

# NEIGHBOURLY VILLAGES LOOK OUTWARD

30th Jun 2008

Three Warwickshire communities which laid on three days of festivities celebrating their togetherness also demonstrate they can be outward looking.

The view was expressed at an open-air service in Claverdon by Canon Lawrence Mortimer, who leads the team ministry also serving Preston Bagot and Wootton Wawen.

"We are sharing a vision across our community. That is good," said Canon Mortimer. "But we are celebrating not only our own villages but something much bigger.

"It is surprising how many from our midst have struck up connections with missions in China and with projects supporting people in Africa.

"It is important communities should be outward looking while also being neighbourly."

The service came on the final day of the three-day Midsummer Celebration of Village Life featuring flowers and music in the three parish churches, cricket and craft demonstrations, displays of art and local history, open gardens and a novelty dog show.

Families were also out in force judging more than 100 scarecrow entries in a 10-mile zone, including one pair apparently conducting speed checks so convincing that Claverdon residents reported more motorists than usual staying within the 30 mph limit.

One scarecrow was present at the open-air service during which it was dismantled by Canon Mortimer to reveal the cross within, then carried by children from the gathering to the afternoon festivities.

Preston Bagot's All Saints Church on the hill was the sell-out venue for Stratford upon Avon's Orchestra of the Swan wind quintet on the opening night.

St Peter's, Wootton Wawen on the second night hosted its festival choir of 30 voices drawn in from several

groups to powerfully deliver Vivaldi's Gloria with important contributions by oratorio and opera soprano Kathryn Hardy, mezzo soprano Penny Turnbull and the Leamington Sinfonia conducted by Jenny Barrie.

Earlier in the programme one soloist was Preston Bagot's organist, Russian trained Olga Ananskikh who remarkably sang as both soprano and contralto..

From Friday to Sunday hundreds of families from the three communities and beyond explored hidden by-ways and busy work centres as they sought-out attractions set up for the week-end. These included miniature horses - none more than 34 inches high - shown to Horse of the Year championship class standard by William and Catherine Semmens at Holywell, near Claverdon, and neighbour Nick Cater's prize-winning rare breed Cotswold sheep. ENDS