

Local Landscapes and Skies

Ansty Parish and its surroundings are so blessed with a variety of beautiful landscapes along with big skies and dark skies.

Such views are best seen out in the open, away from the wooded coombes and valleys – up on the chalk downs or on the greensand bench to the south of the A30; Cholden Hill or even on some of the upper pasture closes of Ansty Coombe.

We hope to build up a gallery of local pictures taken by local people under the collective heading of 'Landscapes and Skies'.

Below we can view four photographs taken by Alan Hardwick.

The photos below were taken in sequence from sunset into the evening, on December 22nd, 2021.

Alan uses a combination of a telescope and a tablet computer camera. Not exactly astronomical photography gear - but it works well enough for him!

Big Skies 2022



1 Sunset over Ansty, late December



2 Venus sitting on a fence post



3 Later, Saturn pays a visit

4 Followed by Jupiter with four moons on display

Dark Skies

Our next picture was taken by K, of Ansty PYO, from the top of the Downs overlooking Ansty. This photograph epitomises our theme of landscapes and big skies.

The photo was taken early on the morning of Valentine's Day – February 14th, 2022. The morning was bright with sunshine, but a cluster of light rain shower clouds had moved in from the west and this magical rainbow fleetingly appeared right over Ansty!

Rainbow over Ansty



K. Ansty PYO 14-02-2022

We received several landscape pictures in March!

The next photo, taken by Helen Hardwick, shows a great view looking NW from the top the chalk downs looking towards the wooded village of Ansty (mid left) on a clear blustery day

12-03-2022



The next photo was taken by Heather Lockley is a marvellous view looking north-west across Ansty Coombe from the edge of Gore Copse and takes in the coniferous tree stands of Twelve Acre Copse and Turners Copse planted in the late 1940s acting as a backdrop. Below this are several small ancient and damp pasture meadows which were enclosed around the 16th century, whilst Ansty Coombe Lane runs along the bottom of the valley accompanied in places by a pretty roadside stream on its way to Frogpond on the right. This gem of a location, criss-crossed by several footpaths, has been shaped by a long and varied agricultural history with roots stretching way back to before Saxon times and long preserved by the Wardour Estate until the whole landscape including Ansty and Ansty Coombe was sold off piecemeal in 1946.

22-03-2022



We were so pleased to receive several other photos from Heather on what was a super sunny spring day we decided to turn them into a 'Welcome to Ansty' front page postcard, familiar to our website viewers.



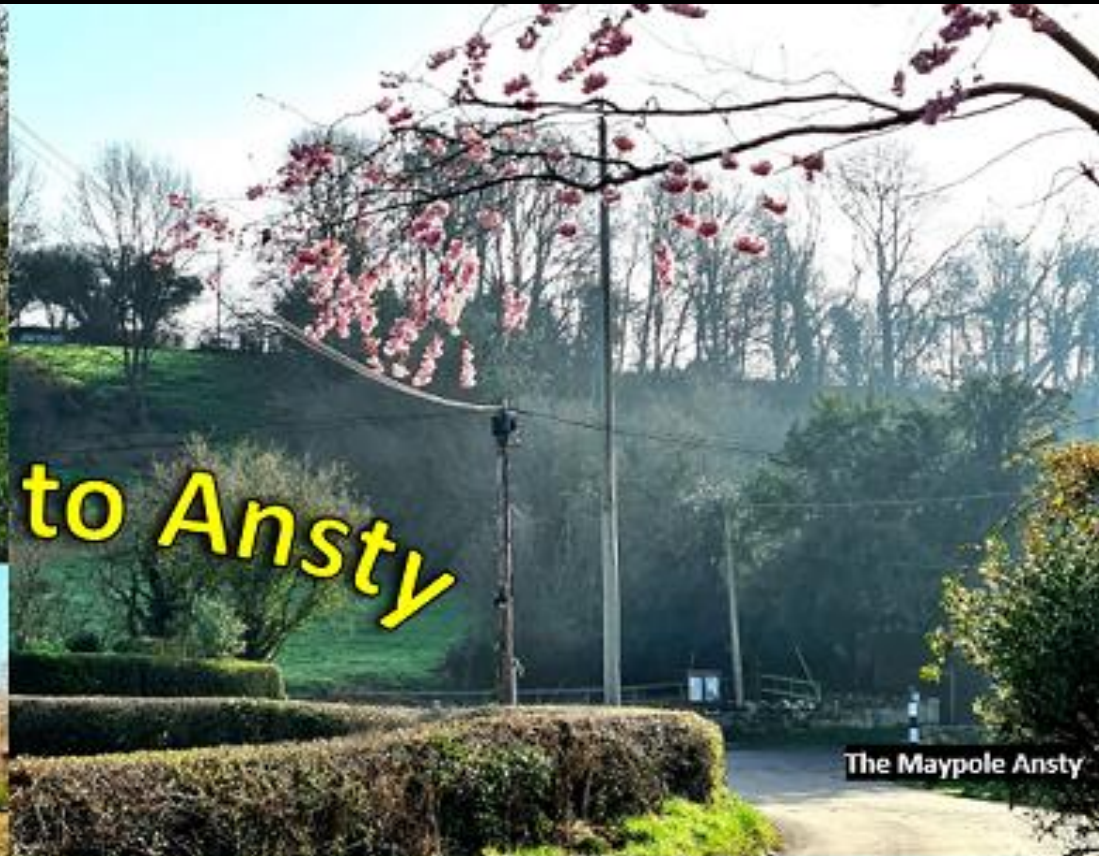
Blind Lane



Ansty Coombe



Ansty Coombe



The Maypole Ansty



Ansty Coombe Lane

Welcome to Ansty

Early Spring 2022

Sunset over New Barn, Ansty.

The latter half of March was unusual weatherwise for a long spell of anticyclonic conditions which brought us days of prolonged sunshine, cold nights, and often quite warm days.

Alan Hardwick sent us the next picture showing a spectacular sunset taken on the evening of the 26th March 2022. As the sun dipped behind the eucalyptus trees at New Barn, Ansty, the dry dust laden atmosphere affects an almost burnt sienna colour: heralding another cool night and another sunny day for the morrow.

Wonderful!



April sunrise over Wiltshire

April 2022 weatherwise was another month dominated by anticyclonic conditions which brought us more days of fine weather, with more cold nights, but often quite warm days.

This picture of the Wiltshire sky taken early on the morning of 11th April showed many contrails (short for condensation trails) produced by aircraft engine exhaust several miles above the earth's surface. After the pandemic lockdowns of the past 2 years many people were desperate for an Easter break somewhere abroad. Unfortunately, this doesn't bode well for those trying to encourage us all to reduce our carbon footprint to offset climate change.

Still, the vapour trails create a beauty of their own.



The 'Pink' Full Moon over Ansty, in Wiltshire

Clear skies over the Easter weekend saw the biggest and brightest full moon of 2022 so far.

The full moon peaked at 7.55pm BST (2.55pm EST) on Saturday, 16 April, but appeared as a full moon from the Friday morning until the early hours of Monday.

April's full moon is traditionally known as the Pink Moon, as it coincides with the flowering of a type of moss called Phlox Subulata in North America, so in fact the name has nothing to do with the actual colour of the moon – although one might argue there is a touch of pink to be seen!

16-04-2022



Ansty in May

These beautiful Maytime landscape pictures were sent in by Mark Norris of Ansty, just before the annual May Day Event which took place on May 2nd, 2022, marking a 'return to normality' after the coronavirus pandemic lockdowns.

We assembled them to form a pleasing backdrop on our website homepage for the spring.



Welcome to Ansty
2022

Ansty in early May

Natural Landscapes?

Since humankind first learnt how to transform the landscape via agriculture perhaps 100,000 years ago there is little, or nothing left anywhere that we can say is an entirely natural landscape.

These pictures taken in and around Ansty appear to show how nature and mankind together can produce an agreeable looking landscape. But there are ominous signs that human endeavours and modern technology have become too much for nature to handle and we are about to pay a heavy price.

These pictures sent in by Juliette Foy and Rob Wilkinson do capture bucolic scenes, but these landscapes have all changed vastly since WW2 at huge cost to the 'natural environment'.

Pictures taken on 26th May



Magnificent Sunset over Ansty

A weak cold front passed over Ansty on the afternoon of the 2nd July. It gave us very little rain but as the cloud cleared away later in the evening it afforded one of those magic sunsets where vivid colours change rapidly as the sun goes down - from yellow and orange to mauve and deep purple!. This view above Horwood was one of those moments. The reflective colours were so bright that they lit the retreating clouds scudding away to the east.

Picture taken on 2nd July 2022





Record breaking temperatures and a Parched Landscape, Ansty 19th July 2022

July 18th-19th will be remembered for all the wrong reasons when it comes to our weather! Yes, it was gloriously sunny, but the temperatures were the highest ever recorded here in Ansty and even higher in other parts of the country. The 18th saw a maximum of 34.9 C and the 19th just behind at 34.8. Don't mention just how hot it was in our houses! To date July had virtually no rain so far and the landscape is looking absolutely frazzled and harvesting has been one of damage limitation it seems – with crops being gathered before mid-July! The year 2018 had similar conditions and a longer run of temperatures in the low 30s – but the 18th-19th this week were truly scorching! In the end the harvest in 2018 was not as bad as farmers feared and maybe it will be the same in 2022. However, as if we need any more evidence: global warming is still gathering pace as we have so far made no difference to the rise in carbon emissions.

Above- View from the chalk downs looking over Ansty parish towards 12 Acre Copse. 19-07-2022. RW

High temperatures and dry conditions continue into August, Ansty

By now, people were beginning to compare the parched landscape to the one experienced by older folk in 1976 which was a severe meteorological drought after a previous dry summer and autumn in 1975 and a dry winter and spring in 1976. It was dramatic and record breaking in all sorts of ways.

Click [here](#) for more details.

We are not there yet though: indeed, the driest February to October ever recorded was in 1921 and we have had several similar drought periods since 1976: including a more recent run of dry episodes: 2003, 2006, 2018 and 2022.

For the most part these are summer droughts are caused by a 'blocking anticyclone' – usually the Azores High bringing high temperatures whilst shearing off the rain fronts - and this includes 2022.

Below- Little rain fell in July and August carried on in the same vein. This photo taken on August 1st, 2022, shows rather cloudy skies with a hint of sunshine above the footpath from Ansty Coombe to Old Wardour Castle just beyond the old Park Pale entrance. The grass is looking very parched indeed and is very reminiscent of the last great drought of 1976.



September brings more mellow conditions!

A spell of showery weather at the beginning of September brought some welcome relief to the parched countryside around Ansty Parish along with cooler temperatures too.

Below- The wonderful pictures below were taken by Tim Martin showing a couple of views from Shave Lane on Friday, 9th September. The left-hand photo is of Shave Lane, looking south towards Ansty Down. The blistering summer has had the effect of bringing in 'autumn colours' rather earlier than expected. Shave Lane was once an important drove road connection up to the Shaston-Salisbury byway and on to Berwick St John and The Ox-Drove.

The right-hand photo shows a view looking across to Ansty PYO and Farm Shop. Lack of rain has left the maize looking rather stunted this year, but the Ansty Maize Maze was as popular as ever.



On the same day (9th September) Karren Price of Ansty PYO took this photo of a perfect rainbow over the premises as yet another blustery shower cleared away to the east.



October and November were both wet and mild, but the first half of December brought in some old fashioned 'seasonal weather' with very cold weather: lots of sunshine and sharp night-time frosts.

Below are some great images taken around Frogpond in Ansty Coombe on 12th December. Pictures by M N.





The last images of 2022 have been sent in by Alan Hardwick. Always ready to capture great images of the sky and the local landscape, Alan also takes his camera out to film the sky at night too as shown by the crystal-clear image of a full moon. Local wildlife is another one of Alan's interests as these wonderful shots of a hare depict. Let's hope 2023 brings another crop of excellent pictures for us all to mull over!





There was quite a long cold spell in January 2023 with a lot of frosts which tended to linger during the day. This photo was taken by K of PYO on the 23-01-23 while descending from the top by-way on the Downs to Shave Lane.

Landscape and skies 2023





Snowdrops are always one of the first signs of spring! Photo sent in by RW from Ansty Coombe in February 23.



Snow fell on March 8th 2023, and it lasted all of a day! Nevertheless, K was out again taking pictures as she and her boys walked along the byway overlooking Ansty.

