



The Parish Magazine for

£1

# STOCKBRIDGE LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD



December 2023 and January 2024



# The Parishes of Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford in the Mid-Test Benefice

**Rector:** The Rev'd Philip Bowden

**Phone no.** 01264 810810

rector@midtest.org.uk

**Website:** <http://www.2day.ws/stockbridge>

**All Enquiries, including enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals:**

Please contact our Rector (see details above)

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To subscribe, please contact David Barnes 810516 or email [editorsstockmag@gmail.com](mailto:editorsstockmag@gmail.com)

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*Hon Secretary*

Micki Nadal 810567

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## **Church Mouse Books**

Micki Nadal 810567

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Vacancy

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[peter.r.moore@gmail.com](mailto:peter.r.moore@gmail.com)

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Clerk: Gill Bulpitt 07763857512

## **Longstock Village Hall**

Selina Musters 810459

## **Longstock & Leckford WI**

Sue Hill 811779

**Neighbour Care** 0845 0943713

*Calls cost 7p/min +network charge.*

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(Non emergencies) 101

## **Stockbridge Primary /Pre School**

Emma Jefferies (Head) 810550

## **Stockbridge Rec Ground**

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Stuart Mawson(Sec) 07766 150055

## **Stockbridge Surgery** 810524

*Out of hours urgent treatment /advice*

*Hants Doctors On Call freephone 111*

## **Stockbridge Town Hall**

Kim Candler (Chair) 811776

*On-line bookings*

[www.stockbridgetownhall.co.uk](http://www.stockbridgetownhall.co.uk)

or phone 513299

## **Test Valley School**

Ms Jo McKeown (Exec. Head) 810555

## **Trout 'n About**

Bob Powell 01264 810966

## **TVBC Councillor**

Cllr Ian Jeffrey 01794 388872

## **Unity Transport (Dial-a-Ride**

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## ***From the Clergy***

It's not so long ago that Christmas seemed to begin just a few days before Christmas Day. For our family, the tree went up on Christmas Eve, along with pastry making, icing the cake and preparing the turkey. Indeed, in my early days at work, we didn't finish until lunchtime on Christmas Eve and, to have that afternoon off, we had to take a whole day's holiday. So it was all a great rush but such fun, partly because everything didn't need to be so perfectly presented as we are encouraged to do now. Now Christmas seems to start in November, copying the US system of beginning the 'holiday season' at Thanksgiving. Sometimes people bemoan such a long pre-Christmas time. You hear, 'We are exhausted by Christmas'.

For the church, the time of Advent, the four weeks before Christmas Day, is traditionally one of quiet prayerful preparation for the festivities of Christ's Birth. Today we often abandon that as our churches are filled with joyous Carol Services and Christingles. I think it is wonderful to broaden Christmas so we can extend the great time we have, because the birth of Jesus Christ is wonderful and should be celebrated. He extolled, by his life and teaching, compassion and forgiveness. The world today, as at the time of Christ, is full of war and controversy, making Christmas a woeful time for so many caught up in conflict. We long for peace on earth. Yet Christ's teaching on how to live is so often ignored. However we can, each one of us, show compassion and forgiveness and bring Christ into our own lives and the lives of those around us to give a deep sense of God's peace. That is what it means to bring Christ into the world of today. That is why we celebrate Christ's birth.

We extend our holiday to encompass the New Year celebrations. A New Year is like a New Beginning. This New Year, our Rector Phill is moving to a new parish; sad for us, but for him and his new church, a New Beginning. As we all wish each other a 'Happy New Year', so we wish Phill every happiness and God's blessing in his new parish.

I pray that you will have a Happy Christmas and that next year will bring you many blessings.

***The Rev'd Sue Kipling***  
***Associate Priest, Mid Test Benefice***

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*Cover Illustration: Ice-Skating in a village, Hendrick Avercamp, c. 1690*

*In these times of grim news from every corner, we hope this month's footers will give you and your family a much-needed chuckle.*

## From the Editorial Team

Another eventful year is drawing to a close and we will not be alone in hoping for a less troubled 2024.

The Parish Magazine, however, has much to celebrate. We regularly report stories of local groups and organisations flourishing and working hard to bring our communities together in many different ways, from the Community Market, to Stockbridge Cinema, to the WI and to Neighbourcare. These and many other organisations bring us company, support and entertainment, always nearby and in some cases literally on our doorstep. We thank all those volunteers involved for their commitment and care.

The magazine particularly wants to thank our own support group - contributors, deliverers, advertisers, proofreaders and most importantly subscribers! If you are new to the magazine please consider taking out a subscription (see below) - we need you!

We wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year and look forward to being with you again in February.

Frances Candler, Jennifer Kidd and Thea Taylor



## Subscriptions

If you have enjoyed reading this magazine and would like to receive it regularly **for only £10 you can receive all next year's copies delivered to your door!**

### New Subscribers

If you wish to pay online see the details below but please ensure that you notify David Barnes, our Treasurer, that you are a new subscriber as we need to ensure that you are on our delivery lists. His telephone number is 01264 810516 or email [barnsiesdandj@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:barnsiesdandj@yahoo.co.uk)

Alternatively, drop an envelope through David's door at Touchwood, High Street (pink house opposite The Three Cups).

### Existing Subscribers

Thanks to the very many subscribers who are now paying online, which we much prefer.

The bank details are as before. Please pay £10 to:  
Benefice Printing Account  
Sort code 30-90-21  
Account Number 03510427

Please use the reference section to indicate your address as clearly as possible (IMPORTANT!)

However, your deliverer is still able to collect your £10 subscription if you wish.



**Stockbridge  
Community  
Cinema**



### Alex Lewis - Mountain (12A)

**Weds 6 December**

**4.30pm and 7.30pm (1hr 36min)**

**+ 30 min Q&A after each screening**

An uplifting documentary following Stockbridge resident Alex Lewis, six years after he lost his arms and legs to septicaemia, as he sets out to prove that anything is possible by climbing the highest mountain in Ethiopia with an off-road, solar-powered mobility hand cycle.

### The Nutcracker (U)

**Saturday 9 December**

**5pm and 7.30pm (1hr 47min)**

A recorded live event from 2018 of Peter Wright's enchanting interpretation of The Nutcracker for The Royal Ballet. A charming and magical production presented in a festive period setting

### Good (15)

**Friday 19 January**

**7.30pm (2hrs 40min)**

As the world faces its Second World War, John Halder, a good, intelligent German professor, finds himself pulled into a movement with unthinkable consequences.

### Oppenheimer (15)

**Wednesday 24 January**

**3.30pm and 7.30pm (3hrs )**

During World War 2 physicist Robert Oppenheimer is appointed to work on the top-secret Manhattan Project. He and a team of scientists spend years developing and designing the atomic bomb with the work coming to fruition in July 1945, as they witness the world's first nuclear explosion, forever changing the course of history.

Tickets (£10.00 December and £6.00 January) available via our website:-

**stockbridgecinema.org.uk** or via the Ticketsource telephone booking service

**0333 666 3366** (additional £2.00 fee per booking)

## Copy for Magazine

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**15 January 2024**

**Please send emails to:**

[editorsstockmag@gmail.com](mailto:editorsstockmag@gmail.com)

or phone Frances on 01264 811776

Jennifer on 811179 or Thea on 07730 964481

## Stockbridge Town Hall Events



### Weekly

Mon am	Pilates with Paula
Mon am	Pilates Unlimited with Clare
Tues am	Michelle Buhl-Nielsen Art Class
Weds am	Yoga with Dionne
Thurs am	Iyengar Yoga with Melissa
Thurs am	Stockbridge Community Market
Thurs am	Su Joy Art Class
Thurs pm	Joga

### December and January

Dec 1	Stockbridge Christmas Event
Dec 2-3	Antique Fair
Dec 4-6	Wild Bazaar
Dec 5	Stockbridge Drama Society
Dec 6	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Dec 7 & 14	Stockbridge Drama Society
Dec 9-10	Hawkmoor Books
Dec 9-10	Antiques and Curios
Dec 9	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Dec 13	U3A
Dec 14	Stockbridge Parish Council
Dec 15-16	South Central Makers
Dec 16	Wine Utopia
Dec 17	Stockbridge Drama Society
Dec 18	Jules At No.43
Dec 19-21	Cotton House Interiors
Dec 22-23	Jules At No.43
Jan 6	Antique Fair
Jan 7	Jules At No.43
Jan 9	Stockbridge Drama Society
Jan 16-18	Wild Bazaar
Jan 18	Stockbridge Parish Council
Jan 19	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Jan 20	South Central Makers
Jan 21	Amanda's Posh Bric a Brac Sale
Jan 23	Longstock and Leckford WI
Jan 24	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Jan 27-28	Hawkmoor Books
Jan 27-28	Antiques and Curios



### Stockbridge Community Market Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December 9.30-11.45am

We hope you can join us for our final market this year – we have a wonderful choir leading us in carol singing and mulled wine, mince pies and sausage rolls for all our customers!

Our busy cooks and crafts-people will have a month off until the market opens again on **1st February**, but, like last year, Angela McMeekin's team will be serving tea, coffee and biscuits on Thursdays throughout January, from 10 – 11.30am.

# Christmas in Stockbridge

Elsa and Anna from Frozen will be posing for photos and switching on the Christmas tree lights (6pm)

Santa in his grotto in the Town Hall (4pm)

Carol singing with the Primary School choir outside St Peters (5.30pm)

Test Valley Brass Band

Teatro singers

Street food

'Kiss me quick' Christmas cutouts

Children's 'Christmas Wish' baubles hung on the Christmas tree by Prego

Caricaturist

FRIDAY 1<sup>st</sup>  
DECEMBER 2023

See Page 15 for more details

## Revd Phill's final Service in the Mid-Test Benefice

The Benefice Service at 10am on 31 December at St Mary's Church, Longstock will be taken by Rev'd Phill and will be his last service before he leaves this Benefice for new challenges in Birmingham.

His parishioners all wish him well, so will be gathering in Longstock Village Hall immediately after the service, to say goodbye and give him blessings as he leaves us.

There will be refreshments provided by all the parishes and a farewell gift.

Saying goodbye is hard, but we celebrate Philip's time with us.

# Christmas

with  
**Southern Voices**

*Conducted by Jamal Sutton*



Including Jamie W Hall's new carol *O nata lux*  
Victoria *O magnum mysterium*  
Howells *Three Carol-Anthems*  
Rutter *Candlelight Carol*

Favourite carols for choir and audience

Saturday 16th December 2023 at 7.30pm  
Chapel of St Cross, Winchester SO23 9SD

#ChoirsAgainstCancer  
supporting  
**MACMILLAN**  
Cancer Support

Tickets: £18 (age 21 and under £1)  
Online at [southernvoices.co.uk](http://southernvoices.co.uk) (booking fee applies)  
Telephone bookings 0333 666 3366 (additional £2)  
Also on the door


Andover Chamber Choir  
*The holly bears a berry*  
Traditional carols and poems for Christmas

7:00 p.m. Saturday 16th December 2023  
St Mary's Church, Andover

Tickets £12 (incl refreshments) on the door or £10 in advance  
from The Lights, Newbury Building Society, Andover,  
or from choir members. Under 16s free.

In aid of Andover Food Bank.  
[www.andoverchamberchoir.org.uk](http://www.andoverchamberchoir.org.uk)




# CHRISTMAS CONCERT



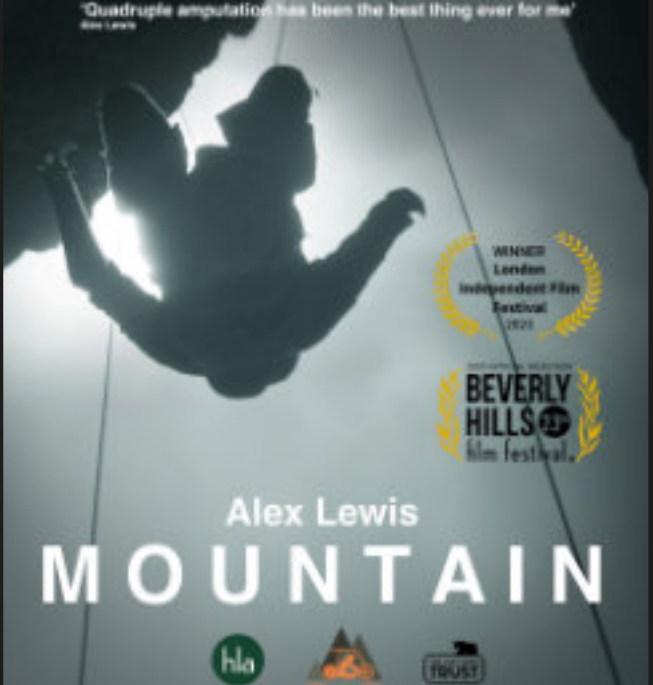
Charpentier *Messe de Minuit*  
Corelli *Christmas Concerto*  
Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*  
Finzi *In Terra Pax*

Saturday 2 December 2023 7.30pm  
St Mary's Church Andover

ANDOVER CHORAL SOCIETY  
WESTMINSTER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
PROFESSIONAL SOLOISTS

Tickets £15 available from Sue Woodley  
07708 987531 or Email: [sue.woodley-47@mail.com](mailto:sue.woodley-47@mail.com)








"Quadruple amputation has been the best thing ever for me!"  
Alex Lewis

WINNER  
London  
Independent Film  
Festival  
2021

BEVERLY HILLS  
film festival

Alex Lewis  
**MOUNTAIN**

Stockbridge Town Hall  
Wednesday 6 December  
4.30pm and 7.30pm

Tickets £10.00 (incl Q&A with Alex Lewis, Simon Ratigan and David Collinson)

All proceeds donated to the Alex Lewis Trust  
Tickets online from [stockbridgecinema.org.uk](http://stockbridgecinema.org.uk)



## LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD WI

December - Christmas Lunch (members only)

**Next meeting:**  
**Tuesday 23rd January**  
**6.45pm for 7pm start**  
**Social Evening**  
**Stockbridge Town Hall**  
**Visitors very welcome**

Please contact Sue Hill on 811779 for further details

# AUDITIONS

Announcing auditions and timings for Stockbridge Amateur Dramatics Society's next production to be performed in April 2024:

## BRONTË

BY POLLY TEALE

**AGAINST A BACKDROP OF DRINK & DRUGS, THE SISTERS WRITE...**



### Reading of the play

Thursday 7th December, 7.30pm, Stockbridge Town Hall (Downstairs)

### Auditions

Thursday 14th December, 8pm, Stockbridge Town Hall (Upstairs)

### Extra Audition slot if required

Sunday 17th December, 2pm, Stockbridge Town Hall (Upstairs)

### Rehearsals

January to April - times and dates to be decided by Director and Cast

### Performance Dates

Thursday 11th, Friday 12th and Saturday 13th April 2024

All are welcome, whether you are interested in being a member of the cast or crew, or would just enjoy a couple of hours reading a really great play!

## SADS

## Wherwell History Group

**Friday 19th January**  
**at 8.00pm**



### **The Corner Shop Killings** **(The Murder of Elizabeth Ridgley)**

a Zoom presentation by

**Paul Stickler**

(Retired Chief Superintendent, Hampshire)

Please book in advance by checking our website:  
[www.wherwellhistory.com/about/programme](http://www.wherwellhistory.com/about/programme)

## Test Villages u3a

**Thursday 7th December**  
**Christmas Social**

This will be a **members only** event.

A fun afternoon including an Entertainer, Quiz and Festive food and drinks.

**Tickets £5** contact Mary Coleman at [mescoleman@gmail.com](mailto:mescoleman@gmail.com)

**Thursday 4th January**

**Jennifer Harbrow** presents

**Ralph Dutton -**  
**the man, the house, the garden.**

Jennifer has worked at Hinton Ampner for the last five years following a career change from mental health nursing to horticulture when she realised her passion for plants, love of being outdoors and working with people fitted perfectly with gardening in the National Trust.

Ralph Dutton, 8th and last Baron Sherborne, was one of the leading taste-makers of his generation. He helped create the perception that English architecture and design was at its height in the 18th century; and, in his own house and garden at Hinton Ampner, he showed how to make that taste supremely effective in our own time. The house and gardens he created he left on his death to the National Trust. Jennifer is passionate about her job and loves sharing her enthusiasm about the house and gardens created by Ralph Dutton with others.

Meetings start at **2pm** (doors open at 1.40pm) in **Chilbolton Village Hall**

New members are welcome to attend our meetings. Find out more about our Test Villages group at

[u3asites.org.uk/test-villages](http://u3asites.org.uk/test-villages)



**Sunday 14th January 2024**

## **36th Stockbridge George Skeates** **Fun Cross-Country Run**

**Raising money for:**

Wessex Spinal Unit

Southampton Cardiac Unit

and Horatio's Sensory Garden at Odstock Hospital

Starting from Stockbridge Town Hall at 10am, there will be two course options:

- a long course of almost eight miles on grassy, rutted and muddy tracks linked by sections of tarmac.

- a three-mile short course on mostly flat road and track.

Enquiries to [jebcrossman@gmail.com](mailto:jebcrossman@gmail.com)



## STOCKBRIDGE MUSIC

Patron: Professor David Owen Norris MA (Oxon) FSA FRAM FRCD



Tim Lowden



Paul Wing

**PAUL WING** takes over the role of Music Director of Stockbridge Music.

“I recognise Stockbridge Music has achieved huge success from the high standard of concerts it has brought to Stockbridge over the past eleven years. I intend to build on the solid platform given to me and will continue to expand the genres of music as well as establishing an outreach programme in due course, using both the Town Hall and the Church.

Stockbridge Music is at an exciting stage and 2024 will be a very interesting season bringing you a variety of ensembles and soloists.

May I thank all our members for their loyal support and wish you all a very Happy Christmas”.

Paul Wing, Music Director



## Stockbridge Community Market

**Thursday mornings 9.30 - 11.45am in Stockbridge Town Hall**

**Last day this year Dec 21st (see p5 for festive finale).**

**Re-start 1st February 2024**

Selling the very best local and home-made produce.

Pies, cakes, breads, soups, eggs and vegetables. Handmade crafts, toys, books, plants & bric-a-brac.

Please come along and browse  
Free Wi-Fi access



## The Royal British Legion Houghton and District Branch

Contact David Williams (Chairman)  
01264 811072

Social evenings are held on the first Wednesday of most months in the Greyhound on the Test



## Longstock Garden Club

Gillian Taylor give us a talk on

### Shrubs - The backbone of your Garden

for our Christmas meeting with mince pies on Tuesday 12th December

And for our first meeting of the new year Geoff Hawkins will be talking about

### The Herbaceous Border on Tuesday 9th January

We meet at 7.30pm in Longstock Village Hall (Doors open at 7.00pm)

At each meeting, buy a raffle ticket still costing just £1 each with many prizes to be won.

<https://longstockgardenclub.com/>

Peter Moore 07881573493



## Houghton WI

**Monday 11 December 10.30am**

Houghton Village Hall

### A Musical Christmas

join in a Christmas sing-along with Henry Anderton, and enjoy a lovely buffet lunch.

All visitors will be very welcome, but please let Jane Anderton know if you would like to come - 01264 810928.

**Monday 15 January 10am**

Houghton Village Hall

### And Now The Good News

With the media so full of bad news, Richard Murphy gives us a whirlwind tour around positive things.

Visitors welcome. Further information from Jane Anderton 01264 810928

## Stockbridge Amateur Dramatic Society's

### Curtain Calls . . .

Come and be entertained by readings and performances from plays, poems and novels - and often songs

**Tuesday 5th December & Tuesday 9th January**

at 7.30pm Stockbridge Town Hall

You don't have to be a member of SADS to come along (but we'd love it if you'd join).

We're also looking for new blood to act, direct and be part of the backstage team.

No experience necessary!

[stockbridgeamdrams@gmail.com](mailto:stockbridgeamdrams@gmail.com)  
or find us on Facebook



## Farewell to our Rector



When our congregations from across the Benefice filled St Nicholas Church in Leckford for the Benefice Service on October 29th, we were not aware that our Rector Phill would be announcing his forthcoming resignation from the Midtest Benefice at the end of the service. Phill has been with us since July 2019 and has earned a great deal of respect and affection. He was able to explain later over coffee that, for purely personal reasons, he is moving to

the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Acocks Green in the Birmingham Diocese. He will also be the Area Oversight Minister covering five nearby churches.

Phill was born and brought up on the River Test in Longparish in Hampshire. His father was a tenant farmer on arable land of the Middleton Estate but was particularly well-known for his pig farming. Phill went to Bath University where he got a degree in Computer Information Systems. He then moved to Eastleigh where he wrote software for MATRA Systems Ltd and his successes included projects for Norwegian Railways and Walt Disney World.

In 2008, in a complete change of direction, he attended Theological College at Ripon College, Cuddesdon getting a degree in theology from the University of Oxford leading to his being ordained. Following in the footsteps of Cyril Garbett, a former Archbishop of York, he completed his curacy at the well-known church of St Mary's in Portsea (Portsmouth) where he received excellent training in the liberal-catholic wing of the Church of England. From there, he was appointed as vicar of two churches in Northampton. He was responsible for the creation of a benefice of these two urban churches.

In 2019, he successfully applied to become the rector of our newly-established Midtest Benefice and started the work of integrating 6 parishes and 8 churches into a unified body. There were obviously huge challenges in this endeavour, as all of the parishes had their own way of doing things and some of them, such as our own, had suffered an interregnum period of almost 3 years. When I suggested that he was then faced with the additional challenge of Covid lockdowns, he reflected that in fact the lockdowns disrupted what had been familiar and disparate routines and enabled him to establish new ways of doing things (his ways) afterwards. Few would disagree that the integration of our benefice has been a huge success story of his ministry.

Phill is rightly proud of this achievement and we have all gained from getting to know each other better. He was able to bring us together, and he has won over many people who were initially reluctant to engage with his policies. He has also been able to develop robust teams under his guidance. He is leaving us with a strong team of lay and ordained ministers, effective church wardens and PCCs throughout the benefice together with administrative support by Lois Opperman. They will all be grateful that he aims to leave everything in good order for next year's interregnum.




Phill is blessed with a dry sense of humour which sits alongside his lack of pomposity. His faith is very strong but he helps people find their own way to spirituality without too much preaching. Some had commented early on that he was very strict on rules, but time has proved that following the age-old procedures of the established Church provides a framework in which worship becomes easier and more tranquil.

Finally, he ruefully admitted that he has not made much progress in the Rectory garden, whilst being very grateful to Jane Lambert for all her help. But using the garden as a metaphor for the parish, he knew that it would need some cutting back, leaving some things as they were for a year or two to see what grew, and then putting in some hard work. He hopes that the teams he has developed will continue to nurture the benefice garden so that it thrives. He tells me that his job is not done here, so we all need to 'crack on' to make things work. And when a new rector arrives, they will do things differently but will be doing things in the context of where they are coming from. He explains that churches grow, and growth means change, so he hopes we will treat his successor generously. For now, he is putting things in order here, planning his move and packing up his model railway. We will miss him enormously and wish him well.

Janet Williams





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## IT'S GOING TO BE A SPARKLING SWITCH ON Friday December 1<sup>st</sup> from 4pm

You will have noticed that the Christmas trees and lights are up so it's time to get ready for the switch-on. The fun will begin at 4pm when Santa is ditching his sleigh for a quite different form of transport. He is due to arrive just as Stockbridge Primary School comes out and the best place to see him will be from the school playground and along the High Street.

Santa will be heading for his Grotto at Stockbridge Town Hall where he will be joined by an artist doing caricatures, and by Elsa and Anna, the famous characters from 'Frozen' who will pose for photos with their fans – fancy dress is optional.

Of course it's not all about Santa. On the High Street there will be music, food options, and Christmas-themed photo backdrops. The traditional Christmas Trail requires children to find 10 candy canes hidden in 10 Stockbridge businesses and to mark them on the trail map which they should take to St Peter's Church by 5.30pm to receive their prize.

500 wooden cut-out baubles have gone to primary schools in Broughton, Tytherley, West Wellow, Kings Somborne, Middle Wallop and Stockbridge. The children have been asked to design a Christmas bauble on one side and on the other to put their name, school and a Christmas wish. There is a 10-foot Christmas tree outside Prego where the baubles can be hung.

At 5.30pm, the Stockbridge Primary School choir will start the switch-on ceremony with carols outside St Peter's Church which everyone is invited to attend. Rev'd Bowden will inaugurate the new lantern arch before inviting Anna and Elsa to start the countdown and apply magic to the plunger to switch on the lights.

Now that we have you all in the Christmas spirit, everyone is then invited into St Peter's for refreshments and a community mingle. We look forward to seeing you there.

*Alyson Lownie*

**Stockbridge Christmas Committee would like to thank** the following for their support, financial and physical :

Fairview Farm	St Peter's Church	The Hub
Greengrocers of Stockbridge	Stockbridge Business Association	The Owl and the Pussycat
Mary Matthews	Stockbridge Community Cinema	The Little Whisky Shop
River Dental	Stockbridge Parish Council	The Three Cups
Robinsons	Stockbridge Town Hall	The White Hart

The switch-on event is free, including activities and prizes, but it does cost a lot - to have the lights professionally stored, put up and taken down; to gradually replace lights and trees as needed since they are now entering their second decade; and occasionally to add to the inventory, this year we have provided lights for the railings around Stockbridge Primary School.

For many years we have been indebted to Richard Foord and Derek Smith for putting up the lit trees but they tell us that they are not getting any younger and so we'd like to take this opportunity to thank them and to appeal to younger residents to take over. Richard and Derek will give training and support so please get in touch with Richard, 07719 596646, if you would like to help.

If you enjoy the event and would like to give a donation, however big or small, the bank details are:  
Account name : Stockbridge Parish Council    Sort code : 60-83-01    Account Number : 20415785  
Please give the Reference 'Xmas' and please give your name so that we can acknowledge it.

**We hope you have fun on the day and wish you a very happy Christmas.**

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Willow and Co Stockbridge opened its bright red doors mid October 2023. The shop is a home décor, lifestyle store offering small pieces of furniture, cushions, lamps, rugs, tableware, candles, gifts, unique pieces of jewellery and many different items for the home.

The intention was to add to the Stockbridge town offering by creating an interesting shop sourcing not only locally but also from further afield including South Africa, Italy, Portugal, USA, France, India, Morocco, etc.

The shop is a mix of new and a little bit of old, with collectables such as Royal Crown Derby, Richard Ginori as well as antique silver pieces sourced for us.

In addition to what you will find in the shop, owner – Audrey Jordan – offers advice for all your home interior needs.

Audrey moved to Stockbridge with her husband, Pete, from Cape Town where she ran a home interiors company for 22 years as well as working with her project manager husband on various projects in the Cape.

Do pop into this 'little gem' to have a browse and find some exciting treasures. Look out for the red door with the black and white striped awning.  
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[www.audreyjordaninteriors.com](http://www.audreyjordaninteriors.com)  
IG: @willowandcostockbridge/  
@audreyjordaninteriors



## Trout 'n' About Presentation Evening

On Friday 17 November, at an event in Stockbridge Town Hall, the Trout 'n' About Committee said a huge thank you, and awarded funds, to the volunteers of Trout 'n' About 2023.

As is the case every year, those who volunteer to help on the day in person are eligible to nominate local good causes to receive a share of the funds raised at the event, and then to vote on the allocation of funds.

This year, funds totalling £2,600 were shared between nine worthy local organisations. More details (and a photograph) to follow in our next magazine, plus information about future plans for TnA.

*Bob Powell, Chair Trout 'n' About Committee*

## Stockbridge, Houghton, Longstock & Leckford Neighbour Care Service

**DO YOU LIKE DRIVING AND  
HAVE SOME SPARE TIME?  
EVER THOUGHT OF VOLUNTEERING?**

Stockbridge Neighbour Care (SNC) service is in great need of your help. If you are a car driver and have a little free time during the week to help get people to their medical appointments, you are just what we are looking for.

Although we have 27 drivers on our list, we are all busy people and only a small percentage are able to help at the moment, putting an increased onus on a very small group of volunteers.

### Here's how it works:

We provide **free lifts to health appointments** for residents of Stockbridge, Houghton, Longstock and Leckford. With ever-reducing public transport services, many people cannot easily get to their health, eye and dental appointments, especially older members of the community.

Appointments can be as close as the local doctor's surgery and as far as Southampton, Basingstoke and Salisbury hospitals.

Volunteers are reimbursed for fuel once a year, based on the mileage covered.

You need only volunteer for the drives you can fit into your schedule and the length of journey you are comfortable doing.

Once you 'sign on' and before you do any driving, a basic DBS check will be done to ensure you can be accepted. This protects both you and your passengers.

A weekly email is sent to all volunteers listing drives for the following week. If you can do any drives, you simply reply, letting everyone know which one(s).

You are issued with a **volunteer's parking permit** for your windscreen and a Blue Badge if your passengers have mobility problems. Some drivers use the waiting time to go shopping whilst others take the chance of a moment to read the papers in peace or catch up with friends on the phone!

If you can't stay for the whole appointment, it's not a problem. Some drivers can only do the outward or the inward journey; the organisers arrange this.

### How do I find out more about SNC?

Sally and Derek Smith, ably helped by Ghislaine and Iain Bell in their absence, organise the drives each week. Call Sally and Derek on 01264 811631 to find out more.

**Remember** – one day **you** may need help from Stockbridge Neighbour Care!

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## Alex Lewis – an update

My goodness, we've crammed a lot in since my last article in the Parish magazine way back in 2017. From kayaking around the southern tip of Greenland and kayaking 300km down the Orange River splitting South Africa and Namibia, we've never been short on adventure but all that changed in 2018 when we started The Wild Wheelchairs Project. The project's aim was to create a four-wheeled, solar-assisted battery-powered hand cycle for a quadruple amputee to cycle through the Simien Mountains and ultimately summit Ras Dashen, their highest peak. Tasked with



creating the vehicle was a crack team of willing engineering students at Southampton University (who in their wisdom never built in any brakes as they thought I'd only cycle uphill!) It was the ultimate end-user-led research project and one that completely reshaped my mindset. All the adventure was enthralling but what was I doing to make a difference to people like me? ... nothing. With this in mind, we raised a large sum of money and enhanced a wheelchair facility over in Bahir Dar. We're now making robust off-road wheelchairs for \$200 and other assistive devices in collaboration with Southampton and Bahir Dar Universities. Then there's Emebet, the most talented, driven and happy coco-



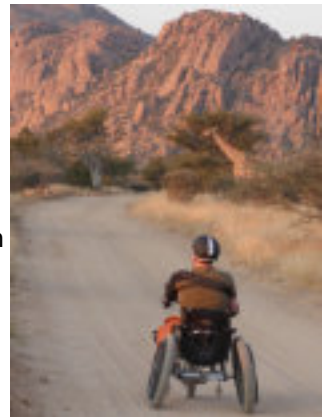
rider I could have ever wished for. A documentary of our exploits entitled '**Alex Lewis Mountain**' will be shown at Stockbridge Town Hall on Wednesday December 6th courtesy of Stockbridge Community Cinema. For further

details and ticket information see pages 4 and 6.

After Ethiopia, well lockdown happened. It didn't stop us from helping others and, with Koalaa, an Imperial start-up and The Douglas Bader Foundation, we founded Project Limitless. Our aim was to be able to help children with upper limb amputation, as many prosthetic centres were limiting appointments and children often require up to four new arms per year due to growing (how dare they!). We raised an astonishing £750k and were able to provide revolutionary soft prosthetics, which last longer than traditional prosthetics and are incredibly comfortable, to over 750 children, enabling them to ride a bike for the first time or simply use cutlery - a remarkable project and one we're continuing to run in the next year.

We then had a period of adventure again, this time riding a mobility scooter across the Namib desert in Namibia. I wouldn't recommend doing it that way as I think I only recently regained feeling in my buttocks! I should have been using a Mach 2 version

of the Ethiopian hand cycle but, due to the East wind blowing the Namib into the sea, our shipping container vessel could not dock and our bike wound up in Durban on the day we flew into Windhoek. On its return to the UK some 8 months later, we unpacked it and decided to attempt to cycle for 24hrs over Salisbury Plain aiming to complete 300km. After a pretty gruelling 19 hours on a bleak February day and night, it sadly broke down and was irreparable; we had completed 214km. It is a marvellous machine and it eventually had its moment of (near) glory!



And now the Ukraine, a relentless news cycle of brutality and the horror of conflict. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to Lviv and Kyiv in February with a mission to understand the rehabilitation and prosthetic provision for injured soldiers and civilians. Our aim was to forge links with regional councils and the military and to meet the injured. It took my breath away, the resilience the Ukrainians have shown the world and we truly felt humbled, upset, angry and so much more whilst there. On our return to the UK, we have shored up projects around the supply of the Koalaa soft prosthetic, predominately as an early rehabilitation tool for the injured in hospitals. We're working towards a University end-user-led project with Kings College and the Kyiv medical universities where students will work with the injured in hospitals in developing new assistive devices which suit the environment they find themselves in. We're also working towards a collaboration of rehabilitation specialists and a US private hospital group here in the UK in developing a network of complex neuro-rehabilitation and prosthetics specialists able to teach not just the clinicians in Ukraine but also the patient. To empower the patient to return home and teach others in a similar situation, a proven powerful example of this is the Alberto Cairo clinic in Kabul. I also understand the power of having a clinical and peer support network around you - I've had it for nearly a decade.

Add to the above a new Foundation we're creating and, next June, I endeavour to become the first quadruple amputee to row from Falmouth to Dover in an adapted rowing boat. Maybe more on that in the next issue? But before I go, all the above would have been impossible had it not been for the continued support of my local community. Your support over the last 10 years has been unwavering and greatly appreciated by my family and me.

Alex Lewis





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## SHOOTS ALONG THE ROUTES

### To the Residents of Longstock, Stockbridge, Leckford and surrounding areas.

We are thrilled to hear of a new initiative aimed at creating nature corridors through our beautiful countryside: Hampshire Forest Partnership the Shoots along the Routes project (<https://www.hants.gov.uk/hampshireforestpartnership/get-involved/shoots-along-the-routes>). This aims to establish natural pathways that benefit our local ecosystem by supporting free tree planting on land that will develop a 2km-wide corridor spanning selected road routes across Hampshire, while fostering connections between wildlife habitats. Locally, the A3057, A30 and B3049 are among the selected routes.

Shoots Along the Routes will fund new hedges, individual trees, linear features, shelter belts, standard trees in hedges, and trees within areas less than 0.5 ha.

To bring this vision to life, we're seeking the participation and support of passionate individuals from our community. We invite you to join our support group, where together we can work towards the successful implementation of this initiative.

#### **Our goals include:**

**Creating Nature Corridors:** Establishing corridors that promote biodiversity and aid wildlife movement, enhancing the natural landscape of our area.

**Engaging Local Landowners:** Collaborating with landowners to identify suitable areas for these corridors, fostering a sense of stewardship and environmental responsibility.

**Public Awareness:** Spreading the word about the Shoots along Routes initiative within our community and beyond, garnering support and participation.

Your involvement in this support group will be invaluable. Whether you're passionate about conservation, interested in sustainable land use, or simply eager to contribute positively to our environment, your enthusiasm and ideas are welcome.

The establishment of this support group is just beginning, but individuals who are interested in joining the Support group or would like to know more on how you can get involved please reach out to Sarah Johns ([clrsarahjohnslpc@gmail.com](mailto:clrsarahjohnslpc@gmail.com)). We intend to convene soon to delve into our strategy, define our goals, and foster collaborative brainstorming sessions focused on engaging local landowners and our community effectively.

*Clrs. Sarah Jones (Longstock)  
and Derek Hallé (Stockbridge)*

Stockbridge Parish Council met in the Town Hall in October; there is still a vacancy for one Councillor at Stockbridge PC and the Clerk would like to hear from anyone interested in becoming a Councillor.

The Council has been working with HCC to replace the unique paving outside Broughton Crafts. The Council felt that this paving gives an unique feel to Stockbridge and wanted to ensure that the broken paving wasn't replaced with an inappropriate substitute. The project has now been completed with the appropriate paving tiles.

As we enter the winter period, it is fair to say that that there has been a lot of rain recently. This will mean that groundwater levels have risen but it does not mean that flooding is inevitable. Stockbridge is well protected with the mitigations installed after the floods in 2014. Stockbridge is also fortunate that the river above and below the village has only one owner and can rely on the River Keepers from Houghton Fishing Club to manage the flow of water through the main river and its side 'carriers' or streams. The river keepers will be outside removing any blockages (such as fallen trees), checking the water levels and if necessary, raising the sluices in order to encourage the river water to flow out onto the floodplain. It is worth residents being prepared, however, and if you have concerns about water ingress due to flooding, you may wish to consider acquiring sand bags from a local building supplier (TVBC has a stock of them but does not allow them out unless flooding is forecast), or investigating other protections that are now commercially available. It will also be worth signing up for the email alerts from the News section of the Stockbridge PC website because any updates from the Houghton Fishing Club will be posted there.

'Unity Online' is asking for feedback on a proposed new on-demand bus service for Test Valley residents with restricted mobility. The idea is to introduce a fully on-demand transport service for people with restricted mobility, using two 16-seat minibuses, both fully wheelchair accessible. To help them to make the case for funding, Unity needs your views and feedback about the idea. Find more details about the proposed service and complete the survey at: <https://forms.office.com/e/7KipJj5VyV>.

Stockbridge Parish Council will meet earlier than usual in December on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December as well as 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024, both in Stockbridge Town Hall.

*Belinda Baker  
Clerk to Stockbridge Parish Council  
[clerk@stockbridgeparish.council.org.uk](mailto:clerk@stockbridgeparish.council.org.uk)*

# Potting Shed Cuttings for Christmas

## How to grow your Christmas Cake . . . for December 2033

In the current spirit of growing your own, can we grow our own Christmas cake? Of course we can – using the iconic Mary Berry’s Ingredients for a Classic Christmas Cake, let’s look at our Christmas timetable:

### Dried Fruit: Raisins, Sultanas and Currants

All sourced from dried grape varieties, of which you’ll need 3: white or green grapes for raisins and sultanas such as the Sultana grape; known as Sultaniye in Turkey, it was named after the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire. For currants, small, black grapes such as Black Corinth. It’s said that when Black Corinth grapes arrived in America from Greece, the word ‘Corinth’ was misheard as ‘currant’ – hence the name currant for a dried fruit not actually related to varieties of currant bushes. They are also known as ‘Zante Currants’. Allow 5 or 6 years of growth before they are fruiting well. Once harvested, they will need to be dried to concentrate their sweetness.



### Brandy

Using grapes from the vines you have already planted, make wine and then boil to just over 173°F and distil the resulting steam. Choose how long you would like it to mature; about 2 years should be fine for cooking brandy.

### Glacé Cherries

You will need to plant your sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*) 3 – 5 years before it will start cropping well. Once harvested, the cherries are candied in a strong sugar syrup.



### Orange Zest

The best variety of orange for zesting is the sweet and juicy Navel orange. In the UK, the similar variety Navelina grows well in a container and can quickly produce fruit after a year or so. You will, of course, have to have someone build a conservatory or greenhouse first, to keep it safe during the winter months (current timescale for ‘getting someone in’ – completely unknown).

### Lemon Juice

Since a lemon tree grown from a pip can take up to 10 years to fruit well, you’ll need to buy a mature specimen, possible Lemon4Seasons/ Eureka and keep it in the conservatory with the orange tree over the winter. Once your tree produces lemons, it will take 12 months for the fruit to ripen on the tree.



### Apricot Jam

Flavorcot, Tomcot and Moorcot apricot varieties have been specifically bred for UK conditions and will crop well in about 3-4 years. You’ll need a sunny, sheltered position in your garden and they’ll need protection from frosts to protect their fragile blossom. Alternatively, if you’ve built a good-sized conservatory or greenhouse, you could overwinter them there with your orange tree! Once harvested, have a fun afternoon of jam making.



### Blanched Almonds

Plant your *Prunus dulcis*, or almond tree, in a sunny, sheltered spot and pray for mild winters and warm summers. In fact, you may need to buy 2 trees, to ensure germination, if no self-fertile cultivars are available and then there are a whole host of diseases to watch out for..



You should have a reasonable crop after 4 years and blanching the almonds will be a piece of cake after the effort of growing them.

### Plain Flour

This could be more problematic. Plain flour is, of course, simply milled wheat grain, which is cracked, rolled to release the endosperm (which becomes the plain flour) and sieved to separate off the bran. First though, you’ll need about 10 square feet of land to produce enough grain to grow 500g of flour. Soft, rather than hard wheat is best for plain flour; harvesting will take between 100-130 days for spring wheat and 180 – 250 days for winter wheat.



### Dark Muscovado Sugar

An unrefined cane sugar which still contains molasses; cane sugar needs a warm, humid climate and although cropping can begin in about 16 months, as it needs 6-8 months of almost continuous rain and no frost and production includes harvesting, juice extraction, juice purification, evaporation, crystallisation, separation, drying, sieving and bagging, you may find it easier to move to Brazil or the West Indies first, where they know what they are doing.





**Black Treacle**

Made from cane molasses and syrup. See Dark Muscovado Sugar for further details of what you are letting yourself in for.

**Icing Sugar**

See Dark Muscovado Sugar. Use sugar from the first crystallization and then mill, mill and mill again. Have you ever been to Waitrose?

**Butter**



OK. 10 litres of milk from the cow makes 1 litre of double cream, which makes about 500g of butter. As a dairy cow will produce about 28 litres per day, you're laughing. Except you need 1/40 acre of pasture per cow per 24 hours. Have you really thought hard about this?

**Eggs**

Ah. Well, a hen will produce an egg a day so you'll need to wait at least 4 days or buy 4 hens. A good mixed, healthy diet for a hen includes leafy greens, cooked beans, corn, non-sugary cereals and grains, berries, apples and most other fruits and vegetables. Do you know where the paracetamol tablets are?

**Marzipan**

See Blanched Almonds, Dark Muscovado Sugar and Eggs. Do you really want to do this?

**Glycerine**

Right. So we need coconut oil and olive oil. Stay calm. We can do this. Olive tree varieties have been specifically bred for the UK and can produce fruit in 3-5 years. So far so simple. A coconut tree could grow in the conservatory, alongside the orange, lemon and apricot trees, although you'll have to turn up the heating and keep misting them with water. Don't hold your breath; they may fruit in 10 years but don't reach full production for 15-20 years. Would you like a box of tissues?



**Mixed spice**

A typical blend includes ground cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, mace, cloves, coriander and ginger. You only need 1½ teaspoons. Probably best to pop into the Co-Op.

**Happy Christmas!**

**Stir-up Sunday and a cake to ice**

Five weeks before Christmas is 'Stir-up Sunday'. The tradition dates back to Victorian times and, although this publication might be a little late for this year, it's a piece of food history. It's when people, family and friends would come together to create and stir their homemade Christmas Pudding. I think this is something that we as a village and all local villages should consider creating in the future.

In the meantime, if you followed last month's recipe, it's now time to decorate our well-fed Christmas fruit cake. This is extremely simple but delicious.

**Ingredients for the Icing**

- 200g/7oz icing sugar
- 1 free range egg white
- 1 tbsp glycerine
- Magic sprinkles, holly sprig, glace fruit

**Method**

Using an electric whisk, whisk together the icing sugar, egg white and the glycerine until thick enough to hold its shape. This could take about 3-4 minutes.

Spread the icing carefully over the top of the cake so it has rough peaks but ensure it does not fall too far down the sides. The icing will set but not harden - a gentle icing and very tasty.

Add decoration, sprinkles and silver balls, holly sprig, whatever suits your event. Tie a wide ribbon around the side too.

Once decorated, place in some cellophane wrap and add ribbons so you have the perfect gift. Or just enjoy as part of your own Christmas celebrations.

A delicious cake and perfect for sharing!



Merry Christmas and a very happy food-friendly New Year!

Micki Nadal

Linda Hotchen

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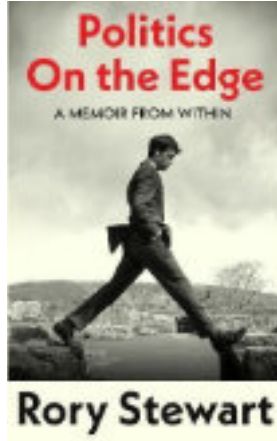
## Notes from a Bookseller - and a new era



It's hard to grasp that the holiday season is upon us once again! Where does the time go?

Here at The Bookmark, we've been looking at all the new titles flooding in for Christmas, and have a few to suggest....

For enthusiastic non-fiction readers, we have some awesome autobiographies including ones from Theresa May, Barbara Streisand, Judy Dench, and also biographies of Terry Pratchett and Bob Dylan. Some major releases on current affairs, politics and history are titles from Rory Stewart *Politics on the Edge*, Jon Snow *The State of Us*, Nigel Biggar *Colonialism* and Peter Frankopan *The Earth Transformed*. Guaranteed to keep the reader stimulated over the holiday period!



course) Julia Donaldson and Alex Scheffler, as well as Jeff Kinney's latest in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series called *No Brainer*. Cressida Cowell's *Which Way Round the Galaxy* is her delightful sequel to *Which Way to Anywhere* and there's a lovely anthology called *A World Full of Winter Stories*, perfect for family reading.



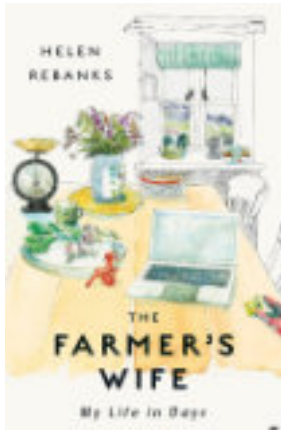
Lastly, we need to tell you, with many mixed feelings, that The Bookmark is up for sale. Almost six years ago, opening the doors to the shop also opened the door into a community of fascinating people of all ages and persuasions who I would never have met otherwise ... and it's been a joy ever since.

But ... life does have a way of moving on, and I know that now is the time to pass the baton to another passionate book lover.

Although running a bookshop is a lot of people's life dream, it is quite a challenge and a not inconsiderable amount of work - both mental and physical. But if the last five years have shown me anything, it's that having a hub for conversation and sharing bookish enthusiasms is one of the most rewarding ways of spending one's time.

There are so many more possibilities for The Bookmark to branch out and explore - more events, school collaborations, pop-ups, life on-line, etc; the possibilities which an energetic and enthusiastic person can inherit are significant.

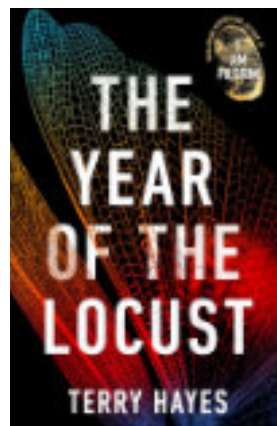
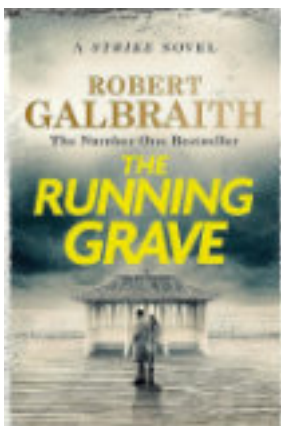
So, in short, if you are interested in acquiring a lively and diverting, although modest, enterprise, do get in touch with [davidsmith@myddletonmajor.co.uk](mailto:davidsmith@myddletonmajor.co.uk) for more information.



Outdoor pursuits and nature highlights include Isabella Tree and Charles Burrell's illustrated *The Book of Wilding*, Paul Whitehouse and John Bailey's *How We Fish* and Helen Rebanks' *The Farmer's Wife*. Even though it's chilly .... lots to think about for the spring.

Festive fiction releases are many but most notable gift suggestions would be Robert

Galbraith's *The Running Grave*, Mick Herron's *The Secret Hours*, Zadie Smith's *The Fraud* and Sebastian Faulks' *The Seventh Son*. And hot off the presses for thriller fans who loved *I Am Pilgrim* is (finally) the new Terry Hayes book, *The Year of the Locust*.



Many thanks for all your support, and happy holidays to everyone.

Elaine Sperber

### Farewell from the Editors

*It has been a privilege to have Bookmark on Stockbridge High Street and a joy to carry a regular column about books in our magazine. Thank you for all you have done for us and the community! We will miss you and wish you well for the future.*

*We very much hope an 'energetic and enthusiastic person' will step into your shoes and carry the business forward.*

The children's area is never without a bumper crop of Christmas-themed stories like *A Christmasaurus Carol* by Tom Fletcher, and Sophie Anderson's *The Snow Girl*. And there are new books from (of

## Max Hastings: "The World can't afford to get bored by Ukraine"

'It's not often I agree with Hastings, but I think he's 100% right in this article' explained Nicholas Raby when he emailed me an article from The Times last month.

In it, Hastings states, 'The most prominent possible beneficiary of the ghastly events in the Middle East is Vladimir Putin. For the West, which seeks to empower Ukraine's resistance to his aggression, Hamas's atrocities and their aftermath represent a colossal and dangerous distraction. Even before Israel was attacked, support for President Zelensky's nation was flagging. How much have you donated to Ukrainian causes in 2023? I hope it does not seem cynical to guess that many people's answer is: less than in 2022.'

It reminded me, while I have been busy with Nicholas and others from StockbridgeUkraine this year, my energy for fundraising has waned when it's arguably needed as much as ever and there is still so much more that I could do. At very least it reminded me an update to you, our friends and supporters, was well overdue.

June was busy helping Sally Milligan with an auction of promises raising a staggering profit of £24,355 for Alex Lewis' fund FLOAT (short for 'For the Love of Assisted Technology'). These funds will help Ukrainian soldiers, civilians and children needing prosthetics developed specifically by Alex, in conjunction with Southampton University. These prosthetics are comfortable, adaptive and low cost, but more on that another time.

Concurrently, Nicholas Raby was setting up the Omega Drone Club which sources and sends second hand 'Mavik' hobby drones to the frontline in Ukraine. These 'eyes in the sky' drones are flown on the frontline for all sorts of vital command and control tasks, all helping to save Ukrainian lives.

Only recently, we received a video direct from Ukrainian Commander Vanya, translated as 'I would like to address our brothers from Britain, who always help the 25th Separate Airborne Brigade with Maviks. I want to remind you once again how exactly they are useful for our work. They are useful for us precisely because, thanks to the Maviks, we save a lot of servicemen's lives. How exactly? By carrying out reconnaissance and additional reconnaissance of the enemy's positions. Also, by adjusting the fire of our artillery as well as carrying out grenade drops and other munitions on the enemy positions. We carry out monitoring and reconnaissance of our front line in order to prevent unnoticed assaults on our positions by the enemy. I'm very grateful to you! Your help is invaluable to us! We thank you very much! Glory to Ukraine!'

This is now a successful and ongoing project. Together with Elizabeth Kerridge-Miller, I have learned to identify and purchase these drones, check them over and test fly them to make sure they are in excellent working order and ready for action as soon as they reach the front in Ukraine.



Purchased drones on the kitchen table



Learning how to fix a problem before sending this drone to the frontline

My first solo test flight over the Stockbridge countryside



Meanwhile, Nicholas has, more or less single-handedly, undertaken much of the fundraising by networking with friends, relatives and acquaintances. More latterly, with Elizabeth's and my help, we have also undertaken a couple of social events, titled 'Drinks 4 Drones', where we demo our drones and raise funds for them. Fun evenings (or lunches) with a purpose, hosted by private supporters. With your help, we hope to build on these events with more over the coming months.

Each drone costs between £400 and £500. Rymma Khoroshko, who forcibly fled to Stockbridge from Severodonetsk, has given us invaluable help by securing a reliable delivery route and she has negotiated courier charges of a mere £30 per batch of five drones. Together, our fundraising has so far raised just over £16,000 enabling us to purchase and send 38 drones.

With the exception of a few specific requests for drones from known contacts, all our drones are sent to a Ukrainian Commander currently fighting with his troops at Avdiivka in the Donetsk region where, since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, the town has been shattered by Russian missiles and the population has shrunk from 30,000 to 1,000.

**Our first drones being unpacked in Ukraine  
by Commander Vanya**



'I'm very grateful to you! Your help is invaluable to us! We thank you very much! Glory to Ukraine. Slava Ukraine.'



A recent BBC article titled 'Ukraine fears drone shortages due to China restrictions' stated the supply of drone parts to the Ukraine has already been affected and they fear the situation may worsen in the future. Our second-hand hobby drones are needed more than ever.

So what do you think? Was Max Hastings right? Has our support for Ukraine waned? Have we forgotten Ukraine? Can you help again? Can we make our support for Ukraine in 2024 greater than 2023 or even 2022?

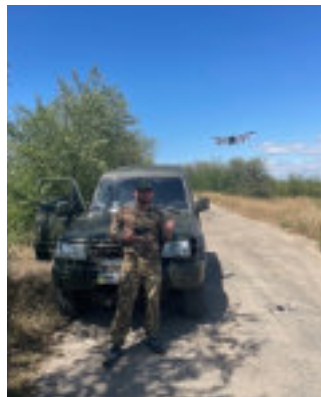
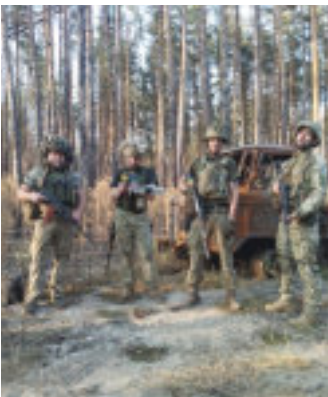
While we will continue to work towards the goal of raising funds to enable us to send more drones to the Ukraine, we can only continue with the support of the community. If you can spare some time to continue this important work, there are details below.

**Afternote**

When I messaged all those included in this article for their approval, I got this message back from Rymma. I, too, was touched by her response and felt compelled to share her comments:

'Hello Amanda. A very touching article, I read it and cry. Thank you for not giving up and continuing the fight with us. Of course, I don't mind if you add my name and these photos. My native and favourite city in which I grew up is called Severodonetsk. Thank you very much again for everything.'

**Our Drones in the Frontline**



**We need your help**

Do you have some time to spare? We desperately need your help, to carry on our drone project. Perhaps you could give Nicholas a few hours a week administrative help to aid him fundraise? Could you host a 'Drinks 4 Drones' event or would you be prepared to fundraise in any other way? Can you help or do you know someone who might? Do you have any ideas that might help us? If you think you can help or simply want to know more, please email us on [omega.drone.club@gmail.com](mailto:omega.drone.club@gmail.com).

**Or you can donate**

Alternatively, a donation will make a huge difference. You can make donations for any of the projects mentioned by sending a cheque to us via Mark Frank, Birch Cottage, High Street, Stockbridge, Hampshire, SO20 6EU. Cheques payable to: 'Stockbridge Ukraine' or BACS to Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-98-97 A/C No. 79874662. Please reference with your particular area of interest e.g. Float (for prosthetics), Omega (for drones), Humanitarian (for various humanitarian requests we get from time to time).

**Messages from Ukraine**



Thank-you certificate from Ukraine



Certificate translation

We are not a registered charity and are run entirely by like-minded volunteers. Everything we purchase with your donations can be traced right through. You can be assured your money will be well spent to support Ukrainians and with absolutely minimal administrative costs and we will keep you up-to-date as to how your donation has been spent.

*Amanda Lambert*

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Longstock and Leckford WI are a very friendly, relaxed group of ladies who meet in Stockbridge Town Hall on the fourth Tuesday of the month in the early evening.

We have a variety of speakers and demonstrations, a craft group, a book group and also meet for an informal monthly lunch at The White Hart.

There are many other activities and campaigns organised on a Hampshire County and Country-wide level that members can get involved with or not as they wish.

Ignore the stereotypes in the media, we do not sing Jerusalem at meetings. And not all members enjoy cooking and crafts!

But we do all enjoy getting together for a good chat.

Come along one evening and see for yourself.

Give me a ring for details or see parish magazines.

Sue Hill 01264 811779

See p7 for details of our January Social Evening

## Big Garden Birdwatch 2024

Organised by the RSPB, the Big Garden Birdwatch is the UK's largest garden wildlife survey. It has been running since 1979, and every year, around 700,000 people take part.

The 2024 event takes place over the weekend **26-28 January**. Participants spend an hour watching the birds in a location of their choice and report back to RSPB on what was seen. Information about few sightings, or none at all, is just as useful.



Wood pigeons nuzzling



Starling

### Why is it important?

Big Garden Birdwatch provides a vital snapshot of how the UK's garden birds are faring, taken over one weekend. This gives a good general impression of the birds that are doing well, and the ones that are struggling. As the first Birdwatch took place more than 40 years ago, there is now a wealth of data to look back on.



Great tits



Goldfinches

Shockingly, we have lost 38 million birds from the UK's skies in the last 50 years, so it is crucial we do all we can to look after our bird life. Big Garden Birdwatch helps to monitor the state of UK bird life.



Magpies



Long-tailed tits

People taking part in Big Garden Birdwatch for the first time often find it sparks a passion for nature. It is hoped that they will then start giving nature a helping hand through feeding their garden birds, putting up nestboxes and gardening in a wildlife-friendly way.

**To take part, go to : [www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch)**

The 2023 top 10 sightings were; Sparrow, Blue Tit, Starling, Woodpigeon, Blackbird, Robin, Magpie, Goldfinch, Great Tit, and Long-tailed Tit. Results of the 2024 event will be announced later this year.



The Travelling Pantry

### What is it?

The Travelling Pantry provides a helping hand to make everyone's budget go further by providing a selection of fresh and packaged food.

### How?

Food in the mobile pantry is either grown, surplus, donated or purchased food through funding. This food is then sorted and placed into the Pantry for families and individuals to select for a small cost of £5



### MORE INFO

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## Stockbridge FC - Notes from the Chair



'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness', wrote John Keats in 1819 in the opening line of his Ode to Autumn. If Keats were writing today, he would have undoubtedly written 'Season of waterlogged pitches and postponed matches ...'. I'm pretty certain Keats was a keen supporter of Tranmere Rovers so he would have shared in the annual disappointment of match after match for Stockbridge FC being lost to the inclement weather. Enough melancholy all round to prompt another Ode. Looking mournfully out of my window at another downpour as I write this. I was hoping to deliver something for the Parish Magazine by way of a poem myself. Ode to a referee's pitch inspection. Unfortunately, expletives aren't very poetic ...

Anyway, I shall stop patting the black dog, think of Spring sunshine and turn to other news.

Dave and Jill Webb have decided to step down from our club committee. They have both dedicated years to Stockbridge FC. Our most successful manager, Dave signed up to play for the Robins when he was 15. He'll thank me for not saying what year it was in the early seventies. Dave and Jill's tireless dedication has guided our club through some difficult years and, alongside the Dance, Savage and Mawson families, keeps our wonderful club going to this day. The club wouldn't be the same without them so I am delighted that Dave and Jill continue to support the club wholeheartedly outside of the committee. I'd like to say a huge thank you to Dave and Jill for their service to Stockbridge FC on behalf of myself and the remaining committee members.

The Robins' new kit is finally here. I know it seemed to take longer than the HS2 decision but here it is! The kit looks splendid and thanks again to Lucy and the team at Greengrocers of Stockbridge for being so supportive of our club this season.



With an eye on the future use of the Rec, the Robins are working with the Recreation Ground Trust in making some initial plans to improve the facilities. Mindful as we are that the Rec fulfils functions other than football, we'd like to update the WC facilities. You'll hear more when plans are done.

And don't forget to sign up for all the latest Robins news at [www.stockbridgefc.com](http://www.stockbridgefc.com) as we'd love your support. You can see when the next match is being played and Stuart, Wendy and Rosemary do a wonderful job of ensuring The Robins Bar is always open for home matches.

So, on reflection, we won't let a little bit of rain dampen our spirits at Stockbridge FC. With Christmas on the horizon there is always so much to be positive about when you look past the

waterlogged pitch to the sky and towards the countryside ... because even when it is raining, we shouldn't forget that this is still sunny Stockbridge, the home of the Robins!

*Bob Powell, Chair Stockbridge FC  
chair@stockbridgefc.com*

Our **Christmas celebration** will be at the **Town Hall at 7pm on 16th December.**

If you played for Stockbridge or simply want to support our club, then please come along.  
**COYR!**



Patient  
News

### Flu vaccinations

If you still need a flu vaccination, please call the surgery to book an appointment.

### Hampshire COVID helpline

If you are eligible and haven't yet received the covid vaccination, you can contact the Hampshire Covid Helpline on 0300 561 0018. (Lines are open 9am-5pm Mon-Fri and 9am-1pm on Sat & Sun.)

### Saturdays

Stockbridge Surgery is open on Saturday mornings for patients collecting medication and routine booked appointments. We are not contracted to provide a service on Saturday mornings and only have a skeleton staff working. Please call 111 for urgent healthcare at the weekend.

### Hospital transport and appointments

Eligible patients can now book their own hospital transport to get to appointments. Patients can book up to 20 days in advance and must book at least 2 days in advance. Bookings can be made by calling 0300 123 9833 or by logging onto <https://managemybooking.scas.nhs.uk/patientzone>

### Blood test results

If you have the NHS App, you should now be able to see test results. Please check the NHS App before contacting the surgery regarding test results.

### Looking ahead

**If you will run out of medication** over 25, 26 or 27 December, please ensure you request medication by **Monday 18 December.**

*Ann Spooner, Practice Manager*

# Stockbridge Primary and Pre-School News

## Looking backwards but moving forwards



Last time I wrote about our Ofsted inspection back in September. One of the things the inspector was keen to focus on was whether children could know more, through our curriculum delivery and the organisation of knowledge and key facts. We want to go beyond this at Stockbridge. I strongly feel that the best curriculum is not like a 'pub quiz' with facts that are simply remembered and recalled, but one which builds meaning and encourages children to be creative and inquisitive. In short, I feel we can do better than the Ofsted framework requires of us!

December is a time full of traditions in school – ones many of you will remember from your own time at school and perhaps a few new ones too! This year, because of holiday dates, we will be cramming our usual three weeks of December into just two as we break for the holidays on December 15th. This means, in a very short time, we will be undertaking the nativity, presented by the lower school, in St Peter's Church; the upper school carol service in St Peter's; Christmas lunch; carols around the tree both at school and, for the first time in a few years, at the lights switch on 1st December. All this will be finished off with Christmas parties in school. We usually visit a local pantomime on the last day of term but, sadly, this year, the timing was not quite right to enable us to follow this tradition.

January will soon be here too and we're back at school alarmingly early in the month on Tuesday 2nd. Whilst traditions focus our energies in December, the new year brings promise and renewal. Our children's learning will be well underway, especially as they have made such a flying start in the autumn term already. After any holiday, we're glad to get back to the rhythms of the school week and timetable and much has been written in the press about how good that is for everyone's well-being and mental health. This will undoubtedly be the topic of many newspaper and magazine articles in the new year!

Well-being and mental health are hot topics everywhere it seems, not least in school. In fact, it's one of our key school priorities this academic year. The Government has provided every school with funding to train a lead mental health worker. We are using our lead, Mrs Cooper, to help shape the school's provision on this serious issue to improve things for both children AND staff. Our theme for January will focus on dealing with worries; the world at the moment seems to be full of them and we need to help our children navigate the serious ones and manage those that they are able to manage themselves, initially with adult support and then moving to doing this independently. We'll let you know how we get on in February's edition of this newsletter.

Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year to you all.  
*Emma Jefferies, Headteacher*

### A message from the Governors of Stockbridge Primary and Pre-School

Stockbridge Primary and Pre-School is thriving. Numbers in our school community are high and ours is a school that families from an increasingly wide area want their children to join.

As governors, it's our job to ask tough questions of the school's leadership, but that doesn't stop us from being proud of what they've achieved. Stockbridge Primary is powered by a small but dedicated team, guided by a headteacher with a passion for doing the best for our community's children.

You might be wondering exactly what school governors do. Our role is strategic rather than operational. That means we focus on improving outcomes for the children by setting targets for the school, monitoring progress and asking questions. But we stay out of day-to-day decisions, which are best left to the expert staff.

Some of the governors are parents at the school, and some are not. The priority in selecting new governors is that we have a real breadth of experience, so the school can call on expertise in fields such as finance, business management, HR, communications, education, law and project management.

We meet once a month in one of the children's classrooms – which means sitting on child-sized chairs for two full hours. But the discussions keep us from cramping up too much: we talk about the school's improvement priorities, we review finances, consider how to mitigate risks to the school and discuss children's test results.

Outside of that, every governor aims to visit the school at least once a term, to see the school first-hand. Talking to the children and hearing their thoughts and feelings about their school and the impact the curriculum delivery is having on their learning is important, but it's always great fun too.

We always feel we're an important part of the Stockbridge town community but, this year, the community played an important role in the school too: we now have improved Wi-Fi access in every classroom thanks to a donation from the Stockbridge Community Cinema. Sales of cinema tickets, wine and ices in the Town Hall are helping inspire young minds just down the street.

If you'd like to find out more about being a governor, please get in touch with the head teacher Mrs Jefferies or the Acting Chair of Governors Miriam White on 07557 916359.

## Remembrance Sunday in Stockbridge



Members of 668 Squadron Army Air Corps, commanded by Major Richard Lonsdale, leading the procession to the War Memorial.



John Standfield, Crucifer, and Chris Devenish, RBL standard-bearer, leading the congregation including scouts, cubs, brownies and beavers.



Service at War Memorial led by Rev'd. Sue Kipling with soldiers and police cadets in the background.



Jean Boney laying a wreath for Court Leet.

We were delighted to receive this very special poem written by children of Stockbridge Primary School (Editors)



Inspired by Harry Riley, who wrote his poem 'Remember Me' after standing in the supermarket for a 2-minute silence, we have written our own poem. We thought about wars, past and present and what it would be like to be a child in these times.

### **We Are the Lucky Ones**

We are the lucky ones, not yet gone,  
We live a life free from bombs.  
We have space and love to roam,  
Whilst those in conflict lose their home.

### **WE ARE THE LUCKY ONES**

Names engraved on a memorial wall.  
The Brock family didn't expect him to fall.  
A son at home without his father there.  
Tears of sadness seem everywhere.

### **WE ARE THE LUCKY ONES**

As children leave for the war  
On the train, they start to bore  
Whilst poisonous gas fills our land  
The innocent soldiers take a stand.

### **WE ARE THE LUCKY ONES**

While Ukraine and Russia have their fights,  
Poor children suffer to survive the night.  
Women try to save their children from the war,  
Yet there is still blood, guts, and gore.

### **WE ARE THE LUCKY ONES**

Such a fight, for so little land,  
Families at risk trying to take their stand,  
Evacuating their homes day by day  
Hoping to live they pray they pray.

### **WE ARE THE LUCKY ONES**

*by Alfie, Keira, Zac, James,  
Max, Charlie, Orla & Katie*



## **Poppy Appeal**

This year's Poppy Appeal went very well in spite of some challenging weather. Thanks to all the residents of Providence Court and Garden Inn, we were able to set up a Poppy Stall with seating under cover which was much appreciated. Mary Matthews kindly hosted another sheltered stall in her front garden at Little Wyke.

This year we had 70 poppy sellers but we always welcome more.

The final total is yet to be confirmed but it will be over £5000 so thank you all for your wonderful support with helping with poppies and for your generous donations.

*Angela McMeekin*

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## Ring Out, Wild Bells Alfred Lord Tennyson

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## HARVEST FESTIVAL 2023 Harvest Festival Giving

Two more of our local churches have joined St Mary's Longstock (reported last month) in making donations to Andover Foodbank from their Harvest Festival services.

**St Nicholas, Leckford** received a certificate of appreciation from the Foodbank recording their generosity and explaining that their donation has provided meals for 71 people - a remarkable achievement for the small parish.

**St Peter's, Stockbridge** also made a donation to the Foodbank, and was gratified to receive a similar certificate, recording that 70.40 kg of food had been donated from its Harvest Festival Celebration which has fed 141 people.

Well done, all three parishes!



## Church News

### St Mary's Longstock

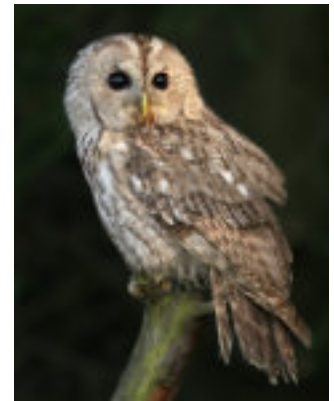


### Eco-church news

We have some exciting news to report about potential new residents in the churchyard at St Mary's! The Hawk Conservancy at Amport runs a raptor nesting box scheme across the south of England. This is such important work as natural nesting sites become harder to find and raptor numbers are put under pressure, affecting the balance of our countryside.

Maddie and I met with Dr Matt Stephens who runs the scheme for the conservancy and he's keen to put up a tawny owl nesting box in our churchyard. We've got a bit of admin to do to get diocese approval but are hoping that, by the time you read this, the box will be up.

It's just the right time of year for nesting boxes to go up as fledged youngsters will be looking for somewhere to set up home to raise next year's families. Here's hoping that the owls will find the box before any squirrels do – it's a 50/50 chance that we'll end up homing tawny owls.



Other villages in the area may be following suit as Broughton and Houghton have expressed interest too and perhaps you'll be inspired to find a space in your garden for a nesting box for other birds or even a raptor (barn owls, little owls, kestrels as well as tawny owls).

You may have spotted some other changes in the churchyard as, with Chris Reynell's help, we've prepared a small area by the wall which will be seeded up with wildflowers in the spring. So please forgive us the covering-up of that for now – we need to kill off the grass and weeds underneath to give the wildflowers a good chance.

Did you know that working with the environment is really important to the church? In fact, one of the 5 'marks of mission' of the Church of England is: to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. So watch this space as we continue to develop this work – and if you've got an interest in this area I'd be very happy to hear from you.

Lisa Traylor  
lisalamberti@hotmail.co.uk

# Church News

## St Mary's Longstock



### 'Soup and Sandwiches'

takes place on the last Thursday of the month – if anyone would like to help by making sandwiches or cakes, (ingredients supplied), please contact me (810284). If you would like to come and join us for good food and a chat, the next event is Thursday 28 December, 12.30pm, at Longstock Village Hall. This is for anyone who would like company, make new friends, catch up on what is going on. Also 25 January, 2024.

**Remembrance Sunday** on 12 November went well with a service in church, followed at 10.50am by the Act of Remembrance at Longstock War Memorial. Rev'd Philip took both these services. As usual, at least half the village were in attendance for the Act of Remembrance and enjoyed seeing the helicopters fly overhead at 11am. After the Act of Remembrance, coffee and cake, courtesy of The Peat Spade was much enjoyed. This year, I was taking the service at Houghton but still saw the helicopters and was moved that so many were sharing the 2-minute silence.



**The Church and Churchyard Autumn clean and tidy** took place, but in variable weather. The church inside smells wonderful and we were able to brush away cobwebs, clean windows and polish pews. Thank you to all who came, with rakes and garden tools, dusters and long-poled web cleaners. Refreshments, drinks and

buns were provided. There was a small, but elite, team of volunteers - Nick Sibley, Beth Oliver, Tricia Rugman (who es-caped the photo), Charles Grieve, Dane Oliver and Maddie Hedley. A very productive morning and many thanks to those able to come. To all who sent apologies, there will be another opportunity in 2-3 weeks!

The main news this month is that Rev'd Philip Bowden is leaving us. He told us on 29 October at the Benefice Service that his last service would be on 31 December at the Benefice Service which will be at St Mary, Longstock. He was inducted in August 2019 and has worked with us to bring the Benefice together. Under his leadership, we have an Assistant Priest, Rev'd Sue Kipling, and have a retired Priest, Rev'd John Rennie, who is willing to help by taking 2 services a month. There is also a strong Ministry Team with 5 Lay Worship Leaders, one of whom has Permission to Preach (PtoP). We have another PtoP in training. During the

interregnum the Church Wardens have the responsibility to ensure that services take place according to the rota. We will start working on the recruitment process as soon as we can but have been assured by the Archdeacon that it will be a straightforward replacement of Philip. No reorganisation or pastoral review, for which I am thankful. Lois Opperman, as the Admin. Assistant, will continue working and co-ordinating events as much as possible. The Church Wardens will meet regularly, as will the Ministry Team so, as far as possible, things will continue as usual.

### Dates for your Diary:

#### Christmas Dates

**9 December** The 'Christmas Story in the Barn' will take place in the Barn at Charity Farm House, courtesy of Paul, Loz and Arthur Hardy. This will start at 3.00pm with a story about Christmas. We will have carols, accompanied by an accordion, played by Mark. Refreshment will follow – if we are lucky, we may have mulled cider and a selection of hot and cold nibbles. Please wrap up warm as it can get chilly. Thermals will help.

**17 December** The Crib Service at 9.30am at St Mary's Church. There will be hand-bells and all the people and animals will be ready to be taken down the aisle during the carols. The church will be decorated and the Christmas Tree will look splendid. I do hope you can come and join in this special act of worship.

**25 December** All Age Christmas at 10.00am at St Mary's Church. The church is usually full, with children excited about the presents, the adults thinking about cooking requirements, but all ready to sing with joy and enthusiasm, greeting the new King on Christmas Morn.

**31 December** A Benefice Service at 10.00am at St Mary's Church. This will be tinged with sorrow as this will be Philip's last service with us. There is bound to be a full church. After the service, we will gather at Longstock Village Hall to give thanks for Philip's time with us and to wish him well at his new parish in Birmingham.

**7 January** 9.30am. All Age Worship for Epiphany when we welcome the Magi

**21 January** 9.30am. The Plough Service. An opportunity to bless the plough and the seeds ready for a good harvest. Always a good service, especially for rural parishes.

**25 January at 12.30pm.** Soup and Sandwiches at Longstock Village Hall.

Church Services at St Mary, Longstock for December 2023 and January 2024 are listed on p35

Maddie Hedley  
Tel.810284 or email [mjh723@btinternet.com](mailto:mjh723@btinternet.com)



## Church News

### St Peter's and Old St Peter's Stockbridge



Our Benefice Service on the last Sunday of October was held in the beautiful old church of St Nicholas in Leckford. Dating back to the 13th Century, St Nicholas was largely re-built in the Tudor period. It has an interesting small timber bell tower which was added in response to a law passed in the 1580s ordering all churches without a tower to build one so that local people could be warned by the bell of a Spanish attack should one occur. The Spanish did indeed launch their famous Armada in 1588 so the Leckford residents would have been well-warned by their bell.

Everyone who attended the Benefice Service felt the sadness that Dawn Williams was no longer there. At the end of the service, our Rector Phill, to the surprise of the whole congregation, told us that he had recently handed in his resignation to Bishop Debbie in Winchester. Once we had absorbed this bombshell, we were given welcome coffee and biscuits by the team including Micki Nadal and David Barnes who had worked hard to get the church ready for the occasion. Dawn would have been delighted to see so many people packing the pews of her church.

The All Soul's Day communion service in St Peter's on November 2nd was very well attended and followed the well-established format of the congregation going up quietly to the altar to light candles as they remembered loved ones who had died, whilst our two ministers, Phill and Sue, read out all the names of the deceased.

Poppy sales for the Royal British Legion started at the end of October. Angela McMeekin, who always achieves the seemingly impossible, rallied dozens of volunteers (many already in their 80s or 90s) to stand or sit in the cold (and sometime rain) during two Fridays and three Saturdays before Remembrance Sunday to sell poppies to passers-by on the High Street. David Williams, President of our local branch of the RBL, thanked Angela and all of these volunteers for their efforts at the Poppy Lunch which was held in the Army Air Corps Museum on Remembrance Sunday.

The Armistice Day service was led by Phill at the War Memorial on Saturday 11th November and was well attended. The day after was Remembrance

Sunday and the Church was full-to-overflowing for a magnificent service led by Sue Kipling. The choir were accompanied by Helen King playing the grand piano which had been donated to the church by Dawn Williams, our late organist. Children and young people from both of our schools were there participating in the service, as well as large numbers of scouts, brownies, cubs and beavers, also contributing to prayers. More than 30 soldiers from the Army Air Corps filled the side pew for the service and then led the procession, followed also by 25 police cadets, and the congregation, down the High Street to the War Memorial for the 11 o'clock Remembrance and the laying of wreaths. Thanks to the magnificent cooperation of our local police, the traffic was stopped or well controlled which enabled huge numbers to gather quietly for the brief service. A great deal of organisation goes into this special day and we are grateful to our church warden, with his military background, for organising it so well. He, in turn, was grateful for the support of Bruce Williams, Rory Christopherson and Alison Vialou Clark.

In early November, in preparation for all the events leading up to Remembrance and to Christmas, our local Fire Brigade volunteers led by their leader, Ian Tranham, got their ladders and supports into St Peter's and reached the high parts of the building that our gallant team of volunteer cleaners can't reach. They use long-handled extending feather dusters to remove spiders' webs that have been comfortably out-of-reach since re-spinning after the firemen's last visit in 2022. We are so grateful to them for this service. The Fire Brigade and the local Police, among many others, laid wreaths on Remembrance Sunday.

On behalf of congregations at St Peter's and Old St Peter's, the Church Warden and the PCC extend enormous thanks to the teams at both our churches who prepare the flowers and who clean the environment so that everything looks perfect for the season of the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. They thank, also, the people who work behind the scenes and who play so many rôles in supporting the life of our beautiful churches. Without the efforts of these tireless volunteers, our churches would not be as beautiful nor as vibrant and functional. Everyone plays a part and the participation of all these willing people will be particularly important during the challenges of the period of interregnum in 2024.

We were all saddened to hear of the death of Andrew Williams. He and his wife, Pauline, attended St Peter's for many years and our prayers are with her. We continue to pray for Christine Leslie who is slowly recovering in hospital from the serious post-operative setback she had in September.

*Continued overleaf*

## Church News

### Old St Peter's and St Peter's - Looking ahead:

**Sunday, December 3rd:** Teas in the church at 3pm for those who live alone.

**Sunday January 7th:** Teas in the church at 3pm (instead of January 1st)

**Friday December 1st:** Christmas lights turned on and late night shopping. There will be mulled wine and mince pies in the church following Primary School children singing carols on the lawn

**December 3rd:** Advent Sunday starting our approach to Christmas celebrating the birth of Christ.

**Fridays December 15th at 6pm:** Carol Service in St Peter's also to be attended by the congregation from St Thomas More, our Roman Catholic Church.

### **Sunday, December 24th:**

10am: Communion Service in Old St Peter's

6pm: Christmas Story in St Peter's for the children

11.30 pm: Midnight Mass in St Peter's

**Sunday, December 31st at 10am:** United Benefice Service in St Mary's Church, Longstock.

This will be Phill's last service in his Ministry here in the Test Valley Benefice and will be a chance for us to say goodbye to him, and to thank him for his four and a half years as our Rector. As portrayed in the tribute to him on page 9, Phill has made a huge contribution to the cohesion and energy of church life here in Stockbridge. We were lucky to have him living in our village and we valued his presence enormously. We wish him well and hope he is happy in his new parish and his life ahead.

**Sunday, January 7th:** We celebrate Epiphany, which represents the day when the Magi (wise men) followed the star and visited the baby Jesus. The word Epiphany comes from the Greek word meaning 'to reveal', as Christ was revealed to the world.

A Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

*Janet Williams*

### St Nicholas' Leckford



### Candlelit Carol Service

### Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 3pm

We hope as many of you as possible can join us for our annual service of lessons and carols at St Nick's. We have decided to hold the service at 3pm rather than later, so you don't have to leave your cosy homes on a cold, probably wet, December evening!

### Prayer for December and January

Lord, as we come to the end of one year and the beginning of the next, we pray and hope so much for peace to come to the troubled parts of the world.

In Bethlehem, the town of your birth, where pilgrims should be gathering, there is only fear and apprehension. We pray there can be a ceasefire and serious talks about the future.

We also pray for Ukraine, still fighting for their right for independence without attack and intimidation from their neighbour. We pray for your doves of peace to encircle the earth. Let the angel's song be heard.

Lord Jesus, whilst we yearn for peace, we also give thanks for our blessings.

This, the celebration of your birth, brings families together, generosity to blossom.

We pray that your churches are full of people celebrating and giving worship, singing with joy the carols which we know and love.

During Advent, we pray we will find time for meditation and reflection to help us improve ready for the New Year.

We pray for the lost and lonely, that we can reach out a helping hand.

The New Year provides for a new start for many, so we pray for Philip, starting a new ministry in Birmingham. We pray he will find a warm welcome.

We pray for the Mid-Test Benefice going into vacancy. We pray for teamwork and a circle of friendship as the Church Wardens and Ministry Team take on new responsibilities. With your help and the Holy Spirit guiding us, we will succeed in our job to find a new Rector to work with us and take us forward spreading your word and love. Be with us we pray.

We pray for your blessing and guidance as we meditate on the words which follow:

'Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
the world has suffered long;  
beneath the angel-strain have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong;  
and man, at war with man, hears not  
the love-song which they bring:  
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,  
and hear the angels sing.'

(Verse 4 from 't came upon a Midnight Clear')

# Church News

## From the Area Dean

This year's Church of England Christmas theme is: 'Follow the Star : Join the Son'. It highlights how singing can help draw us closer to God and each other through the journey from Advent to Epiphany.

'The shepherds were astonished to find the night sky filled with angels singing God's praise. And before long they were singing, too ... Centuries later, singing is still central to how many of us celebrate Christmas. We invite you this Christmas to follow the star, journey to the manger, join the song and come into the presence of Jesus Christ.'

*Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell*

In all of our churches there will be music and singing this Christmas – and it won't all be inside church buildings either! I hope that you will take the opportunity this year to sample some of the music and singing in our communities. It is good for the body, as well as the soul.

*Your Area Dean, James*

*Revd James Pitkin - romseyareadean@gmail.com*

## The Column for November

### Baptisms

11 November. The baptisms of Elsie Martha Collins and Beatrice Sarah Rawson-Cain, took place at 12 noon at St Peter's Church, Stockbridge

### Weddings

There were no weddings

### Funerals

The funeral for the late Ivor Gibson took place at 2.00pm on 2 November 2023 at St Mary's Church, Longstock. A moving service was held in a packed church. The service was followed by interment at Longstock Cemetery.

20 November 2023: The interment of the ashes of the late Ada Rogers in The Churchyard of St Mary, Longstock took place at 10.30am.

## Hampshire Downs RC Parish St Thomas More

Services are held on Sundays at 9.00am

## December and January Services for Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford

### 3rd December (Advent Sunday)

08.00 **Leckford** Holy Communion BCP

09.30 **Longstock** All Age Worship

11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist

### 9th December (Saturday)

15.00 **Longstock** Christmas Story in the Barn  
Charity Farm House

### 10th December (Advent 2)

08.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

09.30 **Longstock** Parish Eucharist

11.00 **Stockbridge** All Age Service

### 15th December (Friday)

18.00 **Stockbridge** Carol Service

### 17th December (Advent 3)

09.30 **Longstock** Crib Service

11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist

15.00 **Leckford** Carol Service

### 20th December (Wednesday)

10.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

### 24th December (Advent 4) Christmas Eve

10.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

18.00 **Stockbridge** Christmas Story

23.30 **Stockbridge** Midnight Mass

### 25th December Christmas Day

09.00 **Leckford** BCP Communion

10.00 **Longstock** All Age with short Communion

### 31st December

10.00 **Longstock** United Benefice Service  
Farewell to Rev'd Philip Bowden

### 7th January (Epiphany)

08.00 **Leckford** Holy Communion BCP

09.30 **Longstock** All Age Service Worship

11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist

### 14th January (Epiphany 2)

08.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

09.30 **Longstock** Parish Eucharist

11.00 **Stockbridge** All Age Service

### 21st January (Epiphany 3)

09.30 **Longstock** Plough Service

11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist

18.00 **Leckford** Evensong (to be confirmed)

### 24th January (Wednesday)(Francis de Sales)

10.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

### 28th January (Epiphany 4)

11.00 **Stockbridge** Morning Worship

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