



St Thomas of Canterbury

Northlew Parish Church

Festivals and Food

A culinary tour of
the church year

*Front cover:
St Thomas of Canterbury - detail from the stained glass window in
the south aisle*

Hospitality and food are at the heart of Christian life. There can scarcely be a more pleasant way to spend time with friends old or new than sitting around a table sharing a meal. This is how we celebrate and mark special occasions during the church year.

Think about all the occasions in the gospels when Jesus was sharing a meal - at a wedding, at a dinner with religious leaders, with social outcasts, with tax collectors or on the road with his disciples. Think as well about the feeding of the five thousand and the Last Supper. As someone once said, *hospitality is where true religion walks its talk.*

So join us on a quick tour of our church building and the main festivals we celebrate (Northlew style) during the church year. On the way we'll talk about some parish traditions, past and present.

And where there's a festival, there's bound to be food, drink and friendship so you'll find a selection of favourite recipes from local residents to try for yourself.

We hope you enjoy finding out more about our beautiful Parish Church in Northlew. Bon voyage!



*Plaque in the Rutleigh Chapel in memory of
Rev Konrad Rees, Padre to the Mission to Seafarers*



Northlew Parish Church

Northlew is a village a few miles from Okehampton in Devon and together with nearby Ashbury makes up the ecclesiastical parish. A farming community, food and food production are central to life here.

Northlew was mentioned in the Domesday Book so there may have been an older, smaller church on the site. The first clergy appointment recorded in the table of Continuity was Henry in 1258. Most of the current building dates back to the 15th century and the affluent wool trade, although earlier stonework is evident in the tower, font and the west doorway.

The building has seen significant changes over the years, including three hundred years of 'miserable neglect' before major restoration in the mid 1800s.



Clock mechanism in the tower

The clock

The clock in the Norman tower was made by John Smith & Son of Derby and installed in 1897 for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The inscription on the face reads *Peresunt et imputantur* - meaning *They perish and are imputed* - presumably referring to the inexorable passing of minutes, hours and days.

The clock is wound by hand twice a week which involves clambering up a ladder and through a small hatch, working as quickly as possible to avoid being deafened when the clock strikes.



*Stands the Church clock at ten to three?
And is there honey still for Tea?
Rupert Brooke 1912*

The bells

There are six bells in the tower. The oldest is inscribed 1772 and one of them declares *I to the church the living call and to the grave I summe all*. Quite a sobering thought.

The church sits at the top of a hill so the bells (and clock) can be heard across the village. In the past a thriving and competitive group of bell ringers were clearly the champions in Devon. They would visit other parishes to compete for 'a belt and a hat laced with gold' (and sometimes ale) and were seemingly impossible to beat. It was 'prize ringing' with the bells rung in English full circle style. The winners were those who struck the bells in the neatest and most regular way.

*'Twas in Ashwater town, then in Callington to
They rang for a belt and a hat laced with gold.
But the men of North Lew won the ale and the
five pound note too,
And there never were better in Devon, I hold.*

Extract from The Bell Ringing collected by the Rev Sabine Baring-Gould from William Kerswell a Dartmoor farmer



Treble bell (the sixth bell) donated in memory of John Worthington, Rector of Northlew from 1885-1919

Opposite: View from the church tower towards the north



The organ

The organ was built by 'Father' Henry Willis and installed in 1889 in the Holway Chapel. He was a British organ builder, responsible for instruments in some of the country's largest buildings including Exeter Cathedral, The Royal Albert Hall and St Paul's - we are really very fortunate to have a working example here in Northlew, in action every week.

The organ now needs refurbishment and that will be a mammoth task as it has to be dismantled and taken away - but when completed it should help keep us in tune for years to come.



The north and south aisles are bounded by impressive four-bay granite arcades. The north aisle bears the arms of the Kelly family who made a significant contribution to the refurbishment of the church in the 1500s. The letters W.K. (William Kelly of Rutleigh) are visible in several places including on one of the pew ends and one of the pillars.



*Roof boss carved with
vine leaves and grapes*

The building fell into disrepair following vandalism by Cromwell's men. The Norman font was re-installed in 1870 followed by a major restoration in the 1880s when the roofs and benches were repaired and the battlements on the tower renewed.



Plans for the major restoration of the church were drawn up in 1883 by the architect, Robert Medley Fulford of The Close, Exeter. They were approved by the Church Building Society with the following proviso attached to the grant:

The grant will be forfeited, if in carrying out the work any alteration in or deviation from the drawings and specification submitted to and approved by the Society be made without the previous sanction of the Society.

The plans allowed for seating 244 people on pews and chairs in the nave and aisles. The work was completed in 1885 with other donations adding to the Church Society grant. The list includes £1 6s 0d from a Parish tea in 1882, £100 0s 0d from the Crown through the Right Hon W E Gladstone MP and a staggering £109 5s 6d, the proceeds of a bazaar.

The vestry was built on in the early 20th century, tucked in between the tower and the north aisle. It has a lovely stone fireplace in the corner which must have warmed many a minister's toes in winter. The medieval rood screen was re-erected in the 1920s, and intrepid souls can access it through a very narrow stone spiral staircase.



The church year and food

The church year is a cycle, a cycle of festivals, food and hospitality, and an important part of Christian life. The regular communion services have bread and wine and sharing at their heart. But there are many other local events, from coffee mornings in the Church Rooms to fund raising lunches and teas for charity. It's striking how many activities in Northlew involve eating!

We regularly join with the Methodist congregation and hold two services a year at nearby Ashbury Church - with a barbecue in summer (more food) and a candlelit service of Light in November.

The annual steak pie lunch in the Victory Hall at the end of January is a great opportunity to meet up around the table. And the Midsummer night safari supper with different courses served in different homes goes down a real treat.

A regular contributor to our church events is Northlew's very own Silver Band, joining in with Remembrance Sunday, Harvest Festival, Rogation Sunday, the Carol Service - and of course the fete.

Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you.

Genesis 9:3

Listen, listen to me and eat what is good and you will delight in the richest of fare.

Isaiah 55:2

Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.

Ecclesiastes 9:7

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:2

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 4:9



Tudor carved pew end - did the vessel hold wine or oil?

We start our tour of the church year and food at Advent, already anticipating the birth of Jesus and gearing up our taste buds for the flavours of Christmas.

Enjoy!

Advent

Advent is the period leading up to Christmas - just twenty-four days to prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus and to think seriously about His coming again.

Advent can be a good time to hold back a bit and experiment with healthier fare to prepare for the gastronomic onslaught of Christmas. But it can prove difficult as there are a lot of temptations in the way. Little chocolatey calendars, mince pies and mulled wine all beckon, and then there are all those Christmas parties...

There are carols in the Square, a carol service in the church with the Silver Band and even some Christingle oranges in the build up to Christmas.

The Christingle service is a time for families and the community to share a message of hope. You may not want to eat a Christingle but the individual parts are symbolic at Christmas. The orange represents the world, the candle is lit to denote Jesus Christ, the light of the world and the red ribbon the blood and love of Christ. The fruit and nuts (or sweets with some left over if you're lucky!) on the four sticks pointing north, south, east and west signify the seasons and fruits of the earth.

Fresh orange smoothie

A good-for-you treat packed with vitamin C will remind you of the Christingle orange. And as a bonus it might help ward off any pre-Christmas colds.

Just blend together three or four peeled oranges, 80ml almond or other plant based milk, a tablespoon of honey, a teaspoon of vanilla extract and ice.

Good health!



Christmas

Christmas celebrations in Northlew start in earnest with the nativity play and crib service on Christmas Eve afternoon. Local children tell the nativity story using a model of the manger, complete with figures of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the three kings and of course farm animals.

There's usually a late night Christmas Eve service with Holy Communion then, at last, the 25th is here. In truth, we have no idea when Jesus was born although possible dates are February or September. It's likely we've borrowed the December date from the old mid-winter Yule festival which celebrated a return to the light as the days begin to lengthen after the winter solstice. Not a bad choice though, to mark the coming of Jesus, 'the Light of the World'.

After the Christmas morning service marking the actual birth of Jesus it's back home for Christmas dinner with friends and family. These days the turkey is often king of the table as we come together to celebrate the arrival of 'Emmanuel'; God with us, here on earth. For some though, humble pigs in blankets are the best part of the meal.





There was little sign of turkey on Mrs Beeton's dinner menus for twelve guests back in 1901. They must have had tough constitutions (and stomachs) back then. Here are some ideas for your Christmas meal, starting with a nice gin and tonic.

- *For a really fresh gin and tonic that stays cold without getting diluted, freeze some tonic water in an ice cube tray and use instead of plain ice.*



Creamy garlic mushrooms

This is a popular starter at the Green Dragon served with brown bread and butter

- *Cut some closed cup mushrooms into largish chunks*
- *Fry the mushrooms in butter then stir in some garlic puree*
- *Turn down the heat and add a splash of double cream and black pepper*
- *Cook gently for a few more minutes and sprinkle with paprika to serve.*

Vicky Stottor

Yorkshire pudding batter

Yorkies go well with any type of roast, including Christmas dinner. There's a simple way to get the proportions of egg, flour and milk right without reaching for the kitchen scales.

- *Find three glass tumblers all the same size.*
- *Put beaten eggs into the first glass*
- *Put plain flour with a pinch of salt into the second glass up to the same level as the eggs, and milk into the third one, again to the same level*
- *Mix everything in a larger bowl and whisk thoroughly*
- *Stand the batter in the fridge for half an hour and it's ready to use. Foolproof?*



Red cabbage with apple and cloves

- *Fry a chopped onion with some ground black pepper*
- *Add shredded red cabbage and some chopped peeled apple, stir and cook for a few more minutes*
- *Pour in some vegetable stock with a teaspoon of ground cloves to barely cover the cabbage*
- *Cook for about five minutes and add a splash of red wine vinegar at the end to help it keep its colour.*

Val Welsh

Brussels sprouts

If you think sprouts are a bitter toxic abomination then you've probably inherited a gene (tas2r38 for the technically minded) making your taste buds sensitive to the isocyanates they contain. It even sounds pretty lethal.

But if that's what you think, try this. You'll need some sprouts, ideally at least one per person, even if your victims are reluctant. Remove the outer leaves and the woody stem. Cut them in half lengthways so the isocyanates are released into the cooking water more quickly.

Bring a pan of salted water to the boil and add a splash of lemon juice. Then cook the sprouts for 9 - 10 minutes max so they end up slightly crunchy and are still bright green. Cooking them too long concentrates the isocyanate and the bitter taste and turns them an unappetising shade of yellow.

To make them even more palatable you can melt grated cheese over them for a gratin. Or fry garlic, an onion and some pieces of smoked bacon and stir into the cooked sprouts at the end.

Allan Welsh



PS For pigs in blankets fans try marinating them in sweet chilli sauce before cooking or cook them with wedges of orange. Revolutionary.

Far Breton

This was a popular choice at the last Safari Supper but would be a good Christmas dessert too

8oz (250g) pitted prunes

2fl oz (50ml) dark rum

16fl oz (500ml) milk

3oz (90g) sugar

2 tablespoons butter, softened

3 eggs

2oz (50g) plain flour, plus a little for dusting the prunes

- Soak the prunes in the rum for at least thirty minutes (overnight is even better)
- Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F, gas mark 6)
- Bring the milk to the boil, then take it off the heat immediately. Cream together the sugar and the butter, then add the eggs one by one and mix until they are well blended
- Add the flour and mix thoroughly then pour in the warm milk and mix until you have a smooth batter
- Take the prunes out of the rum and pour any remaining rum into the batter. Roll the prunes in the extra flour until they are lightly coated
- Butter a shallow 8 inch baking dish. Place the prunes in the bottom of the dish, then pour over the batter
- Cook for 45 mins or until the pudding is firm to touch
- Serve warm or at room temperature.

Roger Atkinson from Madame Marie-José Cossec, Hôtel de Bretagne, Pont l'Abbé

Margarita cream

Something a bit different to serve with Christmas pudding, cakes, desserts - anything really. Cheers!

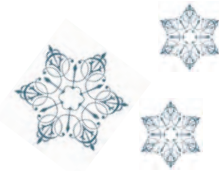
60ml lime juice

15ml tequila

15ml orange liqueur

75g icing sugar

250ml double cream



- Combine the lime juice, tequila and liqueur in a largish bowl
- Whisk in the icing sugar and let it dissolve in the liquid
- Slowly whisk in the double cream until you have a light, airy mixture.

Lena Williams



Caribbean coffee

To finish your meal before a well deserved snooze

- Pour strong black coffee into a heat proof glass or mug
- Stir in some coffee liqueur, dark rum and golden caster sugar and mix until the sugar has dissolved.
- Slowly pour double cream on top of the liqueur coffee using the back of a teaspoon to help slow it down and to ensure the cream floats.
- Garnish with a coffee bean or grating of dark chocolate
- Sip slowly.

Sherry cake

This is a favourite in our household. It's more of a dessert than a cake and it requires no cooking. It's best made the day before - and it's definitely NOT low calorie.

300ml double cream

1 packet Maryland Chocolate Chip Cookies

50ml sherry

1 tablespoon icing sugar

2 squares dark chocolate

Fresh fruit to decorate

- *Whip the double cream until thick, stir in the sifted icing sugar and set to one side*
- *Put the sherry into a bowl and dip the first two cookies making sure they are fully immersed but not soaked*
- *Stand one on its side and sandwich it to the next cookie using a dollop of the sweet cream*
- *Repeat this until all the cookies have been used up. You should end up with a roll approximately 9 inches/23cms long*
- *Use the remaining cream to cover the whole roll and then grate the chocolate over the top*
- *Drink the remaining sherry if there's any left*
- *Leave "cake" in the fridge for a minimum of four hours but preferably overnight*
- *Serve just as it is or garnished with some pieces of fruit such as strawberries or raspberries.*

Sheila White

Christmas turkey leftovers special

What's special about it? Well, it's stir fried with egg noodles and Chinese five spice. The recipe's light on detail (as well as your waistline) as it depends on what you have left over.

Turkey or other leftover meat cut into bite sized chunks

Leftover vegetables also cut into bite sized chunks but leave any sprouts as halves (although if you followed the recipe on the previous page there shouldn't be any)!

Any other fresh vegetables you like, carrots, cauliflower, potatoes – par boiled first

Onions or shallots chopped finely and fried

Chinese five spice powder

Egg noodles, or pasta if preferred

- *Bring a pan of water to the boil and cook the noodles or pasta following the cooking instructions*
- *Heat a knob of butter with a splodge of olive oil in a heavy frying pan or wok*
- *Add all the meat and all the vegetables which should have been cooked by now and stir*
- *Add five spice powder– a couple of teaspoons is usually enough but taste it and add more if you think it can take it*
- *When the noodles/pasta are cooked, drain and toss gently with the meat and vegetables in the frying pan/ wok*
- *Serve in a dollop, especially good with soy sauce.*

Allan Welsh

New Year and Epiphany

New Year's Eve is party time in Northlew - mulled wine and mince pies in the Square, a party in the Green Dragon, cannon fire at midnight and if you're lucky, mulled wine in the church.

After all the rich holiday food you might like to try something that's turkey-free. Epiphany on 6th January commemorates the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus and because the three kings came from the Orient, spicy might be just the thing.

Mexican mess

This is a sharing dish so your guests can just dig in

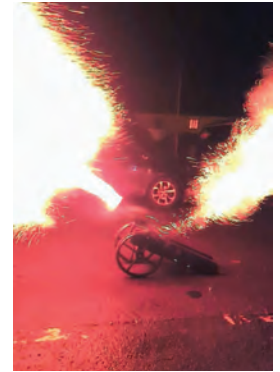
- *Make a Bolognese type sauce with minced beef or a vegetarian substitute - include onions, garlic, tomato, mushrooms, spices etc*
- *Break up a packet of Doritos (other brands of tortilla chips are available...) into pieces roughly the size of 10p coins*
- *Make a mixed salad by chopping up lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, spring onions and whatever else you have into a large salad bowl*
- *In another bowl layer the Doritos first then the mince and sprinkle with grated cheese*
- *Serve with sour cream and chives.*

Nikki Dobson

Spaghetti Puttanesca

Try this fiery pasta dish from Southern Italy. It uses store cupboard items or left over goodies and is very quick to make. You prepare the sauce while the pasta cooks. There are no set amounts of each ingredient, just please yourself.

- *Put the spaghetti on to cook*
- *Sizzle some crushed garlic and chilli (fresh or flakes) in a little olive oil*
- *Add some chopped anchovies then chopped up olives and some capers*
- *Cook for a few minutes, then add passata or tinned tomatoes at the end*
- *Combine the sauce with the hot spaghetti at the last minute. Spettacolare!*



Cannon fire in the Square as the clock strikes twelve

Steve Lofthouse

Mulled cider

Always welcome on a cold New Year's Eve

Heat up some local cider with apple juice, an orange studded with cloves, a cinnamon stick, nutmeg, sugar and brandy. It's best to sample it as you go along, just in case.

Vicky Stottor

Plough Sunday

The Sunday after Epiphany is time to bless the land and celebrate farming and farmers, so important for our food security.

Plough Sunday is a traditional rural festival marking the beginning of the working year on the farm at the beginning of January, just as the ploughing used to start. New methods and crops have changed this, but it's as good a time as any to ask God's blessing on the land, farm workers and seed while all is dormant.

Usually either an old horse plough is wheeled into the church, or a newer one, complete with tractor is parked at the lychgate ready to be blessed.

The celebration begins with hot bacon rolls for breakfast outside the church. Just leave yourself room for Sunday lunch at the Green Dragon.



Seed Biscuits

Ingredients for 3 dozen biscuits

1lb of flour, ¼lb of sifted sugar, ¼lb of butter, ½oz caraway seeds, 3 eggs

Average cost: 10d

Beat the butter to a cream; stir in the flour, sugar and caraway seeds; and when these ingredients are well mixed, add the eggs which should be well whisked. Roll out the paste; with a round cutter shape out the biscuits and bake them in a moderate oven from 10 to 15 minutes. The tops of the biscuits may be brushed over with a little milk or the white of an egg, and then a little sugar strewn over.

Time: 10 or 15 minutes

Seasonable: at any time

Mrs Isabella Beeton 1901

*We plough the fields,
and scatter
the good seed on the
land
Matthias Claudius
1740 - 1815*

*For as the rain and
the snow come down
from heaven, and do
not return there until
they have watered
the earth, making
it bring forth and
sprout, giving seed to
the sower and bread
to the eater, so shall
my word be that goes
out from my mouth.
Isaiah 55: 10-11*

*He makes grass grow
for the cattle, and
plants for people to
cultivate - bringing
forth food from the
earth.
Psalm 104:14*

Lent

On **Shrove Tuesday** pancakes are a way of using up any stocks of rich food before the start of Lent, traditionally a six week period of abstinence running up to Easter. So no luxuries for a while.



Pancakes by Marjorie Millership

Apple fritters

If you find yourself with some left over pancake batter (is that possible?) this one's sufficiently decadent

- *Peel and core some large eating apples. Cut them into fairly thick rings (with holes in the centre)*
- *Pat the apple rings dry and liberally coat with batter*
- *Fry in a light cooking oil (best to deep fry them if you can) and remove when golden brown*
- *Serve with a dollop of ice cream in the hole and smother in golden syrup.*

Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent proper. It's tradition to avoid eating meat today. Lent is a time to reflect on our lives and consider any changes we need to make so this might be an opportunity to cut back. But that still leaves plenty of room for being creative with food.

*Better a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred.
Proverbs 15: 17*

Vegetable lasagna

This recipe can be made with any vegetables that are lurking. It uses ricotta but any other cheeses will be fine

- *Heat oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/gas mark 7*
- *Cook nine lasagne sheets for about 5 mins until just softened. Rinse in cold water, then drizzle with a little oil to stop them sticking*
- *Heat a splash of oil and fry a diced onion*
- *After 3 mins, add about 700g sliced vegetables and two crushed cloves of garlic and fry until they are soft*
- *Stir in about 150g ricotta from a pot and 50g cheddar*
- *Heat a jar of tomato sauce in the microwave for 2 mins*
- *In a large baking dish, layer up the lasagne, starting with half the vegetable mix, then pasta, then tomato sauce. Repeat, top with blobs of the remaining ricotta, then scatter with 50g grated cheddar*
- *Bake on the top shelf for about 10 mins until the pasta is tender and the cheese is golden.*

Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday is on the fourth Sunday in Lent, and began as a religious event of the 16th Century, with no connection to mothers at all.

The word “mothering” referred to the mother church, the main church or cathedral of the region. It became a tradition that people would return to their mother church for a special service.

This pilgrimage was apparently known as “going a-mothering”, and became something of a holiday, with domestic servants given the day off to visit their own families as well as their mother church.

One of the tastiest traditions was baking Simnel cake. Often regarded as an Easter treat, this rich fruit cake is also linked with Mothering Sunday, as a bit of an indulgence to make up for the general austerity of Lent (and a nice home-baked present to take home to mum). With its layers of cake and marzipan, a traditional Simnel cake also reflects the religious overtones of the event. It’s adorned with eleven balls of marzipan, representing all the disciples of Jesus, minus Judas.



These days, Sunday lunch at the Green Dragon after the church service might be an easier option for celebrating the day, maybe with a large box of chocolates and a bunch of spring flowers as well.



Spring flowers from the stained glass window on the north wall

Holy Week

Palm Sunday

The last Sunday before Easter marks the start of Holy Week. Christians reflect on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem when his followers placed palm leaves across his path, a gesture that was usually reserved for the most honoured. Symbolic palm crosses are handed out during the Palm Sunday service and in the past clergy used to hand out Pax cakes and ale while uttering something like *Peace and good neighbourhood*. Pax cakes (actually more like biscuits) contained icing sugar, cornflour and egg white so they must have been very sweet. The ale would no doubt have helped wash them down.

Maundy Thursday

The practice of taking Communion originated at the Last Supper when Jesus shared a communal meal with his twelve disciples the evening before his Crucifixion. After blessing unleavened bread and wine he explained they represented his body and his blood, symbolism echoed in Communion services today. Recent research into the cuisine of the time suggests the meal may have also included bean stew, lamb, olives, bitter herbs, a fish sauce and dates.

Good Friday

Good Friday is a solemn day that commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. He was arrested in the garden at Gethsemane, tried and condemned to death by Pontius Pilate. Crucifixion was the highest form of criminal punishment at the time and Jesus was beaten then forced to carry a heavy wooden cross through jeering crowds. Nailed to the cross, he died and was buried in the tomb from where he would rise again.



Hot cross buns

Hot cross buns may date back to the 14th century and are traditionally eaten on Good Friday. The cross on the top made of flour and water signifies the crucifixion of Jesus, the spices represent the embalming fluid used at his burial and some say the orange peel reflects the bitterness of the cross.

According to legend, people who share a hot cross bun will remain good friends for a year if they say a special rhyme as they eat it: "Half for you and half for me, between us two shall goodwill be." Worth a try!



Carved Tudor pew end depicting Calvary

Salmon and spinach in a puff pastry case

Fish is traditionally served on Good Friday. This dish makes a delicious lunch or supper.

- *Wilt some fresh spinach in a pan of water with a little salt, pepper and nutmeg. Drain it well, squeezing out any excess water*
- *Lay an uncooked, lightly smoked salmon fillet (skinned) on a sheet of ready made puff pastry and cover with a layer of spinach*
- *Make it into a pastry parcel. If you're feeling artistic, you can mould the pastry to look like a fish with scales*
- *Add an egg wash before baking in a pre-heated oven*
- *Serve with Hollandaise sauce.*



Tania Haycocks

Easter Day

At Easter we remember the gravity of Jesus giving himself up for us all to an agonising death on the cross, then, on the third day, rising again to life - a world-changing event that has given hope to millions.

The date of Easter Sunday varies each year - it's a movable feast. It falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after spring equinox so it can be any Sunday between 22 March and 25 April. But sometimes the astronomical dates don't coincide with the ecclesiastical dates. Although the astronomical date of the equinox changes over time, the Church has fixed the event in their calendar to March 21st. This means that the church's equinox will always be March 21st, even if the astronomical date is March 19th or 20th. Confused?

But whatever the complexity of the calendar, in Northlew we have a joyful celebration service on the Sunday morning with Communion and look forward to the prospect of Easter treats.

Goodbye to Lent and its deprivations. Hello chocolate, roast lamb and cakes!

Eggs used to be banned during Holy Week, so being allowed to eat them again was a real treat. They are symbols of new life and came to represent Jesus' emergence from the tomb and his resurrection. Some even consider hollow chocolate eggs signify the empty tomb. The first English chocolate egg was sold by Fry's in 1873 with eighty million now sold in the UK each year.

Not surprisingly the Easter egg hunt after the Easter Sunday service is very popular. It's amazing how many different places in the churchyard the chocolate eggs can be concealed, but somehow they are all found and swept up in a trice.



Rabbits are also symbols of spring and fertility, renewal and rebirth although there's no direct connection between chocolate bunnies and religion. But if you've given up sweets for Lent, any chocolate will go down well, whatever the shape.

If you're stuck for Easter inspiration here's a menu from Mrs Beeton for twelve. It cost £2 7s 0d in 1901 (£2.35p in new money) - about 0.20p a head. If only.

MENU. (English.)		Quantity.	Average Cost.	MENU. (French.)	
			<i>s. d.</i>		
Oyster Soup.	2 qts.	6	0	Potage aux Huitres.	
Salmon,	1 fish.	9	0	Saumon,	
Tartar Sauce. Cucumber.		1	6	Sauce Tartare. Concombres.	
Sweetbreads.	2 dishes.	5	0	Ris de Veau.	
Beef Olives.	2 dishes.	3	0	Olives de Bouf.	
Quarter of Lamb.	1 joint.	9	0	Quartier d'Agneau.	
Potatoes. Cauliflowers.	2 dishes.	1	4	Pommes de Terre. Choufleur.	
Larded Guinea-fowls.	2 birds.	7	0	Pintades Bardées.	
Apricot Omelette.	2 dishes.	2	0	Omelette d'Abricots.	
Vanilla Cream.	2 mids.	2	6	Crème de Vanille.	
Cheese Biscuits.	2 dishes.	0	8	Biscuits de Fromage.	
		£2	7 0		

Your menu for Easter may be less ambitious and may not include oyster soup or larded guinea fowl but here are a few ideas for veg to go with your roast:

- To give cauliflower cheese a bit of a kick, try adding half a teaspoon of English mustard powder to the cheese sauce
- Glaze carrots or parsnips with honey and wholegrain mustard before roasting them in the oven
- Sauté shredded red cabbage with chopped red onion and when nearly tender add slices of ripe pear and some cinnamon
- Cook cabbage and mix with a glaze made by melting bitter orange marmalade into sesame oil and added toasted sesame seeds.

Quail egg salad

I was served this salad in France as a starter or a side dish

200g smoked lardons or strips of bacon
 Salad leaves - a mix of soft and crunchy works well
 ½ cucumber sliced
 1 ripe avocado diced
 3-5 spring onions chopped
 12 soft boiled quail eggs



For the vinaigrette:

½ clove of garlic finely chopped
 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
 2 tablespoons white or red wine vinegar
 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper

- Boil a medium pan of water and gently add the eggs
- Cook for 2 minutes 20 seconds precisely then remove the eggs immediately, and place in iced water to cool
- To peel the eggs, tap them firmly on a hard surface, roll them to 'crunch' the shell, pinch a small area and pull until you break the thick membrane
- Toss all the salad ingredients together in a large bowl
- Shake the vinaigrette ingredients together in a jam jar
- Fry the lardons or bacon until golden and crispy and add to the salad with a little of the cooking juices, mix well and then dress with the vinaigrette
- Halve the quail eggs and place on the top - voila!

Emma Dalrymple, purveyor of quail eggs, Lower Crowden Farm

Roger's bruschetta

Allow two or three pieces per person as a starter (or as a light lunch)

Buon appetito!

For each piece of bruschetta:

1 cm slice from a good sized baguette or similar

Tomato puree

1 or 2 thin slices of ripe tomato to fit the bread

1 or 2 slices of goat's cheese (the cylindrical ones work well)

1 teaspoon pesto alla Genovese

Olive oil and garlic

- *Chop the garlic finely and mix into a small container of olive oil*
- *Leave to steep for a while*
- *Heat the oven to 220°C (Gas mark 7) or use the top of an AGA with the rack set high*
- *Brush the bread slices on one side with the garlicky oil and put them into the hot oven until they just turn brown. Turn over and repeat*
- *Spread tomato puree fairly thickly on one side of the toasted bread, top with tomato slices then the goat's cheese*
- *Finally spread pesto over the cheese*
- *Toast the bruschetta until the cheese has melted*
- *Leave to cool before serving.*

Roger Atkinson

Roast duck with caramelised apples

An Easter alternative to roast lamb

- *Prick holes in the duck's skin and roast on a wire rack*
- *Peel, core and cut some apples into quarters*
- *Pour off the fat from the roast duck and fry the apples until starting to brown*
- *Serve with the duck and some apple sauce.*

Chocolate and ginger cheesecake

More chocolate, but hey ho

- *Crush some ginger biscuits and mix them with some melted butter*
- *Make your usual cheesecake mix and add melted dark chocolate and chopped preserved ginger*
- *Glaze the top with some ginger syrup mixed with apricot jam. Scrummy.*

Tania Haycocks



Saint George's Day

Dragon Pie Supper is a local feast as we get together in different homes to consume the dragon that was killed by England's patron saint on 23 April, now his feast day! The fearsome dragon was demanding human sacrifices as appeasement. This seemed to be all right with local people until a princess was chosen as the next offering. This proved to be a step too far and George gallantly rescued the princess and dispatched the dragon. The rest is history.

The recipes for Dragon pie are a secret held by individual hosts so we may never be sure what's in them, just that red dragon pie is hot and spicy and green dragon pie is much milder.

To add to the mystery, it transpires that Saint George wasn't English at all (he was born in Cappadocia, modern day Turkey), he wasn't a knight wearing shining armour, and he never even visited England. In fact he's the patron saint of several other places as well including Ethiopia and Catalonia.

Not to worry, it's still worth celebrating his day and the pies are fantastic!



Dragon sculpture on the wall near the lychgate

Rogation Tide

The Sixth Sunday of Easter (the fifth Sunday after Easter Sunday) is known as Rogation Sunday. The Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the following week are known as the Rogation Days, days for fasting and prayer. Rogation invites people to ask for blessing – for a particular place, for all its inhabitants and for the common good.

Rogation is the second of the annual agricultural festivals, Plough Sunday being the first, and it has always been done in style here in Northlew. An early evening service is held in a barn on a local farm, to ask God's continued blessing on the soil, the crops and the stock; for health, growth and protection from disease.

The Northlew Silver Band turns out to lead us in some familiar old hymns, with the cows mooing along and tea is shared together at the end. Some parishes combine this with an annual 'beating of the bounds', a hike round the parish borders to mark the territory we're asking God to bless. It would be a long hike round Northlew and Ashbury boundary, with rather a lot of ups and downs...

Weetabix fruit loaf

*2oz crumbled Weetabix (other wheat cereals are available...)
8oz soft brown sugar
6oz mixed dried fruit
1oz finely chopped walnuts
½ pint milk
1 egg
7oz self raising flour
¼ teaspoon salt*

- *Soak Weetabix, sugar and fruit in the milk overnight*
- *Add beaten egg, flour, salt and nuts and stir well*
- *Put into a greased loaf tin*
- *Cook for thirty minutes at 375°F, 190°C, Gas mark 5, reducing a little for a further hour.*

Ruth Squire



Cross stitch kneeler

Ascension

The Thursday after Rogation Sunday is the feast of the Ascension, the 40th day after Easter (where Easter Sunday is counted as the first day). It marks the ascent of Jesus Christ into heaven from the Mount of Olives. The Feast of the Ascension ranks with Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost in its observance throughout Christian faiths.

Traditional menus include dishes containing some kind of bird to represent Jesus' flight to Heaven - chicken or duck and pigeon (better noted for their flying ability) and some kind of sparkling drink with bubbles rising Heavenward.

In some countries a hilltop picnic is the way to celebrate. Chicken salad sandwiches would be a bit more portable than sweet and sour chicken or maybe chicken soup in a flask if it's a bit chilly up Yes Tor...



Sweet and sour chicken

This chicken dish would work well at Ascension (as well as Chinese New Year!)

- *Whisk two tablespoons of juice from a tin of pineapple with a tablespoon of cornflour*
- *Chop the pineapple into chunks*
- *Coat chunks of chicken (breast is best) in cornflour and fry with some roughly chopped green and red peppers and onions until the chicken is nearly cooked*
- *Mix in some soy sauce, garlic, ginger, brown sugar, white wine vinegar, chilli and tomato purée and cook for a further five minutes*
- *Add the pineapple towards the end*
- *Serve with rice (and maybe something with fizz or bubbles?)*

Shirley Brookman

Strawberry mojito

Try this for the fizzy bit - and a chance to enjoy the first local strawberries

- *Lightly mash about ten strawberries with a couple of chopped limes and two tablespoons of sugar in a large jug*
- *Bruise some fresh mint leaves and add to the jug with a pinch of black pepper*
- *Add lots of ice and stir in sparkling water to taste*
- *Add some rum if you want a genuine Cuban punch.*

Pentecost

Pentecost (or Whitsun) is celebrated on the 50th day after Easter Sunday and marks the end of the Easter season. Pentecost literally means 'five' and 'fire' and commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. They were celebrating the Feast of Weeks, when Moses received the five books of the law on tablets of stone on Mount Sinai.

Instead of rules on tablets of stone received in fire on Mount Sinai, God sends the Holy Spirit, arriving in fire to write his laws on the people's hearts!

Whit Sunday and the following week used to be very important as it was the first holiday of the summer. People wore their best clothes for the Whit Sunday service and there were fetes and Morris dancing. Like Easter it's a moveable feast, now replaced with a fixed bank holiday on the last Monday in May. Sadly, the religious context is gradually being forgotten.

However, this could be a good time for the first barbecue of the year or for a pizza - it's always good to see a bit of healthy flame under your cooking!

Pizza

Try this version of an old favourite with a crunchy cheese scone base

*8oz (225g) self raising flour
2oz (50g) margarine or butter
2 tablespoons (30ml) milk
4oz (100g) grated strong cheddar cheese
Salt and pepper to taste*

For the base:

- Add the margarine or butter to the flour and rub in well to form fine breadcrumbs*
- Add the cheese, salt and pepper and mix well*
- Bind the mixture together with the milk to make a firm dough*
- Roll out to a large circle.*

For the topping:

- Mix a little olive oil and tomato paste into a tin of chopped tomatoes and spread evenly over the dough, leaving about an inch around the edge*
- If liked, spread with sliced mushrooms, ham or maybe something more exotic like pineapple or asparagus*
- Grate some more cheese and sprinkle over the top*
- Bake at 200°C (400°F, gas mark 6) for thirty minutes or until the edge is crisp.*

Pat Carter

Patronal festival

On the second Sunday in July, we have a church service and fete to mark the Saint's day of Thomas of Canterbury who was martyred for his faithfulness to God in defiance of the king.

For many years a short play has been enthusiastically enacted on the steps of Northlew church near the altar, depicting Thomas' demise in 1170 at the hands of four knights of Henry II in Canterbury Cathedral - on the steps leading up to the cathedral quire. This little play is to inspire us to integrity and faithfulness today.

The performance is followed by a very English fete in Church Gate Farm's field complete with the famous Northlew cream tea - cakes, sandwiches and scones (cream on before jam of course...).

There's maypole dancing and of course the Northlew Silver Band to entertain us. It's a good opportunity to buy plants, pick up a bargain at the craft and bric-a-brac stalls, have a go at Welly Wanging or just sit back and watch the Northlew world go by, tea and cakes in hand.



*Becket's arms are combined with those of the Diocese of Canterbury. Becket's are gashed with a sword to depict his slaughter
Detail from the window in the south aisle*

Phyll's saffron cake

A traditional old Devonshire recipe for afternoon tea passed on to Molly Atkinson by her mother

5oz lard

1lb flour

2oz sultanas

½ oz fresh yeast

6oz sugar

¼ pint milk

4oz currants

1oz lemon peel chopped

1 saltspoon saffron (soaked overnight in warm water)

- *Sieve saffron and flour and rub in lard*
- *Add sugar, currants, sultanas and lemon peel*
- *Cream yeast with a teaspoon of sugar and add milk and other ingredients*
- *Beat well, leave to rise in a warm place*
- *Knead well and leave to rise again in greased tins*
- *Bake for about an hour in a moderate oven.*

Sandwich and wrap fillings

For something a bit different for tea:

- *Ham, cottage cheese, avocado, basil*
- *Grated carrot, sultanas and mint*
- *Coronation chicken with crunchy lettuce*
- *Jam and sliced banana*
- *Red cabbage, lettuce, beef tomato and red onion*



Harvest Festival

Harvest Festival is a very happy occasion celebrated on the first Sunday in October. We come together to thank God for all that has grown during the year by the combination of his design and providence with our cooperation and labour. Quite a partnership.

The church is beautifully decorated with produce donated by villagers - squashes, apples, more apples, eggs, tomatoes, cabbages, all sorts. Did I mention apples? There are seasonal flower arrangements and a spectacular Harvest Loaf baked locally, in pride of place on the centre of the altar.

After the bell-ringers' welcome, the service of thanksgiving features several familiar hymns and is accompanied by the Northlew Silver Band. And then we dive straight into a bring and share buffet, the table groaning as ever under the weight of cakes, sandwiches, quiches, and sausage rolls.

The evening ends with a lively auction when the produce is sold to raise funds for a local charity. Great fun, even if you buy something you never knew you needed. It might turn out to be your new favourite thing!



Tomato and Apple Chutney

1lb 12oz (800g) red tomatoes
1lb 12oz (800g) cooking apples
8oz (250g) white onions
5fl oz vinegar
1lb (450g) demerara sugar
6oz (170g) sultanas
2 tablespoons salt
½ teaspoon ground ginger

- Dissolve sugar in the vinegar and bring to the boil. Slice tomatoes, apples and onions. Add to the pot with the remaining ingredients and simmer until thick.
- Sterilise your jars by washing them and putting them into the oven on hot for 10 minutes. Cool slightly and pot up whilst the chutney is still hot.
- Seal and store for 3 months before eating. Enjoy.

Jayne O'Connell

Harvest vegetable soup

To use up all the vegetables you bought at auction

Peel and cut up (any) vegetables to similar size chunks and toss with oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Spread evenly on a baking tray and roast in a hot oven until tender - root vegetables take the longest. Add to hot vegetable stock (maybe add some coconut milk too) in a pan, heat through well, then blend to make a thickish soup.

Corn on the cob

- Remove the husk and silk and wrap the cob in several layers of paper towel
- Soak the towel and cob under the tap and then microwave for three or four minutes to steam the corn
- Unwrap. Eat. Simples!

Val Welsh



Harvest loaf

The seed-time and the harvest, our life, our health, our food
Matthias Claudius
1740 - 1815

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land - a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing.
Deuteronomy 8:7-9

All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin.
Henry Alford
1810 - 1871

Loaves and fishes

This dish probably won't stretch to 5,000 servings!

Two pieces of skinned smoked haddock

Two finely chopped shallots

*Two or three old bread crusts ground, blitzed or crumbled
(make sure there are no green bits on the bread)!*

Mixed grated cheese to match the volume of bread crumbs

Milk and cream (single or double)

White sauce - home made or from a packet

- *Make the white sauce and stir in half the cheese and some cream. The cheese doesn't have to melt*
- *Poach the fish in a blob of butter and a splash of milk - as it cooks, gently pull it apart into bite sized chunks*
- *Gently fry the shallots until translucent*
- *Plaice (?) the fish and shallots in a greased baking dish and pour the cheese sauce over the top*
- *Mix the remaining cheese with the breadcrumbs*
- *Cover the fish and sauce with the breadcrumb mix*
- *Grill until golden brown.*

Anon



Marcia's orange fruit teabread

Just the thing for bring and share

5oz currants

5oz sultanas

5oz brown sugar

½ pint hot tea

10oz self raising flour

1 egg

Finely grated rind of two oranges

- *Put fruit, sugar and orange rind in a bowl*
- *Pour over hot tea, stir well, cover and leave to stand overnight*
- *Stir flour and egg into the fruit mixture and mix thoroughly*
- *Grease and line an 8 inch cake tin*
- *Turn the mixture into the tin and bake in a cool oven (150°C) for 1½ hours*
- *Leave to cool on a wire tray.*

Molly Atkinson

The nights are drawing in and there's a distinct chill in the air but we can look forward to the fun of Northlew Carnival in early November - a parade, a massive bonfire in the Square, a very welcome barbecue and of course entertainment from the Northlew Silver Band.

Remembrance Sunday

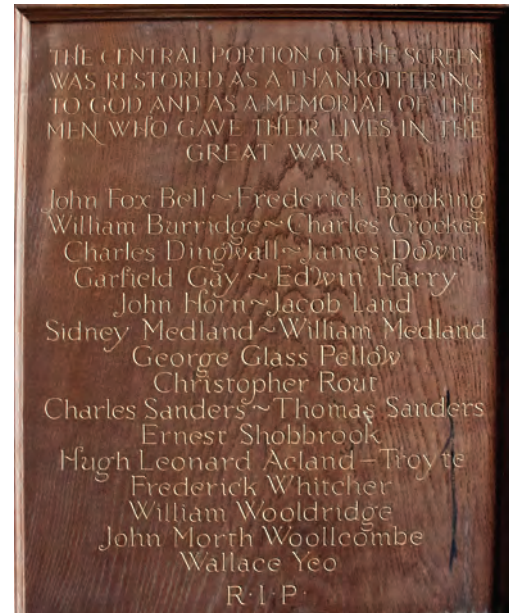
The men who died in the two World Wars are commemorated on the granite War Memorial outside the main church door, which was erected in 1996. During the First World War Northlew lost the greatest proportion of enlisted men of any community in the United Kingdom.

In June 2014, the centenary of the outbreak of WWI the village honoured their memory with an aircraft flyover, parades and speeches and a 3D projection onto the houses in the square to give the impression of a battlefield.

At the combined annual service of Remembrance the congregation meets at the war memorial and the names of the



fallen are read out. A poppy wreath is laid followed by two minutes' silence, and finally the Last Post before entering the church for the main service. On 11th November itself, local school children gather at the memorial to learn more about the history of their village and the sacrifice of war.



Memorial plaque in the Rutleigh Chapel for the twenty-two villagers killed in the First World War

Runner bean chutney

This wartime recipe has been handed down locally for many years to preserve a glut of beans. Some dried fruit may be added if liked.

*2lbs runner beans peeled and sliced
4 or 5 onions cut up small
1½ lbs demerara sugar
1½ tablespoons turmeric
1½ tablespoons mustard (dry powder)
1½ tablespoons cornflour
1½ pints vinegar*

- *Boil beans and onions in salt water (enough to cover them) until tender*
- *Strain and drain well, then chop up small or put through a mincer*
- *Add the sugar and ¼ pints of vinegar to bean mixture and boil for 15 minutes*
- *Mix the turmeric, mustard and cornflour with the other ¼ pint vinegar and add to beans*
- *Boil for another 15 minutes*
- *Allow to cool and put into jars.*

Molly Atkinson



Grandma's WWII Dutch apple harvest cake

This recipe does not involve eggs which were rationed during the war and were as rare as hens' teeth

*1 breakfast cup self raising flour
2 level teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teacup sugar
Pinch of nutmeg
½ teacup milk
3 apples for topping
Apples to stew - enough to cover the base of the dish
Pinch of cinnamon
1oz margarine*

- *Core, slice and stew apples until soft and spread in a layer in the base of a greased shallow baking tray or dish*
- *Work the margarine into the mixture of flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and nutmeg*
- *Add the milk*
- *Spread the mixture over the layer of stewed apples*
- *Peel, core and wedge the three apples for the topping and press into the mixture*
- *Sprinkle cinnamon and sugar on top*
- *Bake in a moderate oven for thirty minutes.*

Enid Maguire

Stir up Sunday

The last Sunday before Advent is the date to prepare your Christmas pudding to allow time for it to mature.

The day does not actually get its name from stirring the pudding. It refers to a different kind of stirring from the Book of Common Prayer - more the shaking up variety. The Collect of the Day for the last Sunday before Advent starts *Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people.*

Since Victorian times Stir up Sunday has become associated with the family custom of making the pudding together, preparing an essential part of most Christmas dinners.

The Christmas pudding is said to have been introduced to Britain by Prince Albert, but an earlier version was brought from Germany by George I (the 'pudding king') back in 1714.

In the past it would have been wrapped in a cloth and boiled for a long time - and might even have contained meat. It was sometimes eaten at the start of the Christmas meal or alongside the meat.



*Come and meet around the table,
God prepares the Holy food;
We can share with one another
ev'rything we have that's good.*

*Come and meet around the table,
God provides the wine to share:
We enjoy a meal together,
show each other how we care.
Children's hymn - Michael Forster*

And as we prepare for the excitement of Advent and Christmas, our year has come full circle.

We hope you have enjoyed our culinary tour and will try some of the recipes for yourself.

Church maintenance and repair

All old buildings need continual care and attention - and Northlew Parish Church is no exception. Not surprisingly, the building is Grade 1 listed, so repairs can be quite a challenge, not least financially.

The funding of the maintenance of the church building, its fabric and the churchyard is the responsibility of the Friends of St Thomas' Church (FOST). For more information about the church and FOST visit the Northlew Parish Council website www.northlewparrishcouncil.org or the Northmoor Team Ministry site <https://northmoorteam.org.uk>.

We hope to see you sometime at one or more of the occasions mentioned in this booklet. Don't forget, the church is open every day for personal prayer and reflection in peace or just to enjoy its historic and architectural interest.

Services are held every Sunday at 9.30 (except 5th Sundays when we meet in Hatherleigh) and we regularly share the special symbolic meal of Holy Communion.

You are most welcome to join us!







Back cover: Window in the south aisle

The proceeds from the sale of this booklet will help the Friends of St Thomas' maintain our beautiful church for future generations to enjoy.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed ideas, recipes, photographs, illustrations and words of encouragement.

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Marjorie Millership age 10, Allan Welsh age 66¾

References:

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- *Historic England* <https://historicengland.org.uk>
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