



The Parish Magazine for

£1

STOCKBRIDGE LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD

March 2024



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

Rector: currently no incumbent

All Services during the interregnum covered by the Team Ministry

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

Please contact the Benefice Administrator, Lois Opperman

Phone No: 07900 927913 or midtestbenefice@gmail.com

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Churchwarden

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Clerk: Gill Bulpitt 07763857512

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Derek@stockbridgeparishcouncil.org.uk

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or phone 513299

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Ms Jo McKeown (Exec. Head) 810555

Trout 'n About

Bob Powell 01264 810966

TVBC Councillor

Cllr Ian Jeffrey 01794 388872

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shopping bus) 356808



From the Editorial Team

You will notice that this month we have a new look for our opening pages. You will all be aware that our benefice is currently without a rector, so this month our Area Dean has stepped in to write 'From the Clergy'. We have placed his article, explaining the process of recruiting a new rector, at the beginning of Church News on page 27. This has given us the opportunity to try a new style contents page to highlight news items and articles of particular interest in each month's magazine.

In this month's magazine, several articles focus on volunteering, both the value and satisfaction of being a volunteer (see page 13 for an insight into volunteering with Age Concern Hampshire) and also pleas for volunteers. Among them Roger Tym is looking for someone to take on the invaluable role he has played in supporting people in the Test Valley through the process of securing affordable housing, Stockbridge Music needs a Treasurer (both page 15) and the Stockbridge & Longstock Homes & Support for Refugees is also looking for help (page 17).

Our footers are inspired by World Book Day which falls on 7th March and will be celebrated in schools around the country. You will find our own contributions throughout the magazine.

We would welcome your comments about the change to this page and about the magazine in general - and please keep those contributions coming!

Frances Candler, Jennifer Kidd and Thea Taylor

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Cover Photo: pupils at Stockbridge Primary School enjoying a story

Stockbridge Town Hall Events



Weekly

Mon am	Pilates with Paula
Mon am	Pilates Unlimited with Clare
Mon pm	Sing for Fun
Tues am	Iyengar Yoga with Melissa
Tues am	Michelle Buhl-Nielsen Art Class
Weds am	Yoga with Dionne
Weds pm	Kathryn Campling Yoga
Thurs am	Stockbridge Community Market
Thurs am	Su Joy Art Class
Thurs pm	Jo Caley Yoga
Fri am	Moo Music

This Month

Mar 1	Stockbridge Music Society
Mar 2	Antique Fair
Mar 5	Infinito
Mar 5	Stockbridge Drama Society
Mar 6	Infinito
Mar 7	Katherine Vince
Mar 8-9	Cocoon Outerwear Limited
Mar 12	St Peter's PCC
Mar 13	U3A
Mar 13	Courts Baron and Leet
Mar 14	Katherine Vince
Mar 15	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Mar 16	South Central Makers
Mar 16	Salisbury Chamber Chorus
Mar 17-19	Jules At No.43
Mar 20	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Mar 21	TVBC Electoral Services
Mar 21	Stockbridge Parish Council
Mar 22-23	Capital Cashmere
Mar 24-27	Wild Bazaar
Mar 26	Longstock and Leckford WI
Mar 30-31	Antiques and Curios
Mar 30-31	Hawkmoor Books

Wherwell History Group

Friday 15th March
8pm at Chilbolton
Village Hall



A History of Women Police
(with particular reference to Hampshire)

A presentation by Dr Clifford Williams

Please check our website at
<https://www.wherwellhistory.com> for
 further details

(£5 entry fee for non-members)



**Stockbridge
Community
Cinema**



Alcarràs (15)
Friday 15 March
7.30 pm (1hr 45min)

In a small village in Catalonia, the peach farmers of the Solé family spend every summer together picking fruit from their orchard. But when plans arise to install solar panels and cut down trees, this tight-knit group suddenly faces eviction - and the loss of far more than their home. *(In Catalan with subtitles)*

The Great Escaper (12A)
Wednesday 20 March

5.00 pm and 7.30 pm (1hr 36min)

In 2014, near-nonagenarian Bernie Jordan (Michael Caine) is sad to miss out on an official group outing to the D-Day anniversary in France. Encouraged by wife Rene (Glenda Jackson), he sneaks out from his care home and goes on one last big adventure to cross the Channel, while reminiscing about his wartime experiences.

Tickets £6.00 (£5.50 + £0.50 booking fee)
 available online via our website
stockbridgecinema.org.uk or via the
 Ticketsource telephone booking service
0333 666 3366 (no additional fee)



Houghton WI

10am Monday 18th March
at Houghton Village Hall

Race to Scotland
Ken Fowler

presents the story of his journey from
Land's End to John O'Groats in a small boat.

Visitors welcome. Further information from
 Jane Anderton 01264 810928

Copy for Magazine

Copy date for the April Magazine:
15 March 2024

Please send emails to:

editorsstockmag@gmail.com

or phone Frances on 01264 811776

Jennifer on 811179 or Thea on 07730 964481



STOCKBRIDGE MUSIC

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

Friday 1st March, 7.30pm
St Peter's Church, Stockbridge SO20 6HE

David Hill - Organ
Crispian Steele-Perkins - Trumpet



"The Trumpet Shall Sound"

Tickets £20 (U18s £5) from stockbridgemusic.uk, on the door or from Romsey Visitor Information Centre, 13 Church St, Romsey SO51 8BT

Organ Masterclass

Saturday 2nd March, 11.00am
St Peter's, Stockbridge

David Hill, renowned organist and choral conductor will be giving a Master Class, featuring our own organist Sarah Seymour amongst others. Hear about the life of a professional organ player, learn more about the three manual Viscount organ and enjoy a short recital. Tickets £5 or reduced if bought with ticket for Concert on Friday 1st March. More details at stockbridgemusic.uk

MANOR and BOROUGH OF STOCKBRIDGE



in the County of Hampshire
COURT BARON & COURT LEET

The annual meeting of
Stockbridge Courts Baron and Leet
has been called by

The Lord of The Manor, Guy Boney, KC,
to be held on

Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 7.00pm in
THE TOWN HALL, STOCKBRIDGE

During the evening, The Clerk to the Court will appoint members to sit on the Jury for 2024/25.

The Lord of the Manor will welcome our National Trust officer and report on issues relating to the past year in Stockbridge and surrounds. While the Jury retires to appoint its Officers, Catherine Hadler, from The National Trust, will give a short update on the work to be undertaken in the coming year.

Any questions you may wish to present to The Lord of the Manor should be emailed to:

The Bailiff at diana_tym@yahoo.co.uk
or delivered to

The Old Manse, High Street, Stockbridge
from whence they will be placed before his Lordship for response on the evening.

Wine and ice creams will be on sale
before the meeting.

We hope to welcome you to this annual event.

The Bailiff

Stockbridge Recreation Ground Trust

Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 12th March 2024
at 7.00 pm in the Clubhouse

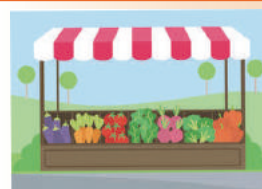
All are welcome to attend



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



Stockbridge Community Market

Every Thursday morning
9.30 - 11.45am
in Stockbridge Town Hall

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 drop-in IT Help Desk and Wi-Fi access

See update on page 7



**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 March
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
or find us on Facebook

Andover Chamber Choir
Fauré: Requiem
plus
“A Patchwork Mass”
featuring music by Byrd, Bruckner and Palestrina

7:30 p.m. Saturday 13th April 2024
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 'Finding Freedom from Abuse' (formerly known as Andover Crisis & Support Centre)
www.andoverchamberchoir.org.uk

finding freedom from abuse ANDOVER CHAMBER CHOIR

Spem in alium
40-part motet by **Thomas Tallis**
and works by **Byrd, Górecki & Whitacre**
Conductor: **JAMAL SUTTON**

SOUTHERN VOICES 40th ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Chapel of St Cross, Winchester
Saturday 23rd March, 7.30pm

Tickets: £18
ages 11 and under, only £5

southernvoices.co.uk
0333 666 3366
booking fees apply

Test Villages u3a
Thursday 7th March
at 2pm in Chilbolton Village Hall

Mr James Smallwood FRCS presents
'The Black Stuff'

James, a recently retired consultant surgeon, will lead us on a journey through the history and the natural world of melanin pigments and their health consequences in the human.

Doors open at 1.40pm for the presentation, followed by refreshments.

Test Villages u3a meets on the first Thursday of every month in Chilbolton Village Hall.

New members are very welcome, and we look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings.

u3a is a UK-wide network of groups that provides the opportunity to socialise and learn for fun. Find out more at u3a.org.uk, or see the latest on Test Villages group at u3asites.org.uk/test-villages

u3a
learn, laugh, live



Longstock Garden Club

Tuesday March 12th

Mr Glenn Duggan FZS

will talk about

Fantastic Flowers of Australia History of Flowers

We meet at 7.30pm in Longstock Village Hall

(Doors open at 7.00pm)

Guests welcome £3 each evening.

Don't forget the raffle tickets are still only £1
or bring a prize.

<https://longstockgardenclub.com/>
Peter Moore 07881573493



LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD WI

Tuesday 26th March

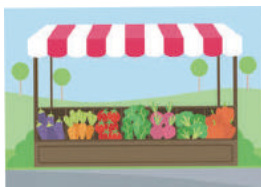
Stockbridge Town Hall 6.45pm for 7pm start.

Sue Adcock

**talks on her work at the
Institute of Aviation Medicine as a
researcher, centrifuge subject and test pilot.**

Guests always welcome.

Please contact Sue Hill on 811779 for further details

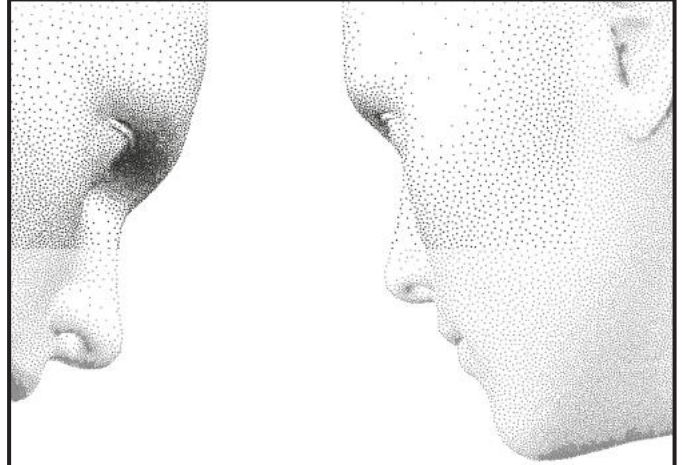


Stop Press Stockbridge Community Market

We are delighted to let our customers know that
**the Free IT Help Desk
will be available again**

at the Thursday market. Many thanks to Bob Powell, who has offered to fill this much-needed rôle; so, if you have any questions about using/problems with your smart phones, laptops, tablets, printers, come along and speak to Bob!

(See also Market Notice p5)



Talking Heads

By Alan Bennett

**A Cream Cracker Under the Settee.
A Chip in the Sugar.
A Lady of Letters.**

Weds 10th - Friday 12th April 24
Stockbridge Town Hall
7.30pm tickets £12 + booking fee

www.stockbridgeamdrams.org for more
information and to buy tickets, or leave a
message on 01264 513676

SADS

Stockbridge Amateur Dramatic Society's Talking Heads by Alan Bennett

Stockbridge Amateur Dramatic Society (SADS) next production will be three more of Alan Bennett's classic *Talking Heads* monologues. Bennett wrote fourteen of these monologues (fifteen if you include the longer play *A Woman of No Importance*). However, amateur performance rights are only available for six of them and we did three of those last April. They were extremely well received.

So we are very excited to be able to complete the set this April. They are *A Cream Cracker under the Settee* played by Sue Jackson, *A Chip in the Sugar* by SADS newcomer Tom Humphreys, and *A Lady of Letters* by Katy Watkins.

Like all the *Talking Heads* monologues, they are brilliantly written - poignant, subtle and humorous.

**Performances will be Wednesday 10th,
Thursday 11th and Friday 12th April**
(note - no performance on the Saturday).

Tickets are £12 on sale now.

Go to www.stockbridgeamdrams.org for more information and to buy tickets, or leave a message on 01264 513676.

Judith Frank



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Just a reminder that you can view test results on the NHS App.

Routine GP appointments, physiotherapy assessments, blood tests and smear tests can be booked online.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella

You may have seen in the news that there have been increasing cases of measles. We would like to encourage any children or young people who have not received two MMR vaccinations to book in for these. It is particularly recommended if you are planning to become pregnant or to go away to school, college, or university. Pregnant women should not have the vaccine.

Healthier Together

We know many patients regularly look after grandchildren. If you are concerned about their health, we would recommend accessing the Healthier Together website or App. Please search 'Healthier Together' to find helpful information on how to manage conditions at home and when to seek medical help.

Patient Participation Group

We would like to say thank you to Gwen Picco who has recently stood down as the Chair of our Patient Participation Group. We are keen to encourage new members of the group. We meet four times a year on either a Wednesday or Thursday evening. If you cannot commit to meeting but would be willing to be contacted by members of the group regarding feedback about the surgery, please email us on hiowicb-hsi.stockbridgesurgery@nhs.net

*Ann Spooner
Practice Manager*

A Defibrillator Near You!

Defibrillators for public use are located at: -

- Stockbridge Fire Station** (available 24 hrs)
- Longstock Village Hall** (available 24 hrs)
- Leckford Estate** (restricted hours).
- Leckford Farm Shop** (restricted hours)

For further details, and for other UK locations, go to www.defibfinder.uk

Instructions for use are given when the device is commandeered but for anyone who would like prior understanding of how to use one, see <https://www.aeddonate.org.uk/events/>

Books that Changed the World

Books affect their readers in many different ways but history shows us that some books have impacted society so profoundly that it is forever changed. Such books share knowledge, inspiration, contemplations and discoveries. They teach, influence and alter the way we think; and their power can, inevitably, provoke social dissent and turmoil.

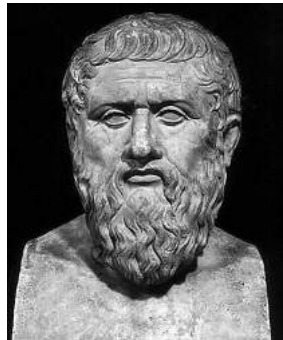
Some books are so enlightening that they shape the world and its people. Of these, the scriptures - amongst them The Bible, The Qur'an, The Torah, The Analects by Confucius, The Tibetan Book of the Dead and others - have provided their followers with enduring spiritual guidance and a code for living for millennia.

Other great works have educated and informed readers in the areas of politics and government, pioneered creative literature, challenged societal norms and advanced academic thought across all subjects. They have unified global understanding - though often after initial dispute and disruption as pre-existing thinking is overturned - to become the revered treatises we know today. We have chosen a few of these great works to celebrate this month.

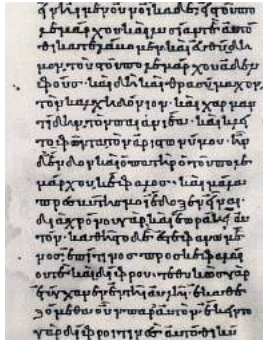
The Republic by Plato

Written around 375 BCE, *The Republic* is delivered in the form of a Socratic dialogue between various Athenians and foreigners. They discuss justice, the order and character of the just city-state and the just man, highlighting the rôle of the philosopher in society. (Socrates was Plato's teacher and mentor).

Looking at the nature of existing socio-political regimes, *The Republic* then compares a series of hypothetical cities, finally proposing *Kallipolis*, a finely-tuned model utopian city-state ruled by a class of philosopher-kings.



Bust of Plato and an example of his script



The men (and they are all men!) also discuss love, ageing, the immortality of the soul, theory of forms, and the importance of philosophy and of poetry in society. The dialogue seems to be set during the time of the Peloponnesian War and thus provides historians with a glimpse of Greece at the time.

The wide-ranging intellectual concepts contained in *The Republic* are still relevant and much-discussed today and have informed society's development of philosophical, judicial and political theory ever since the work was laid down; truly world-changing.

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Stockbridge Floods of Old

As we look out on our soggy gardens and squelch on the waterlogged Marsh, **Geoff Merritt** reminds us of the dreadful flooding experienced in Stockbridge High Street in bygone days. The fast-flowing River Test was unable to squeeze under the very low arches of the old Test Bridge and burst its banks.



Here in 1915, a view west from near the present-day 'Garden Inn', the Town Hall in the far distance.



And above, in 1918, flooding outside present-day 'Broughton Crafts' (once the 'Wheatsheaf' pub, its history discussed in last month's magazine).

The buildings on the extreme right, where a man balances delicately on the duckboards, were once a row of cottages that stood where the public toilets are now.

Some schoolchildren (one with his bicycle) in the punt are being ferried to dry land where others wait. What fun it would have been for them! Fortunately for the rest of us, the bridge was replaced in 1963.

And of course, since then Stockbridge experienced severe ground water flooding in 2014, damaging three houses. The village is now protected by two flood relief devices, one above the town and the other below, funded by TVBC and HCC and now continuously managed and if needed, repaired by the Houghton Fishing Club staff - see www.stockbridgeparishcouncil.org.uk for further details and to sign up for flood alerts.

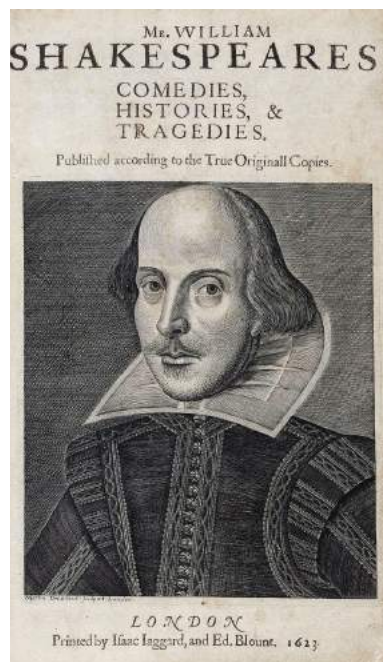
Geoff Merritt and Editors

Books that Changed the World

Mr William Shakespeares *Comedies, Histories & Tragedies*

Commonly referred to as the First Folio, this collection of 36 Shakespeare plays prepared by two colleagues, was published in the large-scale double-columned folio format in 1623, about seven years after Shakespeare's death. Nineteen of the plays had been published before but the *First Folio* is considered the only reliable text for all and the first publication of some plays including *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and *Measure for Measure*. Translated into every major language, the *First Folio* is one of the most influential and globally-revered works of literature.

The power of the plays comes from their relatability throughout history, dealing with universal human experiences - love, death, betrayal, human failings and errors etc. Whilst the language may be dated, the characterisations and stories are ever-relevant and the English lexicon is peppered with familiar quotations which lend weight and poetic meaning.



Our day-to-day life, as well as the cultural world, is enriched by 'such stuff as dreams are made on' and we all well understand 'Beware the Ides of March'!

Shakespeare's plays have engaged us for hundreds of years, have shaped what we know as 'drama', have informed both psychological and linguistic study and are deeply embedded in our culture.



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Stockbridge Primary and Pre-School News

World Book Day - 7 March 2024

I can guarantee that this February half term, at least one teacher, usually the literacy leader, in every school across the land has spent time planning a World Book Day! As the day dawns on Thursday 7th March, it's a time to celebrate all kinds of books and the joy of reading. Here at Stockbridge, we take a low-key approach on the day itself and then save up all dressing-up and celebrations about all things literature for the afternoons of SATS week in May.

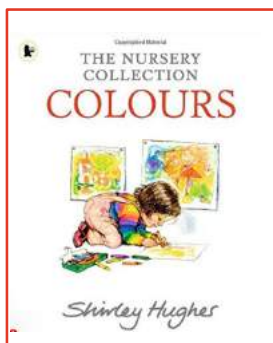
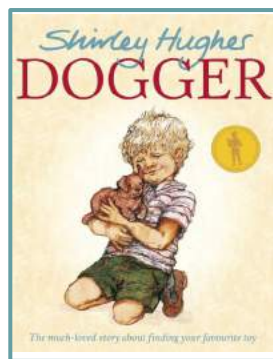
'Why?' you might ask. Well, we think books are just simply superb and a window into other worlds, a mirror into our own and a door to adventures new – a day doesn't feel like it gives us enough time to do them justice. That said, the day is sponsored by National Book Tokens and every child in the country is given a book token for a free book – for many children, this will be the only book all year that they have for themselves. A very special thing. Books are inclusive so they're also available in braille, large print and audio versions and they're all printed on off-white paper with a high opacity to support our dyslexic learners – what an utterly brilliant scheme.

One of the activities we'll be doing in our book week is writing book reviews and asking the lovely Stockbridge Benefice mag editors to publish them so you have a selection of books to go and investigate with your own children or grandchildren over the summer. In the meantime, I'll leave you with my favourites just to get us started.

For pre-schoolers and toddlers

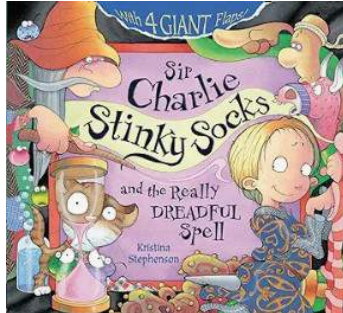
I couldn't decide so had to go for two! I adore Shirley Hughes' work with **Dogger** being my favourite book as a child but I've come to love her book **Colours** which I have shared with many children over the years. Her description of yellow brightens even the dullest winter day and promises of things to come;

"Syrup dripping from a spoon,
Buttercups, a harvest moon;
Sun like honey on the floor,
Warm as the steps by our back door."



For 5-7 year olds

Sir Charlie Stinky Socks by Kristina Stephenson



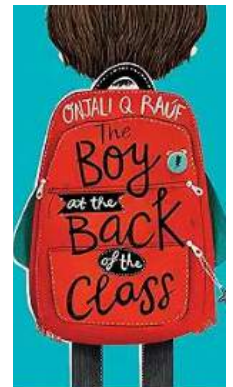
Sir Charlie is a rather hapless but loveable knight who gets up to all sorts of adventures. All books have fabulously large flaps to extend pages and really get stuck into the stories and, to top it all off, the author is local!

Kristina does brilliant workshops with children to help them really get into the story. I have a homemade dressing-up outfit so that I too can be Sir Charlie (from a distant World Book Day in 2010!)

For 7-9 year olds

The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Q. Rauf & P. Curnick

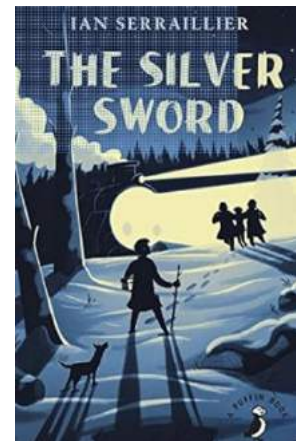
Understanding a refugee's plight is hard for our children and often inaccessible for our children to understand as they're far removed (thank goodness) from it but this book is a funny, warm book about Ahmet, a refugee who's run away from war. He joins a class and there are some funny plans to help him settle and it's told from the point of view of a 9-year-old. Brilliant.



For 9-11 year olds

The Silver Sword by Ian Serraillier

My ultimate book. I remember Mrs Flitcroft, my primary teacher, reading this to me and I was enthralled. It follows the adventures of Ruth, Edik, Bronia and a ragged boy with a very special paperknife as they escape Poland in a quest to find their family which has been torn apart by World War II. Highs and lows, fun and tragedy all happen in equal measure and it is spellbinding. A true classic and nothing has ever beaten it for me! This is my favourite.



Emma Jefferies, Headteacher

Potting Shed Cuttings for March



New(ish) gardening books to try:

An almost impossible thing: The radical lives of Britain's pioneering women gardeners - Fiona Davison

The money-saving gardener: create your dream garden at a fraction of the cost - Anya Lautenbach

The Way Home: Tales from a life without technology - Mark Boyle

How to garden when you rent: Make it your own, keep your landlord happy - Matthew Pottage

Pruning

Shrubs such as ornamental elders, dogwoods, buddleja and other late-flowering varieties can be pruned now. This is also a good month to prune shrub roses. Create an open framework of healthy shoots, pruning to outward-facing buds and removing dead, weak and diseased shoots and those which rub against each other. Don't prune rambling roses now; instead, wait until they have finished flowering; climbers are best dealt with in the autumn but, if they are vigorous varieties, they can be pruned now. Although not exactly pruning, continue dead-heading daffodils and narcissi to ensure seeds are not set and all strength goes into the bulb. If you haven't pruned apple and pear trees, this month is your last chance before spring.

Sowing

This is a busy month for those of us who grow from seed. In the vegetable garden, outside sowings of beetroot, mangetout, peas, radishes, carrots, turnips and spring onions can be made. As the soil has been soaked this winter, it would be sensible to leave cloches on for a few days beforehand to dry out the soil and warm it through. If the weather stays wintry, sow seeds under cloches. Under glass, sow lettuces, celery, onion seeds and early brassicas. Tomatoes, sweet peppers, aubergines and cucumbers will need heat or a sunny windowsill. Hardy annuals can be sown where they are to flower, or in an unused spot, from where they can later be transplanted to their final position. Half-hardy annuals should be started off under glass for transplanting to containers or flower beds later.

Planting/Potting Up

This is a suitable time to plant out perennials or to divide overcrowded plants and replant in borders. Lilies and gladioli are available in garden centres now and can be planted as successional bulbs for the next 2 months. If you have over-wintered fuchsias under glass, start watering them gently to encourage shoots; dahlia tubers can also be brought back into growth. Remember, you can increase your stock by taking emerging shoots and allowing them to root. Rhubarb crowns can be

planted, and asparagus beds prepared for planting in April. Onion and shallot sets and garlic bulbs can be planted; first early potatoes can be planted towards the end of the month.

Miscellaneous Jobs

Now is a good time to check the lawn for molehills and wormcasts; these should be cleared. Mowing will depend on weather conditions: the very wet winter may have left your lawn sticky and unsuited to early mowing, and it would be better to wait a little, until conditions have settled down. If the ground is dry enough to walk on without compacting soil, trim edges to neaten them and make good bare patches.

To prevent annual weeds from reappearing, mulch borders well; deal with perennial weeds whilst they are still small and manageable.

Tie in blackberries and loganberries which can develop long shoots at an alarming rate at this time of year and can soon grow out of control.

Following a wet February, it's likely you will need to finish clearing borders of dead perennial shoots and cleaning and disinfecting the greenhouse; this should be done as soon as possible, as it will soon be in constant use.

Micki Nadal

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Volunteering Opportunities

Volunteer Needed for an Important Community Service

For a number of years, I have been providing a service which helps those in the mid Test Valley community who need affordable housing, owned and maintained by Housing Associations (Aster is the commonest around here). This service has been run by me on a voluntary basis and this has provided me with a rewarding and fascinating second career, meeting some remarkable and delightful people and having the satisfaction of knowing that their lives have been improved in a small but significant way. The service and all the information collected and maintained for its operation are entirely confidential.

The work involves two stages. The first is to register the client with the official system, called **Hampshire Home Choice**. That can only be done on-line with the client present. Confirmation of registration takes a week or so. The second stage is to search the Hampshire Home Choice website once every week to discover what properties have been offered to the client, where and what the properties are and what position the client is in the pecking order: 'You are number x in the queue'. That takes about five minutes for each client. If the client is interested in the property, then I bid for it for them – with varying degrees of success.

I am now an 'elderly' 86 and I have it on good authority that I won't be around for ever. So I am looking for a successor who will take over from me, having had as comprehensive an introduction, handover and continuing background support from me as I can and will provide. If you are interested and would like more information, please give me a call on 01264 810363 or e-mail me on roger_tym@yahoo.co.uk and I will happily meet and explain.

For the elderly who need to find safe and secure housing, this is a vital service. Many do not have computing skills and many don't even have computers. For them, the only means of being rehoused is by seeking help from this service.

Roger Tym

*The Old Manse, High Street,
Stockbridge, SO20 6EX.*

Why volunteer?

"You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give." *Winston Churchill*

"The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention." *Oscar Wilde*

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Stockbridge, Houghton, Longstock & Leckford Neighbour Care Service

Stockbridge Neighbour Care (SNC) service is still looking for 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.

The service provides free lifts to health appointments for residents of Stockbridge, Houghton, Longstock and Leckford. Many people cannot easily get to their health, eye and dental appointments, especially older members of the community.

You need only volunteer for the drives you can fit into your schedule and the length of journey you are comfortable doing. Volunteers are reimbursed for fuel twice a year, based on the mileage covered.

To 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.



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Stockbridge Music is looking for a Treasurer

We are looking for a Treasurer to join our small, enthusiastic team which is working hard to bring top class live classical music and fascinating outreach events to the heart of the Test Valley at affordable prices. We have an exciting schedule of five concerts lined up for this coming year in addition to outreach events which augment our educational activities.

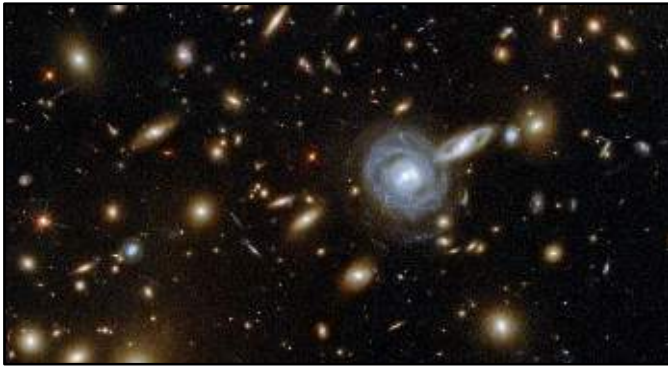
Our friendly and energetic team working under our new Music Director, Paul Wing, seeks someone with financial experience to join this body of volunteers as our Treasurer. The work is light touch and occasional, comprising mostly handling the finances for our events in Stockbridge, helping manage our budgets and producing profit and loss accounts annually. Someone willing to join in with the team to support event management and front of house on event nights whenever possible would be a great bonus!

Please contact us on admin@stockbridgemusic.uk if you feel you could help us in this role.

Paul Wing, Music Director

Cosmic Eggs

There are several theories and hypotheses for how the universe was formed. It has been a puzzle to scholars for hundreds of years. Before light pollution impeded our vision of the night sky, everyone could see planets, stars and also the edges of the Milky Way and other galaxies beyond. As they gazed into the night sky, the stars and formations appeared to be never-ending; there was no definite shape to it all. The puzzle was 'how did it get there and how did we get here?' Ancient peoples were drawn to the Cosmic Egg theory but now, in our modern world, most astrologers have settled on the Big Bang theory. But did one cause the other?



A Hubble telescope image of deep space showing hundreds of galaxies in one view

The egg concept for the birth of the universe is not new. Many ancient civilisations used the exploding or breaking egg models as ways to explain the existence of the vast open space containing many stars, cloud clusters and other galaxies which they could so clearly see on dark nights.

The World Egg or Cosmic Egg is a mythological motif found in the cosmogonies of many ancient cultures and civilisations. The Cosmic Egg is representing a beginning of some sort, and the universe or a primordial being comes into existence by hatching from the egg. There are also modern versions of this theory explaining the creation of the universe.

The earliest idea of a Cosmic Egg comes from Sanskrit scriptures. The source of the universe, the Hiranyagarbha, floated around in emptiness for a while, then broke into two halves which formed the heavens and the Earth.

Egyptian mythology accepted multiple creation myths; one is the Ogdoad, which represents the time before the gods were created. An aspect of Ogdoad was the Cosmic Egg from which all things were born. Life comes from the Cosmic Egg. The god Ra was born from a primordial egg in a stage known as 'the first occasion'.

In Chinese mythology, the primeval giant, Pangu, was born inside an egg. It broke into two halves; the upper half became the sky while the lower half became the earth. As the god grew taller, and the

sky and the earth grew denser, they moved apart. When Pangu died, his body parts became the Sun, Moon, different parts of the Earth and living things.

There is a traditional legend in Finland which describes the world being created from the fragments of an egg laid by Goldeneye on Ilmatar, goddess of the air.

One egg's lower half transformed
And became the earth below,
And its upper half transmuted
And became the sky above;
From the yolk the sun was made,
Light of day to shine upon us;
From the white the moon was formed,
Light of night to gleam above us;
All the coloured brighter bits
Rose to be the stars of heaven
And the darker crumbs changed into
Clouds and cloudlets in the sky.

These myths all centre on an explanation for the creation of the land and sea and the huge skies above them, with millions of stars that could be seen by these ancient peoples through their clear open skies. There was no light pollution to hinder the magnificent view of the Milky Way. The weather came from the skies, gentle rain or welcome sunshine but often drought, severe storms, lightning and damaging winds. Sometimes, strange new objects appeared in the sky, comets passing by just once or other comets orbiting the Sun on very long orbital paths. Halley's Comet, which takes 75 years to complete an orbit, appeared in the sky over Hastings in 1066 and an image of it is sewn into the Bayeux Tapestry. The men are pointing to the sky with great apprehension. Comets were



mostly heralded as bad news; there were many superstitions attached to an appearance and, in this case, King Harold did lose the battle. It seems inevitable that reasons were sought for the existence of the vast environment around and above us here on Earth.

The concept of the Cosmic Egg re-emerged in the 1930's and was explored for many years. Current models extrapolate that, 13.8 billion years ago, the entire mass of the universe was compressed into a Cosmic Egg, held together by gravitational forces. The egg exploded and spread out across the darkness making the universe. This is a modern explanation of how the Big Bang occurred.

In 1929, Edwin Hubble, an astronomer, noticed that other galaxies were moving away from us and the farthest galaxies were moving faster than the ones close to us. This showed that the universe is still expanding.



An image from the Hubble Telescope of an oval body in deep space closely resembling the modern theory of a Cosmic Egg. The oval shape is formed by the strong gravitational forces compressing matter into an egg shape. (Credit : R. Sahai et al. Hubble Heritage Team AURA, NASA).

The Cosmic Egg theory implies a small starting place and a definite starting time for the creation of the universe. This challenges the once-accepted belief of the universe as eternally old, with no beginning and no growth.

Jill Goodwin

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Stockbridge would like to wish our friend Pasha Plichko well on his mobilisation in Ukraine.

Pasha visited Stockbridge and the Test Valley in 2019 when competing in the British Wingsuit* Championship and remains in touch with local residents.

He, his wife and his family will be in our thoughts and prayers as he serves his country for freedom and independence.

Slava Ukraini!



In happier times, Pasha was Ukrainian wingsuit* champion and is seen here in the orange and green suit in the middle.

For further information on Stockbridge for Ukraine - which is currently aiming to raise circa £10,000 for an evacuation car - please go to www.stockbridgeukraine.org.

**Wingsuit flying (or wingsuiting) is the sport of skydiving using a webbing-sleeved jumpsuit called a wingsuit to add webbed area to the diver's body and generate increased lift, which allows extended air time by gliding flight rather than just free-falling. Eds.*

stockbridgeukraine

Looking for a volunteer

Would anyone be interested in joining a small team raising funds for Ukraine?

We have four projects planned and would appreciate help in any way. Huge 'job satisfaction' and it's fun too.

Check Facebook's *Stockbridge & Longstock Homes & Support for Refugees*. Please contact Sally Milligan at sally@sallymilligan.co.uk



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Age Concern Hampshire

Supporting Older People across Hampshire

The Role of a Community Information Volunteer - A personal perspective.

As an older person, carer, friend or family member of an older person, it is probably true to say that you don't know what you need until you need it. Sadly, by then, the person in need may be in, or verging on, crisis and is likely to be ill-equipped to find help in the world of supportive organisations, benefits - personal and financial - and health management.

Age Concern Hampshire (ACH) is an independent organisation which has been in existence since 1985. Its mission is to support older people throughout Hampshire via the provision of services that help them to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. Services include the provision of community information, foot care, and aspects of help at home, and are delivered by specialist staff and volunteers in the home and in local Care and Well-being Centres. Specifically, the Community Information Service is operated by a telephone-based team providing direct help to callers where possible or, when necessary, signposting them to other possible avenues of help.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the organisation and will continue to be needed if these vital services are to continue. A local volunteer describes how, for her, volunteering came at a time when there was a gap in her life that she wanted to fill in a positive way. Full of trepidation and self-doubt, she responded to a poster in St. Peter's church asking for volunteers. She was warmly welcomed into the fold of the organisation and was offered the friendship, training and support that has enabled her to become the confident and highly-experienced 'Community Information Volunteer' that she is today, some seven years later.

There have been changes during that time. Much of her rôle is telephone-based and she now shares telephone duties with other volunteers in the area. Calls are triaged at the ACH central Information Hub and then dealt with by a volunteer who undertakes to return the call within a week. She describes the gratitude expressed when initial calls are returned within the one-week window.

She explains that, on some days, her line can be very busy as calls are rarely brief. In addition to providing a sympathetic listening ear, she offers advice on some of the practical aspects of benefits applications and form-filling. As a consequence, she has broadened her own knowledge of the wider services that callers may find helpful. Callers are often family members seeking help for a relative with financial hardship, housing or home management problems, transport difficulties or

loneliness. Volunteers manage their own time depending on their availability.

If she cannot help, she will make every effort to ensure that the caller is signposted to another organisation or service local to them. Direct help is often needed with form-filling and our volunteer advises callers on which forms they need, where to get them from and how to ensure that they meet eligibility criteria. The process can be lengthy, so a form that has been completed clearly and comprehensively is a great start.

Whilst providing an invaluable service, our local volunteer has also used her spare time to develop an interesting and rewarding rôle for herself and would recommend it to anyone in a similar position.

If you or someone you know needs help, do try the Age Concern Hampshire website

Or contact the ACH general enquiries line on 01962 868545

They will also be keen to hear from anyone who would be interested in learning more about volunteering.

(Our thanks go to Rosemarie for sharing her information with us. Eds)

Why volunteer?

"Every person can make a difference, and every person should try."
John F. Kennedy

"It is not enough to be compassionate — you must act."
The Dalai Lama

For anyone wanting to meet up for company and conversation over simple tasty food, especially if you live alone, do join us for

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Next lunch 28th March

Please contact Selina Musters (810459) or Maddie Hedley (810284) if you'd like more details or to let us know you'd like to come so that we make enough food!

(And if anyone is able to help by making sandwiches or cakes, (ingredients supplied), please contact Selina).

We look forward to seeing you.

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News from The Bookmark - and a new era

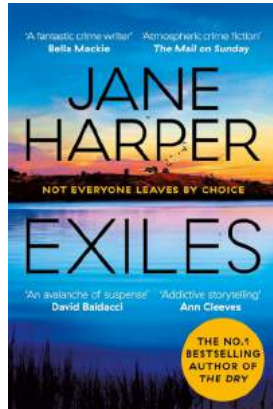
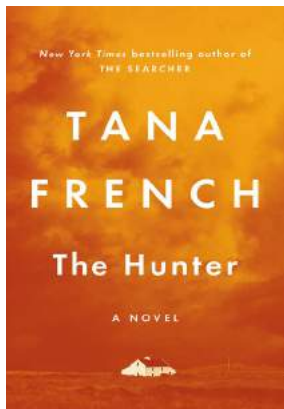


Dear Readers

Good news for 2024! The Bookmark is going to remain in Stockbridge for the foreseeable future, and your interest and support is much appreciated! Though I am retiring, the shop will be carrying on under the auspices of Suzannah Jackson, who, having spent quite a number of years as a pillar of the High Street in one form or another, will be a familiar figure to many. She looks forward to seeing you all.

And following on from this change of hands – I am happy to say that I now have much more time for actually reading books as well as just selling them! Over the past weeks, I have whizzed through 6-10 volumes and thoroughly enjoyed them all.

Among the many titles (primarily fiction) that I devoured were two mysteries by the excellent authors Tana French (THE HUNTER, out 7 March) and Jane Harper (her latest is EXILES).

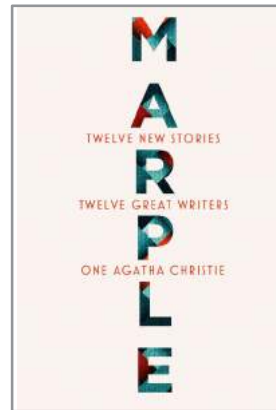


Best-seller lists are now regularly filled by female writers of detective fiction and I became curious about the history of women writing in this genre which was perceived as male territory for so long.

It turns out that women began writing detective mysteries around the late Victorian era. A number of them were writing articles for their local newspapers and were fascinated by the crime stories they covered. Others had published plays or a novel or two before they ventured into the world of detectives. But their popularity really took off in Britain in the 1920 to 30's and has continued at a slow but steady pace ever since.

The authors most generally credited as having created the foundations on which others have built are the so-called 'Queens of Crime': Agatha Christie, Dorothy L Sayers, Josephine Tey, Margery Allingham and Ngaio Marsh (albeit a New Zealander, so sometimes not included in this otherwise British list). Many of their books are still in print, but how much of their groundbreaking work is still read today?

The Bookmark definitely has some Agatha Christie, and even a new book (MARPLE) which contains a



dozen stories written by contemporary authors, but very much in her style. We also carry the classic 'historical' mystery THE DAUGHTER OF TIME, by Josephine Tey. Published in 1951, this highly unusual and compulsively readable book follows the bed-ridden enquiries of her detective (Alan Grant) as he tries to solve the puzzle of the notorious 'murderer' King Richard III.

Today, the shelves are stocked with hugely popular female mystery authors like Ann Cleeves, Val McDermid, Donna Leon, J. K. Rowling (writing as 'Robert Galbraith'), P. D. James and many more. Some of these have chosen to write female detective lead characters, some male, and some both, in different series. And it's interesting to note that several have concentrated their tales in a specific setting: Donna Leon in Italy, Val McDermid in Scotland, Ann Cleeves in Shetland. The attention to details of the landscapes, cityscapes and local colour adds a wonderful resonance to the intrigues and investigations. Outside England, there is also some really fine writing by Tana French who set her



early novels in Dublin and, more recently, in a small town in the west of Ireland. Jane Harper has made rural Australian settings her own, and Louise Penny has mined Canada for unusual characters and circumstances. And in America, a standout series has long been driven by Sara Paretsky's unforgettable heroine V.I. Warshawski, who tracks down villains in Chicago! (Paretsky's newest, PAY DIRT, arrives in April).

We may be well into a second 'Golden Age' of detective novels, so you might want to give some of them a try and see what you think.

Elaine Sperber

Thank you Elaine. We look forward to hearing more from you in your 'retirement'. And 'good luck' Suzanne. Eds



. . . or a book long enough, to suit me. (CS Lewis)

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Stockbridge Parish Council News

Parish Meeting

The Parish Council will be holding a Parish Meeting this year on 25th April in Stockbridge Town Hall. It is hoped that a number of the designs for the Blandford Row Pocket Park will be on display. The community will be asked to vote on the preferred design, the installation of which can then be planned. This will form part of a consultation process for the park to show that the project has community support. The Councillors, who visited Sparsholt College in December to view the designs that the Sparsholt horticultural students had been working on, were very impressed with what had been put forward. The Councillors then had the difficult task of whittling down the designs to one per student for them to develop further. Councillors are looking forward to receiving the final designs to share with the Stockbridge community.

It is hoped the Parish Meeting will also include presentations from other local groups and bodies. More information will be in the Parish Newsletter, this article next month and the Council's website.

Local Plan

TVBC is consulting on the new Local Plan. The Local Plan is an important planning document produced by TVBC, as local planning authority, to set out where new housing developments are allowed to take place. However, just because sites are noted in the plan it does not mean that building *will* necessarily take place there. The new Test Valley Plan highlights areas in Andover and Romsey for the new housing and industrial estates. Stockbridge does not appear to have any new housing allocated to the Parish at the present moment. TVBC is holding an eight-week consultation period from Tuesday 6th February 2024 to noon on Tuesday 2nd April 2024. All the documents are available on TVBC's website at

www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040 where you will also be able to comment on the plan. The plan will be exhibited at a number of venues in Test Valley; dates and places are available on the website. A link to the TVBC website is available from the News section of the Stockbridge PC website.

Hampshire Hospitals

Hampshire Hospitals is consulting on building a new hospital close to Basingstoke. The new hospital will be part of the government's national New Hospital Programme. The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest between £700 million and £900 million to improve the local hospital facilities and services will, however, involve a number of changes to the acute hospital services in and around Winchester and Basingstoke. This may mean changing the Accident & Emergency services available at Winchester and making the maternity unit midwife-

led only. Instead, the new hospital model will bring specialist services together and will separate planned and emergency operations. All the information about the proposed changes is available at www.hampshiretogether.nhs.uk and there is a link to their website from the Stockbridge PC website. There are also online and in-person events which you may be interested in attending.

HCC Spending Plans

HCC is considering its spending proposals for 2024/25. The proposals, totalling £2.6bn, to keep delivering hundreds of local services to Hampshire's 1.4 million residents, will be considered by Hampshire County Council's Cabinet. Setting a responsible, balanced budget for the year ahead is a key duty of the authority, ensuring it makes the most of taxpayers' money to deliver important local services to the people of Hampshire. However, these remain challenging times for everyone, including across local government nationally, and HCC has had to keep finding ways to stretch the budgets that it has available.

The proposed three-year programme includes:

- £173m to safeguard the long-term viability of the Older Adult Care estate.
- £192m investment in new and extended school buildings to provide school places for children in Hampshire - delivering a further 5,312 school places and giving a total of 19,989 new school places by September 2027.
- £163m for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges.
- £73m of Integrated Transport Plan schemes including £43m of schemes focused around walking and/or cycling improvements.
- £76m to address condition-based enhancements to schools.

Stockbridge Parish Council will next meet on 21st March in Stockbridge Town Hall.

Belinda Baker

*Clerk to Stockbridge Parish Council
clerk@stockbridgeparish.council.org.uk*



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Stuffed Chicken Breast wrapped in bacon

Whether it's a Mother's Day treat or a lovely Easter Bank holiday lunch, this chicken is perfect, being easily pre-prepared to ensure you, too, enjoy all the moments of the day. This recipe is so versatile; the method works just as easily with a pork fillet with similar cooking methods. You can also be adventurous with the stuffing and have the option of wrapping bacon or Serano ham.

Delicious served with Dauphinoise Potatoes, steamed broccoli or just a simple green salad.

Ingredients

2 free range Chicken Breasts, boned and skinned

3 or 4 good quality pork and Bramley apple sausages; remove skins

1 mozzarella ball

6 streaky bacon rashers (the thinner sliced the better and without rind)

A little olive oil and seasoning to taste

A baking tray, foil and cling film

Method

Start by preparing the chicken as this needs to be chilled for at least a couple of hours if not overnight.

Lay the breast out on a board and run a sharp knife along one of the long side edges, cutting almost through to the other side. Open the breast out and lightly hammer the middle section so it becomes even more flat.

Place the meat from the sausages in a bowl and tear the mozzarella into little pieces. Mix the cheese into the meat distributing it evenly. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Then place a good-sized portion into each of the breasts and fold them back up, trying to keep the stuffing inside and closing the two sides back together.

Take the bacon and lay each rasher on a board. With the edge of a knife run it along the rasher whilst holding onto the near end. You want to stretch the bacon without tearing or breaking it; it can become quite a bit longer this way.

Place 3 rashers next to each other so that they would cover each end and middle of the chicken. Sit one of the breasts on the top and proceed to wrap the bacon all around the breast. Wrap each breast tightly in cling film and store in the fridge for a few hours or overnight.

When you are ready to cook, preheat the oven to 180°C Fan. Get a large piece of foil and line a roasting tin leaving enough to cover the chicken.

Unwrap the chicken breasts, removing the cling film, and place in the tin fairly close together. Drizzle a little olive oil over. Wrap the foil tightly and place in the oven for approx. 40 minutes. The chicken will produce lots of lovely juices and remain very succulent.

After 40 minutes, open the top of the foil so the chicken is exposed and continue to cook so the bacon gets coloured and slightly crispy, maybe for another 10 – 15 minutes. I serve mine cut into three or four diagonal wedges so you can spread on a plate and see the stuffing inside too.

Linda Hotchen

Books that Changed the World

On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres by Nicolaus Copernicus

De revolutionibus orbium coelestium sets out the Copernicus' radical theory that the Sun, not Earth, is at the centre of the universe, thus challenging Ptolemy's long-accepted astronomical model.

When first printed in 1543 in Nuremberg, it was received enthusiastically by the astronomical elite who could understand and interpret its technical difficulty but, once the treatise reached a wider audience, it stirred up huge controversy and accusations of blasphemy from the church. Martin Luther denounced the Polish 'upstart' who 'wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy'.

Copernicus' book ushered in the upheavals of the Scientific Revolution but it was not until after Isaac Newton's work on celestial mechanics in the late 17th century that acceptance of Copernican theory spread rapidly. By the late 18th century, the heliocentric view of the solar system was almost universally accepted and set the stage for modern cosmology; a process we would now term 'paradigm shift'.

A manuscript of *De revolutionibus* in Copernicus' own hand has survived, lost and found over the centuries, and is kept at the Jagiellonian University Library in Kraków.

This book not only overturned our long-held world view but also our sense of place in the universe.



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Church News

From the Area Dean

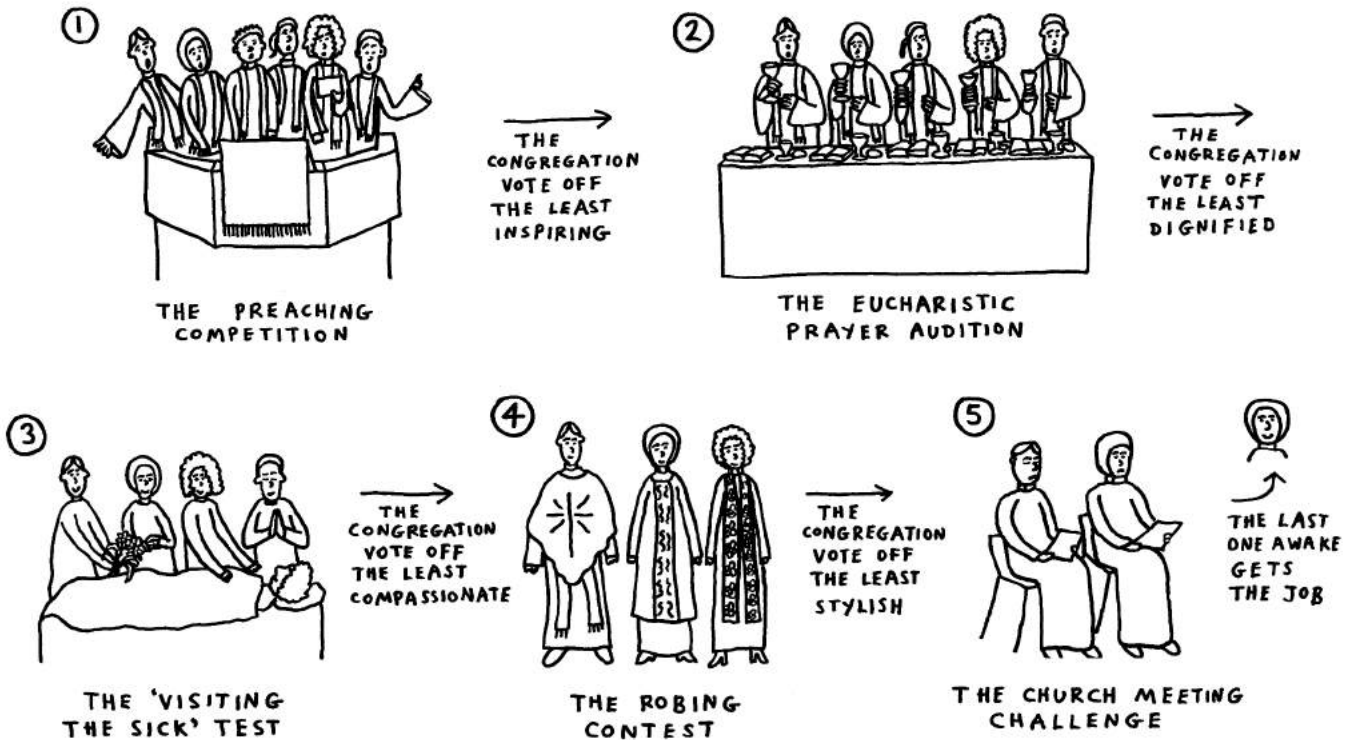
As you may know, Rev'd Philip Bowden left the Mid-Test Benefice in January for 'pastures new' (in Birmingham). This means that we are missing a Vicar! The parishes are eager to fill the gap and are working hard at putting together a 'Benefice Profile' which will inform likely candidates about what a wonderful part of the world we live in, and give details of the parishes of which we are a part. The current plan is for adverts to go out after Easter and, if there are applicants, interviews in July. We may even have a new Rector in place well before Christmas.

In the meantime, the services will be led by clergy and lay people. We can be really grateful that we can call on a team of people to help us continue in worship and church work. So, please be kind to those (like Rev'ds Sue Kipling and John Rennie) who help us carry on.

The appointment process is long and complex – as shown in the accompanying cartoon. Happily, I don't think that all the tests will happen here.

APPOINTING A NEW VICAR

THE PROCESS IS LONG AND COMPLEX



This year, Easter falls at the end March – so this month has most of Lent in it as well as Easter. Good Friday (29th March) remembers the time that Christ spent on the cross. To me, attending the Easter services without attending Holy Week services is like watching the happy ending of a movie without seeing the middle - you only rob yourself of joy. For the joy, join others to celebrate the Resurrection on Easter Day.

Your Area Dean, James

Rev'd James Pitkin - romseyareadean@gmail.com

Mid-Test Benefice, In Vacancy - our experience at St Mary's Longstock

We have survived the first two months! And no falling out. Services on the rota have all been taken, with just one problem when the priest from the clerical registry stood down on the Friday due to illness.

We were given a replacement – but very sadly he was taken to hospital on the Saturday with pneumonia. The two wardens did a splendid job providing a service, missing out the Eucharist.

All the other services have worked well.

Church News

St Mary's Longstock



Bible Studies in February have gone well. The trustworthy sayings have been thoughtful with interesting discussions.

Sunday@4 returned with a lively group enjoying games, singing and stories.

We had the Rev'd Matthew Grayshon for our Parish Communion service on 11 February. He was a delightful man and complimented the congregation – he said we were warm and welcoming and he would be very happy to return.

In March, there are the Lent studies of *Ruth*, which will be interesting. The *Book of Ruth* in the Old Testament is a lovely book to read, reminding us that Ruth was the great grandmother of King David. Plenty of choice is offered across the Benefice with sessions held in Longstock, Stockbridge, Houghton and Broughton. The Longstock group started on Tuesday 27 February at The Cowshed. For details contact John Rennie at johnrennie47@gmail.com.

As Easter is early this year, we have Mothering Sunday on 10 March, with the making of the posies being done at the Old Vicarage on 9 March. A call to help with this will be made once the time is settled. A big thank you to Sophie Hill for hosting this. I hope the service will be well attended.

Friday 29 March is Good Friday when I hope we will be allowed to walk along the River Test. We have provisional permission, but the ground is extremely wet and, if it does not dry out by Good Friday, we will have an alternative, but drier, route for the walk. We meet at the Lych Gate of St Mary's Church at 10.30am and walk, then pause for Good Friday readings along the way. The walk is usually about 1 hour 30 minutes. Dogs are welcome but must be kept on a lead.



Good Friday Walk last year

Easter Day comes on 31 March – when we usually have a combined service for the whole Benefice. As it is Easter, each Parish will have its own service. At Longstock, this will be at 9.30am. As we are in vacancy, we are not able to have a priest from the registry as they are in short supply. But, we will have an All Age Easter, with an Easter Egg hunt,

and make this a joyous service, celebrating the Risen Lord.

DON'T FORGET - the clocks go forward at 1am on 31 March, Easter Day.

Dates for the Diary -

Spring Clean and Churchyard tidy to make the church and churchyard beautiful for Easter.

Saturday 16 and/or 23 March. An email will be sent round regarding which (or both) dates. Please come from 10am – 12noon with your rakes, trowels, garden bags for the churchyard and long-handled brushes, dusters and brushes for the church. There is good nattering and refreshments.

Thursday 28 March 'Soup and Sandwiches' at Longstock Village Hall. (See Notice p19 for details)

March Church Services at St Mary, Longstock

3 March	9.30am	All Age Worship
10 March	9.30am	Mothering Sunday with short communion
17 March	9.30am	Morning Worship
24 March	No Service	Palm Sunday at Stockbridge at 11am
31 March	9.30	Easter Sunday – All Age with an Easter Egg hunt

For queries during the interregnum, please contact Maddie Hedley Churchwarden, 810284; email mjh723@btinternet, or the Benefice Administrator, Lois Opperman at midtestbenefice@gmail.com

If you have any questions on 'The News', please contact Maddie as above.

Maddie Hedley

Occasions:

14 February was Ash Wednesday and we were fortunate to have Rev'd Jill Bentall come and take the service at St Mary's, Longstock. Jill has a warm and friendly manner and she walked round the congregation 'Ashing' all who wished for this. The Eucharist followed. A moving and proper way to start Lent.

We met Jill again on the occasion of Hazel Fake's funeral and thanksgiving service. 26 members of the family walked with David behind the coffin from 28 Longstock to the church, which was full of friends and family. Jill explained that the nave, where most people were sitting represented Earth, whilst the Chancel, where the coffin lay represented the route to heaven. We learnt a great deal about Hazel – her youth, training as a nurse, then the administrative work she undertook. She was a warm and loving person, who will be much missed, especially by David. Please pray for him and for Hazel. With Rev'd Jill taking the service, everyone felt welcomed and the service provided a fitting thanksgiving for Hazel.

Church News

St Peter's and Old St Peter's Stockbridge



February was the first full month of our interregnum and the Ministry Team and Church Wardens supported by Lois, our Administrator, have been getting into their stride. Nigel and Maria Melville went to Birmingham on January 22nd to attend Phill's Induction to his new church (see Nigel's report on p.30). Meanwhile, our team, together with representatives from the Diocese, will be starting the process of appointing a new incumbent here in the Mid-Test Benefice.

On the first Sunday of February, at the end of the Eucharist, we celebrated Candlemas which commemorated the presentation of Jesus at the Temple of Jerusalem. Our Associate Priest, the Rev'd Sue Kipling, led the service and added a moving tribute at the end which involved the congregation processing with candles from the crib at the front of the church to the large wooden cross at the back, symbolising Christ's journey from Bethlehem to Calvary. The choir sang the *Nunc Dimittis*. The crib has been put away until next Christmas and the church has already started the six weeks of Lent.

The beginning of Lent was marked by an Ash Wednesday Communion Service on February 14th in St Mary's Church, Longstock. For many Christians, Lent is the most important time of the year. This year, Easter falls early on 31st March. We follow the Gregorian Calendar in the western churches. This calendar was created by Pope Gregory in 1582 to fix some of the anomalies of the Julian calendar, which had been initiated by the Emperor Julius Caesar in 45 BC and which was based on astronomical features. Here, our Easter falls on the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the Spring Equinox. The Julian Calendar still governs the Orthodox Church in countries such as Greece and Ukraine and this year their Easter falls on May 5th.

Looking ahead

The Lent Course in Stockbridge, led by the Rev'd Dr John Rennie, runs throughout Lent on Thursdays at 5.30pm kindly hosted by Alison Vialou-Clark, 14 Trafalgar Way, Stockbridge.

Sunday, March 3rd

Teas in the church at 3pm for those who live alone.

Sunday, March 10th

Mothering Sunday: this takes place in the Sunday All Age Service in which children are invited to give small flower posies to the women in the congregation.

Thursday, 28th March

Maundy Thursday : there will be a service at 7.30pm in St Peter's when we remember the Last Supper and those who wish can take part in the foot-washing. The church is then emptied of all its 'furnishings' and the building becomes an empty space. A meditation at the back of the church round a symbolic "Garden of Gethsemane" precedes the closing of the church doors. The large wooden cross is the only item left standing until Easter Sunday. St Peter's holds this service for the whole benefice.

Friday, 29th March

Good Friday : A solemn service in front of the cross at 2pm.

Sunday, 31st March : Easter Sunday

Old St Peter's : There will be an early morning vigil at 7.30am at Old St Peter's followed by the Easter Liturgy at 8am. (Gentle reminder : clocks go forward)

St Peter's : Easter Eucharist at 11am.

Janet Williams

Stockbridge Church Choir Invitation to join the choir

Our recently appointed organist, Sarah Seymour, has now taken up her post and we are delighted to welcome her to St Peter's. As well as playing the organ, she will be directing the choir who will be invited to sing at the Eucharistic services (first and third Sundays of the month). This is an exciting time for Stockbridge Church Choir because Sarah is a highly qualified organist with years of experience of training and conducting choirs. As well as a degree in English and Theology, she has studied Sacred Music over many years and has also studied Kodaly teaching methods which enable her, among other things, to help singers learn to sight-sing.

We look forward to enlarging our musical repertoire and we will benefit from her training.

However, we do need more singers and this is a great opportunity for anyone who might like to join us. We would be particularly keen to attract new altos and tenors, but Sarah and all the choir would warmly welcome anyone who wants to come and sing.

Choir practices will normally be twice a month on the Thursdays before the Eucharist Services, from 7.30 - 8.30pm. Sarah would be happy for anyone interested to call her for a chat or text her on 07833300504 or send an email to sarah@seymourartandmusic.co.uk

Church News

Phill's Induction

St. Mary The Virgin
The Parish Church of
Acocks Green, Birmingham



The Induction of the Rev'd Phillip Bowden as Vicar of St Mary the Virgin, Acocks Green, by the Right Rev'd Anne Hollinghurst, Bishop of Aston and Acting Bishop of Birmingham, and the Venerable Gordon Steele, Auxiliary Archdeacon.

Maria and I attended the service which was led by the inspirational Acting Bishop of Birmingham. The large church, which is in a suburb of Birmingham, was full with an enthusiastic and diverse congregation from both St Mary's itself and the four other parishes over which Phill has oversight. There was a first-class organist and fine singing by the congregation. The church itself had been renovated after being severely bombed during the Second World War but one pillar was left as it was to show the damage.

The Auxiliary Archdeacon, who had met Phill some years ago when they were both based in Northamptonshire, told us that they had waited more than two years for a new Vicar and are delighted with Phill's appointment. Phill seemed at ease in his new role and is looking forward to working with the members of what is known as the 'Swan' group of churches.

Nigel Melville

The Column for February

Baptisms and Weddings

There were no baptisms or weddings

Funerals

The funeral service for Hazel Shirley Ann Fakes took place at 2.30pm on Tuesday 20 February at St Mary's Church, Longstock, followed by an unattended cremation at Charlton Park Crematorium.

The wake took place at Longstock Village Hall.

Thank you!

Regrettably, since saying 'good bye' to you all at the end of last year, I have been swept up in a whirlwind of packing, moving, cleaning, unpacking, starting a new job, getting a phone line etc etc.

Now that I am able to sit at a desk and write a few words, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the people of the Test Valley for all the kindnesses, welcome and support that you offered me during my time as rector over the last 5 years. In particular, I want to thank everyone who made my last month in Stockbridge such good fun – invitations for supper, people popping over with a bottle of prosecco in the afternoon or smuggling me down the pub on various occasions in the evening was greatly appreciated, and I had such a good time being cheered up as I prepared to leave.

And of course, I am extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to the very generous leaving gift I was presented with at Longstock following the United Benefice Service on New Year's Eve. I was caught quite by surprise and certainly overwhelmed. The gift will enable me to provide a new home for my model railway here in Acocks Green, to enable me to continue a hobby that I began when I came to Stockbridge. Thank you.

Phill

Prayer for March

Lord, we thank you for this time of Lent, we see all kinds of signs that spring is on its way, snowdrops, crocus, daffodils and hellebores, bringing colour, after the grey winter. Not forgetting the wonderful daphne, with its scent and flowers.

All these things are signs of new life. In the same way, if we reflect on what we need to change, whose forgiveness we need, we can be ready for Easter, cleansed from past regrets, looking forward with joy to Easter.

Before we get to Easter, we pray with Jesus on Good Friday and walk as best we can with Him during his passion.

We pray for the Holy Land, for all who live in fear of attacks, bombs and hatred. We pray for peace for that land, for all who live there; we pray for the war to cease and for love of neighbour to replace powerplay and retribution.

You made a beautiful world and saw that it was good.

Help us to keep it that way.

Amen

Church News

Lay Vocations Morning

Saturday 6th April, 9.30am – 12.30pm

All Saints Church Hall,

St Leonards & St Ives BH24 2LS

Do you think God might be calling you to use your gifts to serve Jesus Christ? But unsure of what your next step might be?

Join us at All Saints Church Hall, St Leonards & St Ives where Bishop David will share about God's calling on our lives and how we can respond to that call. The Winchester School of Mission team will share about the pathways available and afterwards the team will be on hand to answer your questions.

- Do you already serve or want to serve but would value training and networking opportunities? – Come and find out more about the Bishop's Commission for Mission (BCM) available in Pastoral Care, Worship, Children, Youth & Families Ministry, and Beyond Church Walls.
- Do you feel called to preach regularly in your church? - Our Bishop's Permission To Preach programme could help you flourish.
- Would you like to explore licensed lay ministry? - We can help you explore the pathways available.

All are welcome to join us for this morning, designed to help you prayerfully consider your response to God's call on your life - no strings or expectations attached.

Please contact Tracey Nicholls via at tracey.nicholls@winchester.anglican.org to book your place.



Hampshire Downs RC Parish St Thomas More

Services are held on Sundays at 9.00am

March Services

Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford

3rd March (Lent 3)

- 08.00 **Leckford** Holy Communion BCP
- 09.30 **Longstock** All Age Worship
- 11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist with baptism

10th March (Mothering Sunday)

- 08.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion
- 09.30 **Longstock** Parish Eucharist
- 11.00 **Stockbridge** All Age Service

17th March (Passion Sunday)

- 09.30 **Longstock** Morning Worship
- 11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist
- 18.00 **Leckford** Evensong

20th March (Wednesday)

- 10.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

24th March (Palm Sunday)

- 11.00 **Stockbridge** Palm Procession (with Leckford and Longstock)

28th March (Maundy Thursday)

- 19.30 **Stockbridge** Foot-washing Service

29th March (Good Friday)

- 10.30 **Longstock** Good Friday Walk
- 14.00 **Stockbridge** Good Friday Service

31st March (Easter Sunday)

(Gentle reminder : clocks go forward)

- 07.30 **Old St Peter** Vigil
- 08.00 **Old St Peter** Easter Liturgy
- 09.30 **Longstock** All Age Easter
- 11.00 **Stockbridge** Easter Eucharist

FLOWER FESTIVAL 2024

St Peter's Church

The Flower Festival this year will take place on the Bank Holiday Weekend of May 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The Theme: Hobbies and Holidays

Angela McMeekin and the team would welcome any newcomers who would like to join them in helping to make this event its usual success.

If you are interested, please phone Angela on 01264 810236



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