum on the question 'Should Kidlington continue to have the status of a town?' The referendum vote in February 1988 was clear: Yes: 563, No: 2,836.

## New shops

As Kidlington expanded, the stand-alone village shops such as Bateman's closed as retail and commercial activity became concentrated on the High Street, along the Oxford Road and Broadway. The original Co-op, which had opened on Oxford Road in 1911, was demolished and a new Co-op supermarket opened in 1979. The Sterling Cinema closed in 1977 and was converted into a Tesco store. A shopping arcade, now the Kidlington Centre, opened in 1992.



*In February 1988, Kidlington's village status was restored. The placard by the roundabout said it all.*

## Industrial estates and a new station

After the closure of Kidlington Railway Station in 1964, the area around the station became the Station Fields Industrial Estate housing a great variety of businesses. This was followed by further industrial estates off Langford Lane opposite the airport. The airport became 'London Oxford Airport' in 2009, and Oxford Parkway station opened at Water Eaton in 2015. For more on Kidlington's businesses and industry, see pages 22–23.

### *Hampton Poyle flag*

In 2014 Hampton Poyle adopted a flag based on the arms of Walter de la Poyle (see pages 4–5). The flag is registered with the Flag Institute.



*Oxford Parkway station opened as part of Chiltern Railways' project linking Oxford to Marylebone.*



# *Schools past and present*

Records show that a number of small schoolhouses existed in Kidlington before the 19th century. By 1815 there were four day schools in the village teaching 116 children, and in 1828 a National School for village children opened on School Road. Today, Kidlington and neighbouring Gosford have a range of nurseries, four primary schools and a large secondary school.

## **The old village school**

The National School for village children on School Road was founded by Revd Edward Feild, an energetic and enterprising curate of St Mary's. The school was rebuilt in 1871 and catered for most village children until 1932 when the children aged 11 to 14 moved to the new Gosford Hill School. The old school continued in use until 1952 when the children were transferred to the new Kidlington County Junior School (renamed Edward Feild School in 1964) in Bicester Road. The old school building burned down in 1977 and Frank Cook Court now stands on the site.

## **Blenheim Road Infants School**

Kidlington's population rose rapidly in the 1930s and the old village school became overcrowded. To provide for the need, a new infants school in Blenheim Road opened in 1939, with 119 pupils on the roll, 80 of whom had been transferred from the old village school. The infants school closed in 1981.

## **Primary schools**

After the war, Kidlington's population grew rapidly again, and by the 1950s more school provision was needed. In the eight years from 1956 to 1964 three more primary schools opened: West Kidlington, North Kidlington and St Thomas More Roman Catholic School. Along with Edward Feild School, these primary schools remain major contributors to the village community today.

*The old village school in School Road*





North Kidlington Primary School



West Kidlington Primary School



Edward Feild Primary School



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

## Gosford Hill School

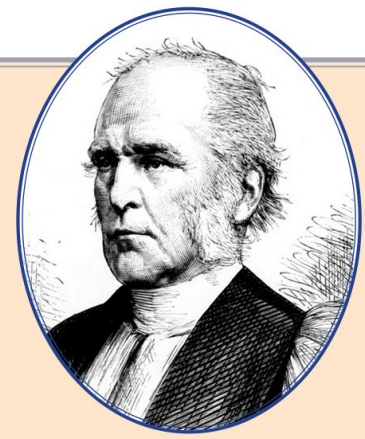
Gosford Hill secondary school was built in 1932 serving Kidlington, Hampton Poyle and other surrounding villages. In 1938 it became a county secondary school and in 1964 a comprehensive. It now has academy status, 900+ students, a thriving sixth form and students who excel in arts, sports, business and academic life. The school is a venue for many community events, and the campus is home to the Kidlington Adult Learning Centre.

## Education in Hampton Poyle

The first village school in Hampton Poyle was established in 1833, teaching 20 children in a small cottage. In 1854 an infant school opened for under-fives and there was a weekly winter school for older boys. Standards may not have been very high, as it was decided in 1871 to send children over the age of six to Bletchington. The school finally closed in 1890 and since then children have attended schools in surrounding villages.



Students from Gosford Hill School in a performance of 'Oliver!'



## Who was Edward Feild?

Edward Feild was a young priest and tutor at The Queen's College, Oxford. For nine years (1826–35) he was curate at St Mary's, Kidlington. He shook up the educational scene, opening schools, encouraging his parishioners to exercise and cultivate allotments on church land, and raising money from his friends. He became an inspector of National Schools and went on to be Bishop of Newfoundland, where he built a cathedral and continued his passion for education in training missionaries.

# Church and community today

The Parish churches are at the heart of our growing and diverse communities, just as they have been for 800 years. With an inclusive and welcoming attitude, they are open almost every day of the year and are concerned to serve all residents regardless of faith or church attendance. They are also part of a wider family of churches, Churches Together in Kidlington (CTK), which coordinates activities for the whole community.



*The dog show at St Mary's summer fete offers prizes for the waggiest tail, best trick and best sausage catcher.*

## Hospitality

Concerts, lectures, exhibitions and events are a big part of the way the Parish churches support community life. Sunday afternoon teas are on offer at St Mary's during the summer, and the annual fete is especially appreciated, as residents enjoy music, stalls and the popular fun dog show.

## St Mary's, Hampton Poyle

This little church is very active. As well as traditional Sunday services, events include such country traditions as the Rogation Sunday walk, Harvest Festival, the Blessing of Animals and a very popular Carols by Candlelight on Christmas Eve.

## Marking life events

The Parish churches are honoured and privileged to hold baptisms, marriages and funerals for local residents, whether or not they attend regular church worship. Services are made personal to each family, from their chosen music, to readings and special touches.



*Felicity Scroggie in full robes for Rogation Day in Hampton Poyle. Felicity is frequently seen around the Parish on her horse, Spider.*



*St Mary's Toddler Group flower display for a recent Flower Festival*

## For children and young people

Kidlington's churches offer a wide range of clubs and groups for children and young people. The monthly Joyful Noise services at St Mary's offer music and fun for adults, babies and children. At the Methodist Church, Messy Church is a fun monthly event, and Zac Pack is a term-time group for children aged 5–11. The Baptist Church offers groups and clubs for children of all ages, from Little Fishes to TGI Youth Club. St Thomas More Church offers activities through the Kenelm Youth Trust.

## Church collaboration

Churches Together in Kidlington (CTK) unites Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists and the Lifehouse Community Church in activities for the whole community. Recent activities include Kidlington Jamboree (a family fun day in the High Street), carol singing, a fellowship meal, the Flower Festival, and joint services. CTK also supports the North Oxfordshire Community Food Bank, which meets at the Baptist Church.

## The Community Hub

Kidlington Community Hub in St John's Church or St Mary's provides a space for playing, craft, singing, listening to stories, healthy refreshments and friendship. There are separate groups for babies, toddlers, and children with special needs. Additionally, drop-in sessions offer support to parents, with NHS health visitors and midwives attending to ensure local access to such vital services as parent education classes, baby weighing and child health clinics.



*Kidlington Community Hub runs most weekdays.*

## Community activities

As well as many other events, the Methodist Church hosts an annual Family Fun Day and is the venue for the popular Antique & Collectors Market. The Baptist Church is a lively focal point for a wide range of community activities. For more information on the activities at Kidlington's churches, see pages 24–25.



*Family Fun Day at the Methodist Church*

# *Kidlington and Hampton Poyle today*

With a population of over 15,000 including the parish of Gosford and Water Eaton, Kidlington is one of the largest villages in England. As it grows and thrives, so do its local amenities. Hampton Poyle remains a rural hamlet with a population of about 195 (including Hampton Gay). The two meeting points, the church and The Bell, are significant assets in a small community.

## **Thriving Kidlington**

There are about 50 shops in Kidlington and neighbouring Gosford, as well as banks, pubs, restaurants and cafes. A market does bustling trade on Fridays and Saturdays in the High Street, and other services include vets, dentists, optometrists, care homes, estate agents, two medical centres, sporting facilities (see page 26), four primary schools and a secondary school (see pages 18–19).



*Kidlington market*

## *Hampton Poyle today*

Hampton Poyle, with its historic limestone houses, winding lanes and ponds, has much rural charm. There is no formal civil parish committee, but the village has an informal committee of active residents who look after local and national issues affecting the village. The Bell, an independent hotel, public house and restaurant, draws its clientele from far and wide to enjoy gastronomic food and stay in its nine boutique bedrooms.





## The library

An average of 300 people a day use Kidlington's public library. As well as books, audiobooks, newspapers and magazines, the library has computers for public use, with free internet access. There are Age UK computer classes, book groups for the over 60s, and many activities for children. The library also has an extensive local history and information section.



## Exeter Hall

Exeter Hall on Oxford Road is the home of Kidlington Parish Council and also houses Cherwell District Council Customer Services, Kidlington Information Centre and Citizens Advice. It's a one stop shop for information about housing, benefits, local amenities, and the Good Neighbour Scheme, which organises volunteer support for elderly or isolated residents. With a capacity of around 250 people, the hall is a popular venue for community events.

## Council and community

Kidlington Parish Council arranges many events for the community, including an annual Gala Day, a Fireworks Display, and the Christmas Lights Switch On. It also organises Kidlington's 'In Bloom' entry (see page 30) and is responsible for the village's allotments and recreation grounds (see pages 26 and 30). The Council has a strong working partnership with Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Council, adopting a collaborative approach to serve the interests of the communities.

## Major employers

Kidlington is home to the headquarters of several major organisations: Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Thames Valley Police, the county St John Ambulance, the Anglican Diocese of Oxford, and the publishing company Elsevier. Gyllyan, the chocolate company, also has premises here. On Langford Lane is Oxford Motor Park, which has showrooms for most leading motor manufacturers.

## The airport

London Oxford Airport is a busy commercial airport handling VIP business, service and repair work. It is also used for private and recreational aviation and is home to the largest air training school in Europe. Pilots come here from across the world and go from here to fly for all major airlines.

### *Kidlington Voice*

Kidlington Voice is the focus organisation for local businesses, and also includes representatives from schools and church groups. A monthly meeting and informative website, [www.kvoice.co.uk](http://www.kvoice.co.uk), provides the chance for sharing news, networking and promoting events.



# Community groups and activities

There is no shortage of things to do in Kidlington and Hampton Poyle. Kidlington residents can take their pick from a vast array of groups and activities. Hampton Poyle may be a lot smaller, but it is very active socially and the spirit of togetherness, support and fun is just as evident.

## What shall we do today?

Sometimes there's just too much on offer! For those who enjoy dancing, the Folk Dance Group meets at Edward Feild School, and there's Jive+ at Gosford Hill School. Among other flourishing groups are the Gardening Society, Historical Society, Royal British Legion, Townswomen's Guild, Women's Institute, Trefoil Guild, Cherwell Community Archaeology, the Angling Society, and Kidlington Camera Club Photo Group. There are adult learning opportunities at Gosford Hill School, a wide choice of musical groups (see pages 28–29), sports and fitness clubs (see page 26) and organisations for children and young people (see page 27).

## Arts and crafts

Art groups meet at St Mary's and the Baptist Church, and the Baptist Church also provides the venue for the Roundabout Quilters and Nifty Needles craft groups.



*Roundabout Quilters produce beautiful patchwork and appliqué works.*

## Caring, friendship and support

Many groups exist to give friendship and support, including Friendly Faces, Kidlington & District Carers' Group, and the Late Spring Group, which gives bereavement support to the over 60s. Retired residents can get together for a coffee and chat at monthly drop-in sessions at St John's. Charlbury Close

Social Club offers activities and outings, and the Macular Society provides support and talks for those with macular degeneration. The Good Neighbour Scheme arranges volunteer support for elderly or isolated residents (see page 23), and there's much on offer for older residents at the library (see page 23).



*Each year Kidlington Gardening Society plants beds and baskets for Kidlington in Bloom.*

## *Kidlington News*

*Kidlington News* is a monthly magazine available for a small price from local shops or by subscription delivered to your door. It will keep you up to date with local organisations, school and council news and what's on each month. New subscribers and contributors are always welcome.

## **KIDLINGTON NEWS**

May 2019

Price £1

"The positive energy crackled" in Gosford Hill School's production of *Oliver!*  
See Page 15



Ready for business: Luke, Chloe, Simon and Stuart  
See Page 4



**YOUR NEWS YOUR VIEWS YOUR COMMUNITY**  
kidlingtonnews@yahoo.co.uk All the regular features and more

## Remembering the past

The Kidlington Reminiscences group meets monthly at the Baptist Church, providing residents with an opportunity to share their memories of times gone by, and to talk about the changes they have seen in the village. For those interested in exploring their own family's past, there are family history sessions at the library, and the Oxfordshire Family History Society meets at Exeter Hall.

## Community events in Hampton Poyle

In Hampton Poyle, craft fairs, open gardens, coffee mornings and other events pepper the year's calendar. There's a weekly Saturday Night Club for residents to meet at The Bell for a drink and chat, and there are regular meals out and an annual Christmas Dinner. It is hoped that improvements to the facilities at the church will enable it to be used for concerts and other events (see page 32).



## *Kidlington Abundance*

Kidlington Abundance is a community action group which redistributes and utilises the abundant fruit crops in the village. Community fruit pressing days, held each autumn at schools and other venues, are a firm favourite with local families. Villagers bring spare apples and pears and windfalls to be made into fresh juice in a traditional wooden press, and the juice is redistributed free.

# Sport and fitness

From football and cricket to yoga and karate, there are many clubs and classes in Kidlington for those who want to be active and stay fit.

## Football, rugby and cricket

Founded in 1909, Kidlington Football Club plays at its ground in Yarnton Road. Other football clubs include Kidlington Old Boys, Exeter Rangers, Garden City Boys, Gosford Youth, Kidlington Youth, Little Kickers and Power Play. At Stratfield Brake, Gosford All Blacks (founded 1956) has 15 teams competing in rugby for male and female, young and not-so-young, and Kidlington Cricket Club (founded 1837) has three senior and four junior teams.

## Clubs and fitness

The village's many other sports clubs include bowls, table tennis, basketball, netball, squash and hockey. For those who enjoy running, Kidlington Running Club is a friendly, mixed ability group. There are many fitness classes from yoga and pilates to zumba and vi-box. Kidlington Rambling Club organises regular walks, and there are short weekly 'Health Walks' led by trained volunteers.



Gosford All Blacks



Kidlington Football Club, or 'The Greens'

## Sports and recreation grounds

Refurbished in 2018, Exeter Close has a state-of-the-art outdoor gym, tennis courts and multi-use games area for basketball and 5-a-side football. Orchard Recreation Ground, Ron Groves Park and Park Hill all have football pitches, while Stratfield Brake has a fine pavilion, two cricket grounds and three rugby pitches. Together with Yarnton Road Sports and Social Club, these facilities are major assets that contribute to the health and wellbeing of the village.



Kidlington Cricket Club

## Kidlington & Gosford Leisure Centre

Facilities at the Kidlington & Gosford Leisure Centre include a 50-station gym, 25m swimming pool, cycle-fit studio, sports halls, all-weather pitch, sauna, steam room, squash courts, soft play area and crèche. The centre also hosts a wide range of fitness sessions.

# Activities for young people

As well as sport, there are a many other activities on offer for young people. Scouting, Guiding and other organisations open up the world of adventure for young residents, and offer exciting opportunities to learn new skills and have fun.

## 33rd Oxford (Kidlington) Scout Group

From camping to paragliding, Kidlington Scout Group offers a huge range of activities for girls and boys aged from 6 to 18. Originally formed in 1942, the group meets at the Scout Centre in Blenheim Road. With a total membership of around 200, it is one of the largest groups in Oxfordshire. There are two Beaver colonies (ages 6–8), two Cub packs (8–10½), two Scout troops (10½–14), and an Explorer unit (14–18).



*Jacala Cubs scuba diving*

## Girlguiding Kidlington

Founded in 1939, Girlguiding Kidlington celebrated its 80th anniversary in 2019, and after many years of fund raising and planning, the new Guide Centre on Green Road was officially opened. The group offers fun and adventure for all ages, with two Rainbow units (ages 5–7), five Brownie units (7–10), three Guide units (10–14) and a Ranger unit (14–18).

*Brownies playing Pooh sticks at Wight Bridge*



## Cadets

The 1315 (Kidlington) Squadron RAF Air Cadets gives teenagers the opportunity to learn flying and gliding, adventure training and aviation studies, while the Army Cadet Force offers rifle shooting, military exercises and orienteering. In the St John Ambulance Cadets, young people can learn caring and first aid skills. By joining Kidlington Fire Cadets, those aged between 12 and 17 can discover a range of fire-fighting skills and activities.

*1315 Squadron's Drill Squad*



# Music in Kidlington

The musical scene is flourishing in Kidlington and there are opportunities for musicians of all types and ages to sing and play together. From choirs and musical theatre to folk music and brass bands, there is something for everyone.



KAOS in a performance of 'La Belle Hélène'

## Kidlington Amateur Operatic Society

Founded in 1977, the society has around 100 members and prides itself on being part of community life. KAOS performs three high-standard concerts a year: a spring concert (at St Mary's), a full stage autumn production (Gosford Hill School) and a charity Christmas concert (St Mary's). They are supported by local orchestral musicians. 2019 saw the retirement of their much-loved founding conductor, Paul Ingram, and the beginning of an exciting chapter with their new conductor, Martin Quinn.



Kidlington Community Singers

## *Folk music at The Highwayman*

The Highwayman Hotel at the north end of the village offers a unique musical experience on the third Sunday evening of each month. A musical session featuring fiddle, guitar, accordion and percussion instruments provides the opportunity to join in or just listen.

## Kidlington Community Singers

The Community Singers was started in 2013 for retired people in the village. Around 35 members rehearse weekly at the Baptist Church and take part in concerts throughout the year. Popular tunes performed include classics from the 1960s and 1970s and musical numbers. The performances raise money for charity, and membership is a great way to make new friends.



*Kidlington Concert Brass on a tour to Edinburgh in 2019*

## Kidlington Concert Brass

References to a band in Kidlington date back to 1840. The current band was formed in 1992 by the merger of Oxford Concert Brass and Kidlington Silver Band. The band is a sociable Championship Section band who enjoy both the challenge and surprises of competing and the variety of preparing an entertaining concert program. With regular concerts in Exeter Hall, they are very much part of the village community.

## Music at St Mary's

St Mary's has a strong musical tradition, with a highly proficient mixed choir who, alongside the choristers, lead congregational singing, sing anthems at the Sunday morning service, and prepare more extensive programmes for major festivals. The church boasts a magnificent organ and the eight bells have been rung enthusiastically for hundreds of years (see pages 2–3). As well as hosting a number of traditional concerts, the Coffee Concerts are a monthly series of short recitals given on Sunday mornings by a mix of professional and amateur music makers.



*The organ at St Mary's*



*St Mary's bellringers*

## *St Mary's Choristers*

In autumn 2017 St Mary's Choristers was launched for local primary school aged children who want to sing in church and receive a musical education. The initial cohort of eight has risen to 14, and the group continues to grow in confidence and love of performing. They regularly take trips to sing in Oxford colleges as well as abbeys and churches further afield.

# Gardens, greens and fields

Kidlington's original greens may have gone, but the village has plenty of green spaces, including recreation grounds, allotments and nature reserves. Kidlington and Hampton Poyle also benefit from a superb network of footpaths, which allow walkers to explore the surrounding countryside.

## Kidlington in Bloom

Each year Kidlington enters the 'Britain In Bloom' national gardening competition. Parish councillors, Kidlington Gardening Society and other community groups, schools and individuals work hard to improve the village's public spaces with colourful planting, wildflowers, and food-growing initiatives. Every public space is included in the judging, and Kidlington has frequently earned silver gilt status. An annual local competition for the best front garden is also run by Kidlington Parish Council.

## Parks and playgrounds

Hidden behind housing, often accessed by alleyways and paths are Kidlington's recreation grounds. Orchard Recreation Ground, Ron Groves Park and Park Hill Recreation Ground are large fields with children's playgrounds and football pitches. Exeter Close has an excellent play park and garden area (see also page 24).

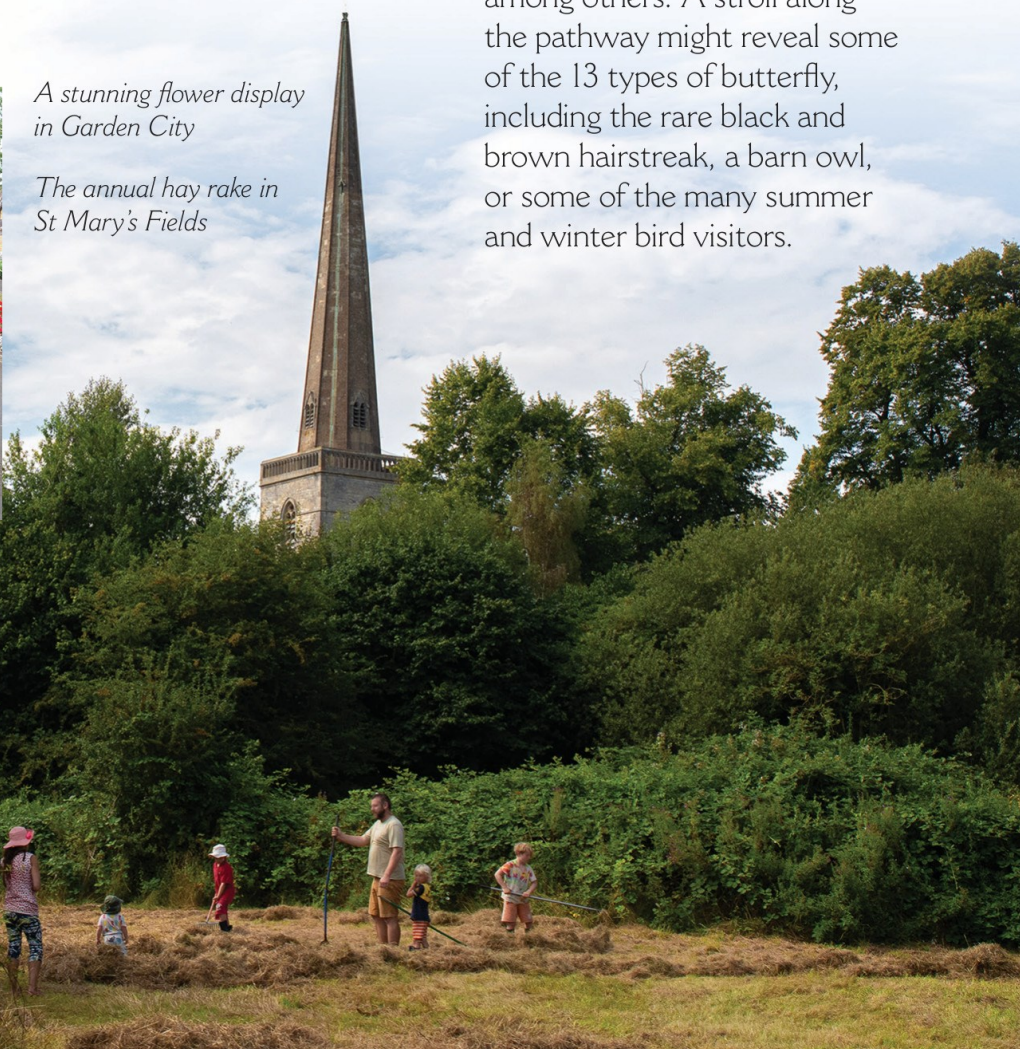
## St Mary's Fields

Behind St Mary's, Kidlington is the 14-acre St Mary's Fields nature reserve. Created in 1999, the reserve is maintained by volunteers in co-operation with the Parish Council. In 2002 it was the first site in Oxfordshire to be adopted as a Jubilee Wildlife Site, and in 2019 it was designated a District Wildlife Site. Special planting and mowing regimes encourage wildflowers – look out for yellow rattle, yellow flag iris and hemp agrimony among others. A stroll along the pathway might reveal some of the 13 types of butterfly, including the rare black and brown hairstreak, a barn owl, or some of the many summer and winter bird visitors.

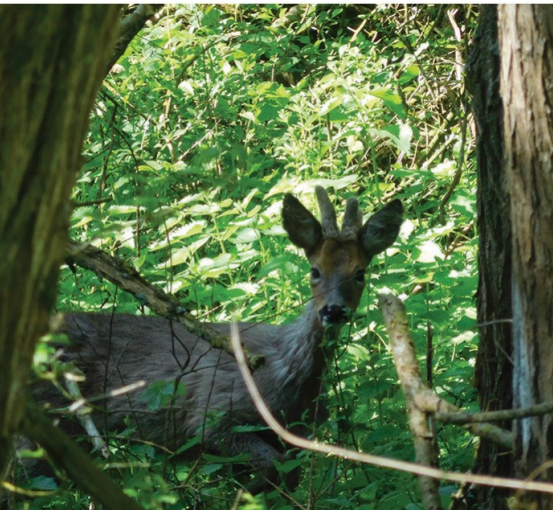


*A stunning flower display in Garden City*

*The annual hay rake in St Mary's Fields*







*Roe deer are a frequent sight in St Mary's Fields.*

## *Town Green*

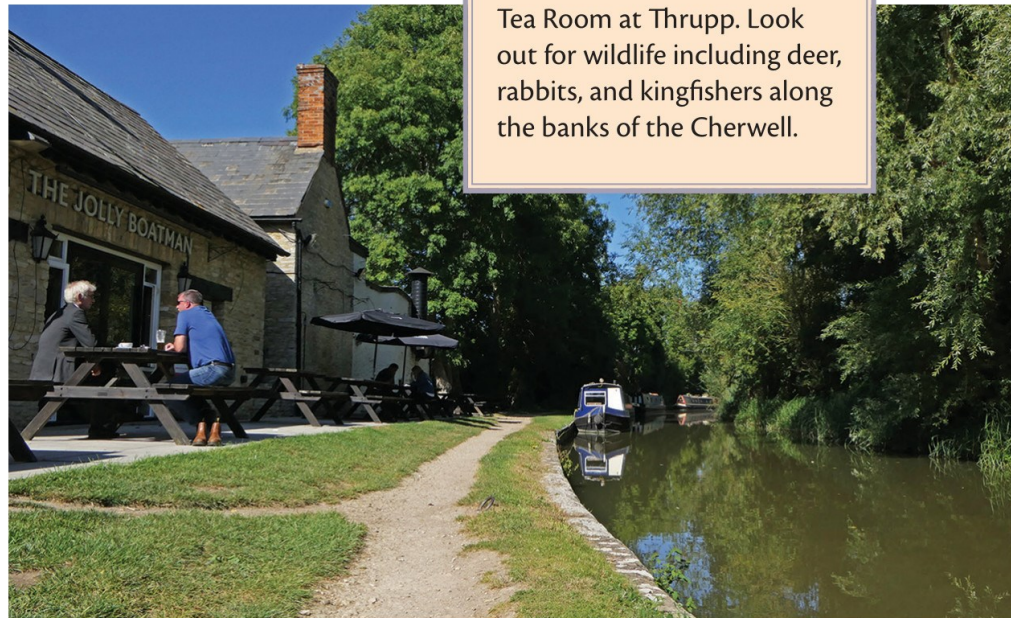
At the junction of today's High Street, Mill Street, The Moors and Church Street was Kidlington's Town Green (see map page 10). The green was a central part of village life, providing an area of open space crossed by footpaths. The green was built on in the 19th and 20th centuries, but some remnants can still be seen today.

## *Popular walks*

Why not take a leisurely walk along the canal towpath from Kidlington to the Jolly Boatman or the Boat Inn at Thrupp? There is also a popular 4-mile circular walk, which starts at St Mary's, Kidlington. The walk passes St Mary's, Hampton Poyle and the ruins of the manor house at Hampton Gay, with superb views of St Mary's spire across the floodplain. It continues past narrowboats along the banks of the canal to Annie's Tea Room at Thrupp. Look out for wildlife including deer, rabbits, and kingfishers along the banks of the Cherwell.



*During an early summer visit to Stratfield Brake you may see the flower spikes of early marsh orchid.*



## **Stratfield Brake**

Alongside Stratfield Brake sports ground (see page 26), are the Woodland Trust's 45 acres of woodland, meadow and wetland. With parking on site and 1.5 miles of path, this is a well-loved space for peaceful walks, and an oasis for wildlife. Over 90 different bird species have been recorded here, including both woodland and wetland species. Meadow plants such as ragged robin and yellow rattle grow in the grassland areas. A footbridge links with the canal towpath.



*Kidlington has 140 allotments for residents to grow their own fruit and vegetables.*

# *Kidlington and Hampton Poyle 800: the legacy*

*Our villages are vibrant communities. As they have done in the past, they will change and grow in the future, bringing new friendships and new opportunities. Our ancient Parish churches will also need to adapt to meet the challenges ahead.*

*Many groups use or want to use these churches but the facilities do not meet modern standards. The lack of toilets at St Mary's, Hampton Poyle limits the events which can be run in this much-loved gem. St Mary's, Kidlington hosts larger scale events and services as well as children's and adult midweek groups. The hall facilities need to be upgraded and made accessible so that the church can continue to serve local people. And nothing can happen without a solid roof.*

*We have three building projects linked to our Kidlington and Hampton Poyle 800 celebrations:*

- *an accessible community hall, with office, meeting room and modern facilities behind St Mary's, Kidlington*
- *a water-tight roof for St Mary's, Kidlington*
- *an accessible toilet and servery for St Mary's, Hampton Poyle.*

*The events taking place in 2020 and the proceeds of the sale of this book are for the Kidlington and Hampton Poyle 800 projects fund which will go towards the costs of these projects. Fund raising will continue beyond the year and all contributions or supportive events are most welcome.*

*Thank you for buying this book! Thank you for contributing to the Kidlington and Hampton Poyle 800 projects fund! Thank you for taking part in the year of celebrations! Thank you for playing your part in our village communities!*

*And may Kidlington and Hampton Poyle go from strength to strength, as healthy, caring, compassionate and vibrant places for residents of all ages to live in.*

*Felicity Scroggie*

*Team Rector, Parish of Kidlington with Hampton Poyle*



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Map on page 10 re-drawn by Simon Borrough.

Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this booklet is accurate. Any errors will be corrected if the booklet is reprinted.




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