

D-Day Remembered



Amidst the public commemoration of the D-Day landings, Flitcham recalls its own, very personal, connection. Bernard Farrow, who lived in Flitcham for most of his life, died three years ago, aged 96.

Robert Walden reminds us of the part he played:

Bernard's daughter-in-law Christine and son John (pictured above) have decorated Bernard's grave in the churchyard with his regimental colours. He was only 19 years old when he took part in the D-Day landings on Sword Beach on the very first morning, having enlisted with the Royal Marines in 1943. He had never even been to London before. He later recalled the stormy seas, being offered warm pilchards on board for breakfast and the constant, continuous "boom" as so many ships sent shells over their heads to the German defences. As a Royal Marine, his job was to ensure the regular soldiers got onshore as quickly as possible and he ended up sleeping his first three precarious nights on board his landing craft. He later went to Scotland to train for the invasion of Japan but of course that invasion was never needed. His many medals included France's Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in recognition of his participation on D-Day.

Abbey Farm Walks 2024

Saturday 6th July – evening sunset walk; 8-10pm. We will walk from the farm buildings up onto the hill to see the sunset. Bring a thermos or something like that for when we watch the sun go down – good post-election therapy! Might see or hear some wildlife. Meet at Abbey Farm (What3Words [///dumpy.dignify.tilt](#)). The walk will be 5km long on farm tracks and other uneven surfaces. It includes some relatively steep slopes. Please bring suitable footwear. If you are concerned about ticks, please wear clothes that cover your limbs.

Sunday 7th July – chalk grassland flowers and butterflies; 10am - midday. This is a chance to see the chalk grassland at Abbey Farm, some of the most flower-rich in the county. You can walk from the farm buildings, but for those who don't fancy that, the grassland can be accessed along tracks by vehicles (unless it is very wet just before the event). We will look at the flowers and other wildlife, including butterflies, or you can just sit and enjoy the view. Meet at Abbey Farm (What3Words [///dumpy.dignify.tilt](#)). If you are concerned about ticks, please wear clothes that cover your limbs.

St Felix

Ann Beasley's detailed account of village signs (in the June Newsletter) concludes with the legend that Flitcham is named after St Felix, the first Christian Bishop in England. It may well be true and would make his rescue from drowning by the beavers all the more noteworthy. However an ancient book, Parkin's *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of Norfolk* printed in 1808 states: "Flicham, as it is wrote in Domesday Book, taking its name not from Felix, Bishop of the East Angles (as some have conceived) but from the site, it not being the custom of the Saxons to give names to towns from their Lords or any person: the ground here abounds with springs and water...therefore from these flete ices or waters it takes its name."

Parkin goes on to refer to the Saxon Hundred Court (parliament) in the 11th century, being called to meet at Flicceham Burch the hill 1 ml north of the "town". He also cites St Albans, St Ives, St Neots and St Edmunds Bury as once having original Saxon names but which the Romish Church replaced with names of its "fictitious Saints".

Robert Walden

Here's another, strange, one - "[the name] derives from the Old English for a village or settlement where 'flitches' of Bacon were produced.". This is courtesy Wikipedia (Yes, I know, but it does claim the authority of Nottingham University!) - TA