

## Harvest Supper Sadly Cancelled

When we started planning for the 2021 Harvest Supper this spring, we hoped it would be possible to go back to the sort of inclusive, community gathering which Ravensthorpe does so well, and that we had to forgo in 2020. Sadly, it became clear that Covid is still very much with us locally, and concern was expressed from a significant number of villagers (who would normally attend) that we could not offer sufficient social distancing to take account of this, and that they would not feel comfortable with communal buffet food at this stage.

We discussed the options and what we could do to take account of this, but concluded that to significantly reduce numbers, provide smaller tables and waitress service, to wear masks, not to have a bar, and to overall discourage mingling went against the spirit of the Harvest Supper we wished to enjoy with our neighbours.

Reluctantly, therefore, we have decided to cancel the Harvest Supper for this year. We appreciate some, particularly those who had already purchased tickets, will be disappointed to hear this, and may disagree with the decision, but we felt it better to decide now than wait until nearer the time if the concerns remained significant. Our grateful thanks go to those who offered to donate food or help in other ways. We look forward to seeing you around the village and to returning to being able to come together again properly soon.

**Rev Allison Twigg, Alice Cooper, & Charlotte Matts**

## Harvest Festival Service and Auction of Produce:



Our Harvest Festival Service will be held on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30am, followed by refreshments and our auction of Harvest Produce. Please do come along, or leave produce at the church on the Saturday if you can't make it. All proceeds to our Bangladesh charity. We would also love any children and young people to come on the day, and bring with them something they have grown or made (can be food, craft or whatever you like!) for Harvest – there will be a chance to share what you have brought along and a small prize for the most interesting contribution!

## Christmas Shoeboxes:

We are collecting shoeboxes for young people or adults in need across the world again this Christmas. For details please take a look at the instructions and checklist (see link), or contact Tricia Freeman on 01604 770855 by 15<sup>th</sup> October, or come along to our shoebox packing party at Brunch@11 on 17<sup>th</sup> October, to donate items or to pass over a completed box. <https://blythswood.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Shoebox-Checklist-2021.pdf>



## Ride and Stride:

St Denys Church would like to thank all who helped in manning the church or riding or walking this year – especially a lovely number of youngsters from the village! We had a very successful year with £301 raised, of which a share goes to Northamptonshire Historic Churches, and a share is returned to our local church.

## Advent Windows and Stones:

Following the success of both of these events last year we are hoping to run both of them again, so start thinking and planning if you would like to take part! More details to follow next month!

### CHURCH SERVICES: RAVENSTHORPE & UPLANDS GROUP OF CHURCHES — OCTOBER

October	Location	Service Type	Time	Flowers
Sunday 3rd October	Ravensthorpe	Harvest Service	8.30am	Liz Reader, Lynn Holt
	Other Churches / Services	Cold Ashby (Harvest Service 5.00pm); Cottesbrooke (Harvest Service: 11.00am), Creaton (Harvest Service: 9.30am), Guilsborough (Harvest Service): 11.00am); Spratton (Worship for All Harvest Service:11.00am); Thomby (Harvest Service 3.00pm).		
Sunday 10th October	10.00 Group Service, Creaton.			
Sunday 17th October	Ravensthorpe	Harvest Festival Service	9.30am	Liz Reader, Lynn Holt
	Other Churches / Services	Creaton (BCP Communion: 9.30am); Guilsborough (BCP Communion: 8.30am), Brunch@11; BCP EP 5.00pm); Hollowell (BCP MP: 11.00am); Spratton (BCP Communion: 8.30am).		
Sunday 24th October	Ravensthorpe	Worship For All	11.00am	Liz Reader, Lynn Holt
	All Churches/ Services	Cold Ashby (BCP Communion: 9.30am), Guilsborough (CW Communion: 9.30am), Hollowell (Harvest Service: 11.00am); Spratton (CW Communion: 11.00am).		
Sunday 31st October	10.00 Group Service, Cold Ashby.			



## **GORDON STAFFORD (1924-2014): CONCLUDING MEMORIES OF A RAVENSTHORPE CHILDHOOD**

*This is our final extract of an unpublished, personal memoir, with kind permission of Gordon's family.*

*The focus in these extracts has been growing up in Ravensthorpe, although the memoir itself is much longer and includes Gordon's many experiences of serving in Europe.*

Germany, 1947

*By 1935, Gordon's eldest brother had left school, as had his two elder sisters, who were now "in service" (as was then quite customary for girls). When Gordon sat his 11 plus exam, he won a scholarship to go the Town and County School for Boys in Northampton:*

"The only bus to get me to school on time, was from East Haddon so until I was 14, I had to bike there and back each day. When I arrived in the bus station it was still over a mile to walk to school. During the bus strikes, quite often we had to bike to Althorp Station and get a train from there.

This period was still just pre-war ....but when I was fourteen, this was the Neville Chamberlain era, it was obvious that war was coming. As young boys we were thrilled to hear the stories told by the old soldiers from the First World War and towards the end of 1938, the talk of war, and even the preparations for it, were the main news items.

By helping out on the farm, I was able to earn a little pocket money, which came in handy for the pictures at Buckby, and I was big enough to help Father on the garden.

(The next year, 1939) there was also a new job for me in the Church. Rather than singing in the choir, I started that of "organ blower", which was a regular Sunday job. Usually done by hand, organ blowing involved pumping up and down a large handle at the back of the organ, out of sight of the congregation. Watch had to be kept on a little lead weight on a string, which went up and down depending on how much wind there was available for the organist. If it passed a certain mark I was in trouble, because the organ would fall silent until I hastily pumped it up again. There was a long pew at the back of the organ and I soon found out that I could stand on this and operate the handle with my foot, while reading a book, (but also keeping a watchful eye on the little lead weight!). I think I had this job until I was about 16 years old.

The war was declared on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939. and I was not yet 15 years old. I had been to the normal church service and the news was quickly spreading when we came out. Prior to this, on the Friday, buses arrived from Brixworth with about a hundred evacuee children (from London), some with their mothers. They assembled in the village hall and then were allocated to their various "hosts". Although families were kept together mostly, it wasn't always possible, and sometimes the children had to be split up. It was very late in the evening before all of the children were found new "homes".

The result of all this was that the number of children in the village almost doubled. I wasn't at the village school, so I don't know what the conditions were like, but at my school in Northampton, we had to share it with a grammar school from North London. The arrangement was that we used it in the mornings and they in the afternoons. This meant that we finished at 1pm. (Later) I decided to get a better bike, so that I could bike all the way to school, and I didn't have to depend on the bus and I could get home earlier. The round trip was just under 25 miles. Both of my sisters worked in the town, in service, so I could also stay in town and do a spot of gardening for their employers, which paid very well.

The influx of the evacuees really altered the outlook of the village people. It was now war-time and everyone tried to help as much as they could. The children soon palled up and were introduced to village "culture". Quite a few didn't last the course and about 50% had gone back to London by Christmas.

As I was now 15 years old and all the local boys had left school and started work, I couldn't wait to do the same, so that I could earn a wage. Some of my older friends at school were volunteering for the Air Force and being accepted at 16 years old. Within a year, some were returning to visit the school, resplendent in their uniforms and some had already qualified as air-crew.

In October 1939, my eldest brother was married, just prior to being called up for military service (they were entitled to a little more money if they were

married). My sister joined the WAAF in the next year and trained to be a parachute packer. Lots of the village lads were called to the various forces, so there was a noticeable lack of young men in the village. This put an end to all the organized football and cricket in the villages. Even the professional leagues were suspended, but teams like the Cobblers could organise their own friendly matches and were able to play any serviceman who happened to be stationed in the vicinity, even top-class professionals. During that time, the manager of the Cobblers was our local baker (don't ask me how he got the job), but because our neighbour worked for him, he had to take the baker's car into town when he had finished the day's deliveries, so the manager could come home when he liked. If he finished deliveries early enough, we had a free lift to the Cobblers Ground and free entry.

1940 was the year when we all realized there was a war on. In June of that year after the evacuation from Dunkirk, troops were billeted in any wooded areas that had cover from the air. One of those was Althorp Park, which appeared to be saturated with canvas.

Two anti-aircraft sites were set up, one at the top of the village on the West Haddon Road and the other at the top of the hill going down to the Buckby Road Wash Brook. Both were just searchlight sites. They were to be well used later in the year during the blitz on Coventry. We could see the sky lit by the fires in Coventry from the top of the village. It was at this time that a bomb was dropped just down the Buckby road, enough to shake our house windows and doors. There was also a stick of seven that fell just over the A428 on the way to West Haddon. Buckby had a stick of bombs dropped on the right at the bottom of Station Hill, parallel and close to the Railway Line.

Around this time, there were also bombs dropped on Northampton, some of which were on the Billing Road cemetery. This was on my way to school, and there were bits of gravestones all over the road and path. Later on, an aircraft crashed in the middle of Northampton, between All Saints Church and the old Law Courts. The crew had already baled out. I didn't actually see this, as we weren't allowed near the scene. but the local paper carried pictures of it.

The Home Guard was formed somewhere around this time (originally the Local Defence Volunteers). Ravensthorpe soon had about 30 or 40 members who attended parades. I was allowed to join soon after I was sixteen, on 29/1/41 to be exact, and was very proud when I was kitted out in full uniform. Wearing the uniform on various occasions, helped enormously when visiting pubs. Landlords never questioned my age. The active part was going on dawn patrols looking out for paratroop landings. They were always thought to be a distinct possibility following the exit from Dunkirk. Dawn patrols started at 4.00am.

From January '41 to the time I went into the Army, I spent a lot of time doing Home Guard Duties. Apart from the early morning patrols, there were parades twice a week at nights, lectures on Saturday afternoons, with Sunday morning field exercises and trips to firing ranges. Church parades were also held on certain Sundays. It was a full life in the Home Guard!!

By Christmas 1940 I was keen to leave school, but I was told that I must wait until July when I should sit my School Certificate. I would be nearly seventeen by then, but I tried again and succeeded in leaving at Easter. A job was soon found for me at the BTH (Electrical Engineering Works) at Rugby. I borrowed a decent bike to get to the interview, but they gave me a warm welcome in the form of a chat and a cup of tea, and asked if I could start the following month. And so in June 1941, I began my long association with Mill Rd. Rugby. My first stint was in the Cost Accounts Office Lamp Works at the princely sum of £1 2/6 (£1.12) a week. It was a huge factory during the war, employing 20,000 people. When I retired in 1986, there were 1500.

In December 1942, I went to the Dover Hall in Northampton and had a medical before enlisting in the Northamptonshire Regiment. Later, on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1943, I joined the Training Battalion at the Nelson Barracks, Norwich.

*In November 1943, Gordon began 4 years of service in Europe and North Africa, starting in Italy in 1943, Egypt, Palestine and Syria 1944-5, and then Italy, France, Belgium and Germany from 1945. Following VE Day in May 1945, Gordon continued to serve in Germany for the following two years. In August 1947 he completed his army service, and returned to Ravensthorpe and to working with BTH Lamp Works in Rugby, where he worked for the following 39 years to his retirement in 1986.*

## Ravensthorpe Village Hall: What's On in October?

Friday 1	9.30am	"Raven Tots"	alina@cooper.bio
	12.15pm	Yoga with Lizzy	07950 573719
Sunday 3	9.30am	Zumba	Lina 07725 984 674
	10.45am	Shotokan Karate	Andy 07891 132675
Monday 4	9.15am	Elizabeth Reader Pilates	07810 235258
	10.30am	Elizabeth Reader beginner Pilates	07810 235258
Tuesday 5	10.30am	Zumba Gold	Lina 07725 984 674
	2pm	Afternoon Bridge Club	Bernadette 770424
	7pm	Village Cinema presents <i>Nomadland</i> (see box). More/book/pay online: <a href="http://www.rvhall.online">www.rvhall.online</a>	
Wednes 6	10.30am	Morning Coffee	
Thursday 7	9.30am	Pilates with Sophie	07764 586990
	6pm-7pm	NEW Shotokan Karate	Andy 07891 132675
Friday 8	9.30am	"Raven Tots"	alina@cooper.bio
	12.15pm	Yoga with Lizzy	07950 573719
Sunday 10	9.30am	Zumba	Lina 07725 984 674
	10.45am	Shotokan Karate	Andy 07891132675
Monday 11	9.15am	Elizabeth Reader Pilates	07810 235258
	10.30am	Elizabeth Reader beginner Pilates	07810 235258
Tuesday 12	10.30am	Zumba Gold	Lina 07725 984 674
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Thursday 14	9.30am	Pilates with Sophie	07764 586990
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Monday 18	9.15am	Elizabeth Reader Pilates	07810 235258
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Tuesday 19	10.30am	Zumba Gold	Lina 07725 984 674
	2pm	Afternoon Bridge Club	Bernadette 770424
Wednes 20	10.30am	<b>Morning Coffee—on the terrace— —all welcome</b>	
	8.00pm	<b>Ravensthorpe Parish Council</b>	
Thursday 21	9.30am	Pilates with Sophie	07764 586990
	6pm-7pm	NEW Shotokan Karate	Andy 07891 132675
	7.30pm	WI	Maggie 770458
Friday 22	9.30am	"Raven Tots"	alina@cooper.bio
	12.15pm	Yoga with Lizzy	07950 573719
Saturday 23	2-4pm	<b>Short Mat Bowls—Come &amp; Try—FREE SESSION Call / Text Lin 07 557 396627</b>	

Sunday 24	9.30am	Zumba	Zumba
	10.45am	Shotokan Karate	Shotokan Karate
Monday 25	9.15am	Elizabeth Reader Pilates	07810 235258
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Tuesday 26	10.30am	Zumba Gold	Lina 07725 984 674
	2pm	Afternoon Bridge Club	Bernadette 770424
	6.45pm	Village Cinema presents <i>Another Round</i>	Village Cinema presents <i>Another Round</i>
Thursday 28	9.30am	Pilates with Sophie	
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Full guidance for newcomers to the sport will be provided.

All are invited, so come and try.  
Refreshments and cakes provided!

Registering your interest first will help us.

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### TUESDAY 5th OCTOBER 7.00 for 7.30pm NOMADLAND

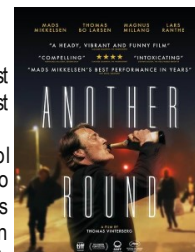
Nomadland is about Fern, a sixty-something who once taught English literature and who, in a short space of time, loses both her husband and the community she lives in when the single employer (a gypsum mine) shuts down. She puts her life in a small van and travels the American West.



Frances McDormand won a third Oscar with 'Nomadland'. Since then, the film has been on an international winning streak, picking up top prizes at the Golden Globes, the Baftas, and finally the Oscars, where its trophies included Best Picture, Best Actress (McDormand) and Best Director Chloe Zhao. 2020 117 mins, Cert 12A.

### TUESDAY 26th OCTOBER 7.00 for 7.30pm ANOTHER ROUND

Thomas Vinterberg's latest film won the Bafta for best film not in the English language, and Oscar for best international feature. A profound yet playful alcohol-fuelled comedy-drama about four high-school teachers, each facing their own mid-life crisis who enter into a Faustian pact to lace their everyday lives with drink. 'Another Round' is unruly in tone with an unforgettable final scene. 2020 107mins Cert 12A (In Danish with English subtitles).



**Tickets: £6 & £4 for students. Go to [www.rvhall.online](http://www.rvhall.online) or email [cinema@rvhallonline](mailto:cinema@rvhallonline). Or, telephone: Mike & Mo Cobbe 01604 328822.**

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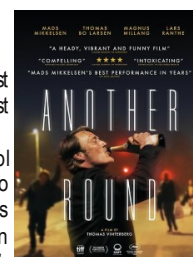
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