

HEYFORD: OUR CHURCH, OUR STORIES — A SUMMER UPDATE

Over the past few weeks, our village project **Heyford: Our Church, Our Stories** has begun to gather momentum, and memories. What started as a simple idea at the Village Hall Garage Sale has already grown into something touching, funny, surprising and deeply personal.

People have begun sharing stories that remind us why this project matters. One resident told us about going to a club at the vicarage. The vicar's wife, determined to keep everyone busy, sent the children out to "tidy the garden". They dutifully pulled up weeds, brambles and nettles, and went home absolutely covered in stings. A small moment, but one that still makes them laugh decades later.

Another contribution arrived this week from a family with long ties to Nether Heyford. Their grandparents were married in the church just after the war; he still in his Private's uniform. Years later, at his funeral in 2017, a cloud of white doves flew past the church door as the family entered. A moment of pure synchronicity for a man they described as "a piece of Heaven". Their story also included the honesty of past hurts, and the grace of letting bygones be bygones. It ended with a simple truth: *whatever your path in life, this church can still hold a beloved piece of your story.*

These stories are completely different, yet each contains threads that will resonate with someone else. A childhood memory. A family milestone. A moment of humour. A moment of peace. **Your story, however small, will be part of someone else's story too.**

What We're Asking People to Do

We'd love you to:

- **Write something down** — a paragraph, a page, or even a few lines
- **Search out old photos** tucked in drawers or albums
- **Talk to family and friends** who might remember something you don't
- **Send us a story**, however ordinary it may seem
- **Come to a Memory Drop-In Day** in September

If you're not sure what to write, here are a few gentle prompts from our interview guide:

- What's your earliest memory of the church?
- Did you attend Sunday School, choir, bellringing, youth groups or school services?
- Was the church part of a family milestone, a wedding, christening, funeral or celebration?
- Do you remember any village events connected to the church?
- What does the church mean to you now?

You don't need to write beautifully. You don't need to remember everything. You just need to begin.

Why It Matters

Every story we collect will help build a **village exhibition** at the end of November, a shared history created by the people who lived it. Something future generations can look back on and say: *this is who we were*.

So this is your call to action: **Get writing. Get remembering. Get rummaging. Get talking.** Your story might be the one that makes someone smile, laugh, or pause with recognition.

And if you'd like help capturing your memories, just come along to one of our Drop-In Days. We'll have volunteers ready to listen, record and scan.

Every memory matters. Every person is welcome.

Tim Brown, Churchwarden

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