



The Parish Magazine for

£1

STOCKBRIDGE LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD

February 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 Ministry Team

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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To subscribe, please contact David Barnes 810516 or email editorsstockmag@gmail.com

Editors: Frances Candler 811776 Jennifer Kidd 811179 Thea Taylor 07730 964481

Distribution: Sylvia Shepard 810603 **Advertisements:** advertstockmag@gmail.com

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<p>St Peter's Stockbridge <i>Churchwarden</i> David Williams 811072 <i>Hon Secretary</i> Micki Nadal 810567 <i>Hon Treasurer</i> Jean Farnan 07590 532460</p>	<p>St Mary's Longstock <i>Churchwarden</i> Madeleine Hedley 810284 <i>Hon Secretary</i> Richard Robinson 810388 <i>Hon Treasurer</i> Madeleine Hedley 810284</p>	<p>St Nicholas' Leckford <i>Churchwarden</i> Vacancy <i>Hon Secretary</i> Micki Nadal 810567 <i>Hon Treasurer</i> David Barnes 810516</p>
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From the Clergy

A Call to Prayer

As I write this piece, we see conflicts open up around the world; when under such pressure how do we, as Christians, respond to these crises?

There is no doubt how Jesus would have responded. When he was threatened as he was many times, he took time out to pray to his Father. In Luke 6 the authorities had decided that they had had enough of his teachings and they would do away with him. Jesus instantly withdrew to the mountainside and prayed.

Why do we find it so difficult to turn to prayer rather than become anxious, exhausted by uncertainty and begin to lose our sleep? Perhaps it is because we haven't discovered the power of prayer described by a saint of old as "the Christian's Vital Breath".

In our own villages, we must be praying for the appointment of our new rector. Praying that God will identify the man or woman who will lead our churches. We need someone who will bring renewed vision, whose priorities will be to build up and spiritually feed the faithful, as well as reaching out to those who search for faith or are of no faith.

Until we pray we have no idea of the impact prayer can make. Through prayer, we begin to see challenges and different people from God's perspective and begin a journey with Him which can lead to transforming relationships in our communities. Jesus' ability to change us, and the situations we find ourselves in, continues to this day. We may not find any other solution. It is that urgency that prompted Pope Francis recently to encourage us all to be involved with spreading the good news of Jesus. He says, "The success of a mission can no longer be measured by the number of confessions heard but by how many people have passed from being nominal Christians to real Christians, that is, convinced and active in the life of their parish".

The Pope goes on to explain what this personal encounter with Jesus may look like for any of us experiencing it today. "Let us try to understand what this famous personal encounter with Christ actually consists of. It is like meeting a person live, after having known him or her for years only from a photo."

In our churches, in our homes, let us resolve to make prayer a priority.

Rev'd Dr John Rennie

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Cover Photo: Ed Crispin

Our footers this month celebrate food, so often the centrepiece for comfort, sharing laughter and romance.

From the Editorial Team

The year has turned and although there are blue skies and sunshine, temperatures remain stubbornly low. We want to stay indoors and keep warm and, unsurprisingly, our attention has turned to food, essential for life itself and the heart of so many shared and significant moments. Our footers reflect many different attitudes to food, but none of them challenge its importance.

It is not so surprising that we need fresh ideas about what we eat, and this is where the celebrity chef steps in. We've taken a light-hearted look at some of these 'flamboyant foodies'. And of course we have our own celebrity chef whose recipes are always imaginative, nutritious and practical - you never need a truly obscure ingredient! Thank you, Linda, for keeping us interested and inspired.

We are very proud to announce we reached third place in the National Parish Magazine Awards 2023 and won the award for Best Content. We were a bit unsure about entering this competition but we have heard from the organisers that about 450 parish magazines were entered. As the content for our magazine comes almost entirely from you, our readers, you should give yourselves a pat on the back. But don't relax, we do rely on your contributions so keep them coming, both articles and photographs!



Many thanks to everyone who contributes to the magazine in any way including our deliverers without whom the magazine wouldn't reach you. Please don't forget to renew your subscriptions if you haven't already done so. Glance right for details!

Frances Candler, Jennifer Kidd and Thea Taylor

Copy for Magazine

Copy date for the **March Magazine:**

15 February 2024

Please send emails to:

editorsstockmag@gmail.com

or phone Frances on 01264 811776

Jennifer on 811179 or Thea on 07730 964481

* Subscription Reminder *

Subscriptions for 2024 are now due.

For only £10, copies for the year will be delivered to your door

Thank you those readers who have already renewed their subscription to the magazine.

For those of you who are yet to renew your subscription, or are new readers, if you would like to receive regular copies of this magazine **now is the time to act.**

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:

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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.

New Subscribers

If you wish to pay online see the details above 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

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

Stockbridge Amateur Dramatic Society's

Curtain Calls . . .

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

Tuesday 6th February

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



**Stockbridge
Community
Cinema**



PAST LIVES (12A)

Friday 16 February

5.00pm and 7.30pm (1hr 45min)

Nora and Hae Sung, two deeply connected childhood friends, are wrested apart after Nora's family emigrates from South Korea. Two decades later, they are reunited for one fateful week as they confront notions of destiny, and the choices that make a life, in this heartrending modern romance.

THE OLD OAK (15)

Wednesday 21 February

4.45pm and 7.30pm (1hr 53min)

The landlord of The Old Oak TJ Bannatyne is struggling to stay afloat during economic uncertainty. The northeast town, previously a mining community now plunged into poverty, faces rising tension when Syrian refugees are placed in local homes. While this is met with hostility by the locals, Bannatyne forges a relationship with Yara, one of the refugees, and her family, as they organize a food initiative to help the local town community

Tickets £6.00 available via our website:- stockbridgecinema.org.uk or via the TicketSource telephone booking service **0333 666 3366** (additional £2.00 fee per booking)



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 Or scan:



This concert is kindly sponsored by a member

This will be a special event as David Hill will be giving a master class the next day at 11am on the electronic organ he will be bringing to demonstrate what a great noise they make - replace your costly church organs?

Winchester City Festival Choir

Come to tea with WCFC!

Sat 17 February St Paul's Church – sing or come later for tea and to listen

2.30pm - Come and Sing extracts from **Handel:** Dixit Dominus, **Rutter:** Psalmfest and **Faure:** Requiem

(loan music available)

Music Director Paul du Plessis-Smith,
Piano Gilly Slot

3.30pm - Join us for tea and cake

4.00 pm Music performance and background stories



St Paul's Church, St Paul's Hill, Winchester SO22 5AB

FREE admission - donations welcome



**Remembrance
2023**

**Thank You,
Stockbridge**

Last November's Poppy Appeal in Stockbridge raised an amazing **£8,216.27**.

Many thanks to those who donated and those who collected

Angela McMeekin



Houghton WI

10am Monday 19th February
at Houghton Village Hall

For The Love of Dogs

Sandra Harper

talks about tales of good canine care.

Visitors welcome. Further information from
Jane Anderton 01264 810928



Stockbridge Community Market

**Every Thursday morning
9.30 - 11.45am**

in Stockbridge Town Hall

Selling the very best local and home-made produce

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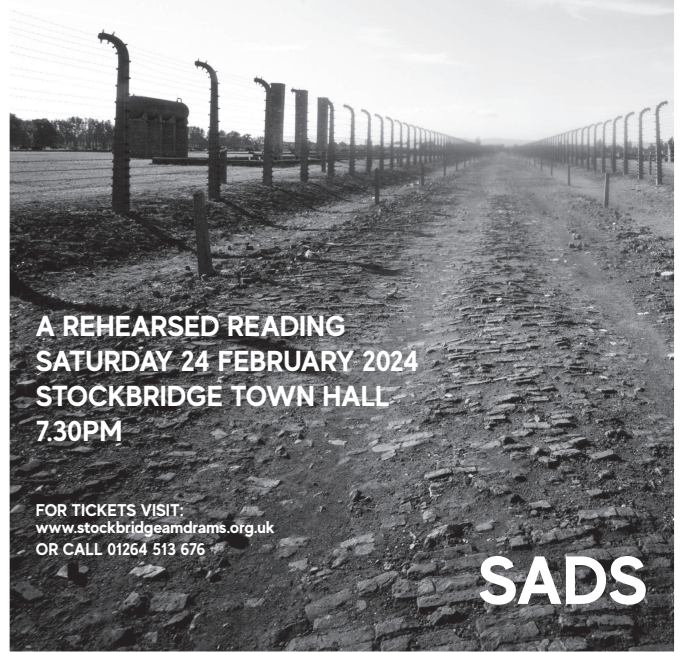
Please come along and browse

Free Wi-Fi access

COFFEE & CAKES RETURN TO RAVENSBRUCK

BY MIRIAM COLEY

SISTERHOOD, LOSS AND SURVIVAL



A REHEARSED READING
SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2024
STOCKBRIDGE TOWN HALL
7.30PM

FOR TICKETS VISIT:
www.stockbridgeanddrams.org.uk
OR CALL 01264 513 676

SADS

Test Villages u3a

**Thursday 1st February
at 2pm in Chilbolton Village Hall**

John Hughes presents

'Where have all the birds gone?'

There is no doubt that bird populations worldwide have plummeted. John's talk focuses on the decline in bird populations in the UK and explores losses due to the collection of wild bird eggs, the millinery trade, exotic predators, habitat loss and highlights global warming and disease as the latest threats.

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*



**Longstock Garden Club
Tuesday February 13th**

Annual General Meeting

with wine

followed by a talk by Wilf Simcox

The Cloud Forest of Honduras

At this meeting, collect your programme for
2024-5 talks and outings

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

Guests welcome £3 each meeting.

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

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



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 Town Hall



Events

Weekly

Mon am	Pilates with Paula
Mon am	Pilates Unlimited with Clare
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 Joga
Fri am	Moo Music

This Month

Feb 3	Antique Fair
Feb 3	Mandy Henley
Feb 4	Yoga'naflow
Feb 5	Infinito
Feb 5	Hannah Baron
Feb 5-6	Infinito
Feb 6	Stockbridge Drama Society
Feb 7	Romsey and S'ton N Cons Assoc
Feb 9	Seasons Ltd
Feb 10	Josh Robinson
Feb 10-11	Jules At No.43
Feb 12-14	Capital Cashmere
Feb 14	U3A
Feb 15	Stockbridge Parish Council
Feb 16	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Feb 17	South Central Makers
Feb 18	Jules At No.43
Feb 19	Hannah Baron
Feb 21	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Feb 24-25	Antiques and Curios
Feb 24-25	Hawkmoor Books
Feb 26	Hannah Baron
Feb 27	Longstock and Leckford WI

Flamboyant Foodies

Nowadays, we are bombarded with persuasive, yet often conflicting, advice about food. The choice of what to eat has become a moral, nutritional and financial obstacle course through which it is easy to lose the simple comfort and joy of indulging in delicious food.

Whilst many of us still rely on trusty and dog-eared cookery books for our favourite recipes in the privacy of our own kitchens, the promotion of online recipes, food 'influencers' and the ubiquity of the television chef means our relationship with food has expanded into mass media entertainment.

'Celebrity chefs' are everywhere these days but we remember with affection - and, with hindsight, some horror - the pioneers who brought their culinary skills and their eccentric personalities to our TV screens. They brought fun to our food.

Philip Harben was the first to present a cookery programme for British radio and television from 1943 to 1969, focusing on basic techniques and, in the post-war years, making best use of rationed ingredients. Broadcasting live TV inevitably resulted in some inadvertent hilarity when a cracked egg which turned out to be rotten and smelly reduced him and the studio crew to helpless laughter and, on another occasion, at the finale of presenting a cooked dish with a flourish, he realised he hadn't switched on the oven.



Harben became hugely popular - 'part entertainer, part teacher ... plump, bearded and genial, with a racy delivery' (Levy) - and was so well known that he played himself in two comedy films and thus set the stage for the arrival of the celebrity chef phenomenon we know today.



LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD WI

Tuesday 27th February

Stockbridge Town Hall 6.45pm for 7pm start.

**The work of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance
by Keith Douglas**

Guests always welcome.

Please contact Sue Hill on 811779 for further details

Wherwell History Group

Friday 16th February
at 8.00pm



**The Great Exhibition of 1851
and its Legacy**

a Zoom presentation by **David Morton**

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www.wherwellhistory.com/about/programme



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All the best for 2024

We are trying to ensure the best use of limited appointments by getting you to the right person within the team first time.

Joint pain

For adults experiencing any joint pain, you can book an appointment with Lydia, our Physiotherapist who works on Wednesdays and Fridays at Broughton.

Eye problem

The surgery does not have the specialist equipment necessary to examine eyes effectively. There is a Minor Eye Conditions Service available to all patients by calling 0300 303 4922. If necessary, they can arrange a prescription, or an appointment with an Optician or the local hospital.

eConsult

You can contact the surgery online via our website, stockbridgesurgery.co.uk. This is especially useful for requesting extensions to sick certificates or if you have a question regarding your medication.

Medication reviews

There is no need to book an appointment for a medication review unless a member of the surgery team has asked you to do so. The doctors will review your medication and history and a member of the team will be in touch if we need to book you an appointment. Sometimes we require blood tests or other investigations prior to a review.

Blood pressure

If you are aged over 45 years, we encourage you to have your blood pressure measured once every 5 years. This can be done using the machines in our waiting rooms and handing the reading in to reception.

*Ann Spooner
Practice Manager*

Patient Participation Group

The PPG works with Stockbridge Practice to improve local provision of healthcare. It aims to improve communication between surgery, patients and the wider community about matters concerning the surgery and health in general.

The group is keen to welcome new members. It meets four times a year; the meetings are only 1 hour and 30 minutes long and are well structured and usually run to time. Usually meetings take place from 18:30 till 20:00 in Stockbridge Town Hall.

For further details please contact the Chair of the Patient Participation Group Chair, Gwendolen Picco (gwen.picco@gmail.com)

SADS plans for a busy 2024

Stockbridge Amateur Dramatic Society has planned what may be our busiest year ever in 2024: a rehearsed reading, three full productions, and monthly Curtain Call meetings.

COFFEE & CAKES RETURN TO RAVENSBRUCK

BY MIRIAM COLEY

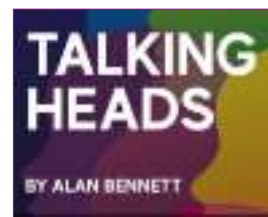
The first event, on 24th February in the Town Hall, is a rehearsed reading of **Coffee and Cakes:**

Return to Ravensbruck a new play by Miriam Coley directed by John Baxter. Tickets will be on sale from 4th Feb from our web site www.stockbridgeamdrams.org.uk.

Written for five actors who multi-rôle, the play examines women's experience in the Holocaust. It is set in Ravensbruck, a concentration camp for women.

Themes of oppression, imprisonment, and survival are all explored in the text as are those of remembrance, love, family, and community. Marta, the youngest character, is the thread that pulls the story together, which switches from the camp to the 1990's.

Then, in April, we will be performing more of Alan Bennett's **Talking Heads** monologues. We performed three last year which were very well received. More details to come on our web site.



In August, we have planned a joint production with Salisbury-based group JT Productions of Simon Stephens' dramatisation of the well-known novel by Mark Haddon **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time**. This will be directed by Tom Humphreys of JT Productions. Tom has negotiated with the rights holders to make the central role a 15-year-old girl. So, if you know anyone who might be interested in doing this, please contact stockbridgeamdrams@gmail.com. The actress doesn't have to be 15 – she could easily be in her 20's – she just needs to be plausibly young



We will see out the year with **Brontë** by Polly Teale about the Brontë sisters. This play was extremely well received by both audiences and critics when first performed in 2005 and has had several revivals and tours since then.

In addition to these productions, we will maintain our very popular monthly Curtain Call meetings on the first Tuesday of every month from October through to April. All are welcome and no experience is necessary. Again details are on our website.

Sarah Litton

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Ukrainian Evening in Broughton



It seems a while ago now but, on Saturday December 2nd, a Christmas Ukraine Evening was held in Broughton Village Hall. We would like to thank all the shop keepers in Stockbridge for their generosity in giving donations for the raffle.

The whole evening was a great success with both the Ukrainian Choir and dancers, and all who came having a really enjoyable evening. Thanks to the raffle and auction, we are able to now make donations to Ukraine Charities which are in dire need of support.

Thank you to everyone who supported our event.

Sue Stafford

Farewell to our Rector - Footnote



Phill, with a portrait of his illustrious predecessor at St Mary's, Portsea, The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Cyril Garbett, GCVO

I was interested to read Janet Williams' nice tribute to Philip Bowden in December's Parish Magazine.

The article referred to Philip completing his curacy at St Mary's Portsea, 'following in the footsteps of Cyril Garbett, a former Archbishop of York'. But I wonder how many readers know of Garbett's connection with Stockbridge?

Cyril Garbett was my great uncle. Having been curate and then vicar of the parish of Portsea for 20 years from 1899, he was consecrated Bishop of Southwark in 1919.

From there, he was translated to Winchester in 1932 and it was during his time as Bishop of this Diocese that he discovered Stockbridge.

Although only 57 years old on arrival at Winchester, he identified Stockbridge as the place where he would eventually like to retire. But that was some years ahead for, after 10 years in Winchester, he was further translated to York where he was consecrated Archbishop in 1942.

In those days bishops did not retire at 70, and Garbett soldiered on at York past his 80th birthday in February 1955. By then he had resolved to retire at the end of that year and he and his sister (like him, unmarried and who had always acted as his hostess and companion) bought Manor Farm House in Stockbridge.

Sadly, his retirement was not to be. He was nominated in the Queen's New Year Honours List of 1st January 1956 for a peerage but, on the last day of 1955, he died.

His sister, my great aunt Elsie, moved to Manor Farm House in 1956 with just her cook/housekeeper.

Elsie died in 1963 and left the house to her niece, my mother. The story has a happy ending. We moved as a family to Stockbridge in 1964 and it was at that time that I met Selina Richardson of Longstock. We married in St Mary's Longstock in 1973 – and the rest, as they say, is history.

John Musters



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Saving our Natural Environment

Surely few people can be unaware of the huge decline in the populations of most of our natural species. The peerless David Attenborough in his *Planet* series has shown us the extent of the decline but also the sheer wonder of our natural environment. One of my favourite examples of this wonder is the migration of the bar-tailed godwit. As a fledgling of just 5 months, it flies about 8,500 miles non-stop over the Pacific Ocean between Alaska and Tasmania in 11 days. And this entirely without parents, helicopter, or otherwise. How can a creature so young have such endurance or know what to do or where to go? Meanwhile, Homo sapiens blunders around the planet making life for our natural species difficult if not impossible.

Now, however, some cheer is being offered by a radical scheme which offers to all of us something which can make a real difference and reverse this trend. Preparations are being made to establish a national network of Nature Recovery corridors and I believe that we should ensure that a corridor goes up the Test Valley through Longstock and Stockbridge and that the residents of these parishes should wholeheartedly support its development and success. This is additional to, and complementary with, the 'Shoots along Routes' scheme which is linked to the road network. The intention of the national Nature Recovery Network (NRN), its official name, is to 'make room for nature' to allow it to flourish, move and strengthen through cross-fertilisation. It will also help us to enjoy and connect with nature, to understand much better what we can do to help and to observe and monitor progress. The reason this radical action is being taken is that, up to now, worthy as many nature reserves and local initiatives have been, the trend has been unfavourable for nature. And this applies even in our green Test Valley; so, if we cannot demonstrate real progress here, where else can?

Fortunately, we can all see how this policy is actually working in Sussex where, a 'Weald to Waves' network has been established. I would urge you to visit www.wealdtowaves.co.uk to see what we could do as well. Already, our local parish councils for Longstock and Stockbridge are supporting this scheme and also the 'Shoots along Routes' companion scheme.

Hampshire County Council have now issued a survey to gather information which will contribute to the decision about where the Nature Recovery corridors should be located. The questions include asking about where and what kind of

improvements people would like to see; what their priorities are and for what reason. In addition, our Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust will be running workshops for people to understand and contribute to the establishment of the Nature Recovery Network in Hampshire.

The scope of the NRN will include farms, green spaces and gardens so everyone can be involved. Wilding can be controversial but the policy, which is enshrined in the Environment Act of 2021, is designed for the long term so that farmers, who have businesses to run, planning decisions and our personal decisions can adapt in the same way as we adapt to climate change which is its concomitant.

The policy might be long term, but we must respond promptly. We really need help from local people who have a commitment to encouraging the flourishing of our natural species such as birds, butterflies and wildflowers. The aim will be to respond to the survey to establish what our views are and, in due course, to support implementation of ambitious plans both for the Nature Recovery corridor and Shoots along Roots.

What you can do;

- Contact Sarah Johns or me on geoffrey.wort@gmail.com if you would like to make a difference for nature in our valley.
- Contribute to the HCC survey by searching for 'Nature Recovery Network' on their home page, scrolling down to box headed 'Nature needs you – help inform Hampshire's recovery', finding towards the bottom of the page 'completing online survey'.
- Look at www.wealdtowaves.co.uk to see what is already happening.
- Join the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust – half price at the moment!
- Watch out for the dates of the HIWWT workshops about all of this.
- Persuade others to contribute.

Thank you for your help and I look forward to hearing from you.

Geoffrey Wort

Go Green(er) for Lent

The weeks leading up to Easter are a great time to start or give up something that benefits nature and helps address climate change. Is there a change you can make to better care for creation and improve our lives and the lives of others through healthy, eco-friendly and sustainable living?

Last year, I decided to only buy a new item of clothing when I got to the point of opening my wardrobe and literally having nothing to wear! So, in 2023, I bought a waterproof coat - and that was it. Did you know that fashion production makes up 10% of humanity's carbon emissions, dries up water sources and pollutes rivers and streams. What's more, 85% of all textiles go to the dump each year.

There are all sorts of things you could try from eating less meat, shopping at refill/zero waste shops or making sure you've got food and water out for the birds each day. I'll be interested to hear what you decide to do.

For more eco-tips, sign up to A Rocha UK's Wild Christian email at: arocha.org.uk/wild-christian and, if you'd like to contact me, please email on lisalamberti@hotmail.co.uk

Lisa Stone

Leckford Biodiversity Volunteers

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Please contact Kath Herson, Biodiversity Officer, to express your interest

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Stockbridge Parish Council News

Stockbridge Parish Council was pleased to welcome Mr Christopher Robathan as a new Councillor but sad to receive the resignation of Frank Parr. Frank has been a reliable and helpful member of the Council since he joined it in 2019. His contribution to the Council's meetings and running of the Council will be missed. There has been no call for a by-election and therefore the Council will seek to fill the vacancy by co-option. If anyone would like to put themselves forward as a Councillor, please contact the Clerk.

Hampshire County Council Consultation

HCC is consulting to understand people's views on proposals to change and reduce some local services and help the Authority address a £132 million budget shortfall faced by April 2025. The Future Services Consultation runs from 8 January to 31 March 2024 and signals the next stage in the County Council's plans to ensure it can focus support to the most vulnerable people in Hampshire – such as protecting children from harm, social care for older people, and supporting adults and children with disabilities and additional needs - while meeting its legal duty to deliver a balanced budget in 2025/26. It is really important that people give their views on what HCC proposes to cut because it will have a significant effect on the services the community will receive from their County Council.

Some of the suggested cuts are:

- adult social care charges – taking 100% of any assessable income (as opposed to the present 95%)
- withdrawing grant schemes such as the adult social care grant programmes and the Rural Communities Fund
- reducing the amount given to arts and museum services
- highways maintenance including reducing large-scale structural repairs and surface treatments and the winter treatment of roads
- stopping support for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- reducing the number and opening hours for waste recycling centres
- reducing library stock
- reducing bus routes and the funding for some Concessionary Travel Schemes (older and disabled persons bus passes)
- introducing parking charges at rural countryside car parks (such as nature reserves and conservation sites)
- cancelling some School Crossing Patrols and reducing the brightness and length of time of street lighting.

The consultation runs until 11.59 pm on 31 March 2024. Feedback can be provided by using the

Consultation Response Form, available online via www.hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation. Responses can also be emailed directly to Hampshire County Council via insight@hants.gov.uk or write to Freepost HAMPSHIRE. (Please also write PandO, IEU, FM09 on the back of the envelope).

Groundwater

The rain in December and early January has caused a rise in the groundwater in the local area. The fishing club team was kept busy over the yuletide season clearing fallen trees and removing branches, and even garden furniture and tarpaulins, which were blocking hatches. The River Keepers maintain that it is important to keep excess water on the meadows and in the main channels and they are working to achieve that. They say the flood relief hatches are working incredibly well and make a real difference to the flood defence of Stockbridge. The Parish Council keeps in contact with the Houghton Fishing Club River Keepers and posts any updates received from them on the News section of the website. Sign up to receive email updates and you won't need to go looking for them, via www.stockbridgeparishcouncil.org.uk/news.

Test Valley Consultation

Test Valley will be consulting on their Local Plan for 6 weeks from February to March. The Local Plan looks at the possibility of new housing provision throughout Test Valley. Sites that are noted as potential new housing developments does not necessarily mean that they *will* be developed into new housing, and there will still be a number of planning 'hoops' to go through, but the planners will regard the sites as a 'definite possibility'. When the consultation is announced, the links to the information and mechanism for response will be posted on the Parish Council website.

Stockbridge Parish Council will meet on 15th February in Stockbridge Town Hall.

Belinda Baker

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

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Stockbridge Cinema News

2023 saw another upward step with ticket sales of just under 2,000 for the year - the highest since 2019. One of the highlights of the year was in December when there were two screenings of the documentary *Alex Lewis - Mountain*. These were followed by an audience question and answer session with Alex, the film's



director Simon Ratigan and Executive Producer David Collinson. The audience rated the film higher than any other screened in 2023 with a 100% 'positive' rating with several responses appreciating the

additional information provided by the participants. Over 100 people attended the two screenings and, as a result, £1,180 was raised for the Alex Lewis Trust from ticket sales.

If you missed this excellent film, or want to see it again, there is an opportunity to view it by visiting the website alexlewismountainfilm.com. You can choose to donate from as little as £1. All donations through this site are used to meet the costs of making the film as well as supporting Alex and David's work in helping the disabled in Ethiopia, Ukraine, the UK and elsewhere.

2024 got off to a great start with the screening of the National Theatre production of C P Taylor's play *Good* starring David Tennant. We received special permission from NT Live to screen this film thanks to the involvement of director Dominic Cooke who attended for a Q&A session after the screening. He later commented that he really enjoyed the event and was stimulated by the intelligent, engaged questions he was asked.



A more detailed report of the Community Cinema's activities in 2023 will soon be available on our website.

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Ice Scene (1610)



When we chose this painting by Hendrick Avercamp (1585 -1634) for the front cover of our Christmas and New Year issue of the magazine, we didn't fully appreciate how intriguing it was until we received an email from Maria Melville. Maria has an enlargement of the painting which fascinates her grandchildren, who have spotted some unexpected details in this playful depiction of all levels of Dutch society enjoying a wintry day's skating.



In the foreground, is an extremely stylish skater with a plumed top hat, while behind and to the left of him, a woman is doing her washing through a hole in the ice.



Further to the left, a dreadful accident has happened; people have fallen through the ice, but rescue is at hand as a man with a ladder hurries to the scene.

The grandchildren have of course spotted other details perhaps less suitable for the front page of a parish magazine. A lady has had an unfortunate fall, revealing a little more than she would have liked!



Avercamp was born in Amsterdam but, in 1586, his family moved to Kampen where they became prominent citizens. The talented Hendrick, who was mute, moved back to Amsterdam to live (and study?) with the Danish painter, Pieter Isaacks. By 1613, he was back in Kampen where he devoted himself to the painting of crowded winter scenes, of which this is an example. Among his pupils was his nephew, Barent Avercamp, 1612- 1679, who painted similarly busy winter landscapes, though possibly with less humour. Hard to tell until you see an enlarged copy!

You can see 'Ice skating in a village' at the Mauritshuis, a museum in The Hague.

Editors, with special thanks to Maria Melville

Trout'n'About



At an event in Stockbridge Town Hall in late November, 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 in person to help on the day are eligible to nominate a good cause and vote on the allocation of funds raised by the event. Funds are awarded according to the number of votes cast for each nominated organisation. The 2023 awards were made as follows:

Stockbridge Community Market - £600 (16 votes)
Old St Peter's - £500 (15 votes)
Longstock Allotment - £400 (12 votes)
Longstock Playground - £300 (11 votes)
Stockbridge Scout Group - £300 (11 votes)
St Nicholas' Leckford - £150 (8 votes)
Stockbridge Music - £150 (7 votes)
Stockbridge Primary & Pre School - £100 (6 votes)
Stockbridge Recreation Trust - £100 (6 votes)

The Trout'n'About Committee is extremely grateful to the volunteers, without whom the event simply could not happen. The committee would also like to thank our own committee member, Mary Richards, who organised the volunteers so brilliantly. Trout'n'About always needs volunteers so, if you are part of an organisation that would benefit from funding, please sign up to help out in person next year. Mary would love to hear from you.

We are already starting to plan Trout'n'About 2024. This year, the committee will be looking to forge stronger links between the Parish and TVBC, HCC and the High Street businesses with a view to increasing the amount of money raised for good causes, that being the underlying reason the event exists. As the residents and businesses of the Parish are generous enough to host such a prestigious tourist attraction in Hampshire, then it should follow that our good causes must be the main beneficiaries.

Again, thank you to the residents and businesses of Stockbridge and the surrounding villages for their support, not to mention our marvellous volunteers, who made Trout'n'About 2023 such a huge success.

Finally on a personal level, as Chair, I would like to applaud the wonderful team of volunteers that comprise the Trout'n'About committee. Derek Halle, Mary Richards, Jean Farnan, David & Emily Wilkinson, Hayley Rampton and, of course, Kim Candler and Richard Gueterbock for their ongoing sage advice and support.
Bob Powell

Flamboyant Foodies

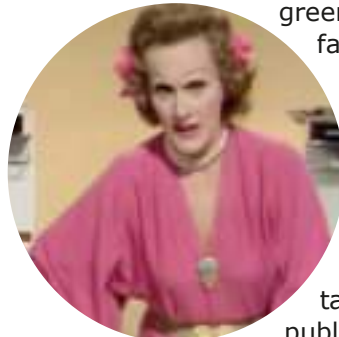
Phyllis Nan Sortain Pechey, better known as Fanny Cradock, was an English restaurant critic, television chef and writer inspired by the famous Auguste Escoffier. She gave every recipe a French name and, whilst her food looked extravagant, it was generally economical. Her catchphrases included 'This won't break you'.

First appearing on television in 1955 with her fourth (bigamous as it turned out!) husband, Major Johnnie Cradock, the pair turning theatres into restaurants cooking vast dishes that were served to the audience. They became known for their roast turkey, complete with stuffed head, tail feathers and wings. Complete with French accents, their act was one of a drunken and bumbling hen-pecked husband and a domineering wife.



Fanny's personal life was equally colourful and full of drama with not a little scandal.

In spite of her entertainment value, as time went by, her food became outdated, with her love of the piping bag and vegetable dyes (blue eggs and green potatoes being



favourites). As she grew older, she applied more and more make-up and wore vast chiffon ballgowns on screen. Her final downfall in 1976 was a televised encounter with a talented amateur chef. The public was incensed at her eye-rolling rudeness and her contract was ended.

And we have a surprise local connection - it seems Fanny lived for a while in the former Little Dean Nursing Home in Stockbridge. Apparently she could be found in John Robinson butchers instructing other customers on how to cook their meat! Her legend lives on ... and the Editors would be intrigued to hear any memories from readers.



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A Blast from the Past and an Opportunity not to be Missed

A local friend of mine has just transferred an old VHS tape of the Passion play onto a memory stick and also onto a DVD, and we have enjoyed reliving that great village event of 24 years ago.



How young we were then and how sad to see old friends no longer with us.



Nevertheless, it makes good viewing and I wondered whether others might like to have their own copies.



There is no need to try to find your old VHS tapes. Just let me know and I will get you a copy made for you in whichever format you require. The cost is just £10.



Let me know by putting a note through my door (Touchwood) or leaving a message on the phone (810516) or by email barnsiesdandj@yaahoo.co.uk You can pay when you get your copy.

David Barnes

Flamboyant Foodies

From his TV debut in 1984, the flamboyant Keith Floyd endeared himself to viewers with his unapologetic, irreverent approach to cooking, drinking wine and talking to the crew as he cooked, often in unusual settings such as a fishing boat in rough seas. He pioneered 'on location' cookery shows.



Floyd owned many restaurants in different countries but was a hopeless financial manager and most went bankrupt. His personal life was equally chaotic with drinking and smoking bringing inevitable health problems. He admitted privately that he often drank too much out of loneliness but viewers loved him for his wayward spirit.

Christmas in Stockbridge



Although the Christmas Lights were switched on back in the beginning of December, this is the first opportunity we have had to recognise all the work that goes on behind the scenes, and thank everyone involved in this wonderful community event.

The Christmas Committee, chaired by Alyson Lownie, is a partnership of local residents, businesses and many local organisations. This year, they decided that children should be at the heart of the celebrations.



Santa arrived in style thanks to Autobarn, and helped by Elsa from *Frozen*, settled into a very comfortable grotto in the Town Hall, beautifully decorated by Mandy and Dave from *Prego* and friends, who

all put their hearts and souls into ensuring the evening's success.

Adelle Sharpe from *The Hub* organised a Christmas Trail requiring the children to find ten candy canes hidden in High Street shop window displays. On their way, they could pose to be photographed as Santa, a polar bear, or as elves.



500 local school children decorated wooden baubles and added their own Christmas wishes, all to be hung on a Christmas tree outside *Prego*.

Stockbridge Primary School choir sang carols around the splendid tree (with thanks to Robjents). Rev'd Bowden inaugurated the new lantern arch, Elsa switched on the lights and the church welcomed everyone to warm up with mince pies and mulled wine.



We're sorry we can't mention everyone involved, but on behalf of all who were there, or have since been enjoying the lights, thank you all!

Editors

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Rural England Prosperity Fund

Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has been awarded just over £500,000 of Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) money to support its rural communities and businesses.

Capital grants for business of between £5,000 and £25,000 will be available to new and existing rural businesses to develop new products, services and equipment that will be of wider benefit to the local economy. This could include farms looking to diversify or businesses needing new equipment to develop.

Capital grants for Community groups of between £3,000 and £20,000 will be available to projects that support new and improved community facilities, local art and heritage, rural green space, and/or essential community services for local people.

Funding will be available to support:

Rural Businesses

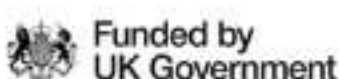
- Small-scale investments in micro and small enterprises (fewer than 50 employees)
- Development and promotion of the visitor economy through micro, small and medium sized enterprises (fewer than 250 employees)
- Growing the local social economy & supporting innovation through micro, small and medium sized enterprises (fewer than 250 employees)

Rural Community

- Local arts, culture, heritage and creative activities
- Creation of, or improvement to, rural green space
- Impactful volunteering and social action projects.

For more information please visit: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/BusinessREPF> for Business Grants or <https://testvalley.gov.uk/CommunityREPF> for Community Grants

TVBC Councillors, Terese Swain and Alison Johnstone, have commented that the Funds will 'help our rural communities to thrive, supporting local organisations to provide services and facilities that will hugely benefit the local community' and that, in our large rural community, this funding 'will really help businesses in those areas to grow, invest and become more productive.'



Welcoming the 98th Bishop of Winchester

Philip Mounstephen



A service was held at Winchester Cathedral on Saturday 13 January 2024 to celebrate the arrival of our new Bishop. It was the first formal ceremonial occasion at which the new bishop took up his office, an historic and important event in the life of the city and the diocese.

The service began at the ancient church of St Lawrence in the city centre, where Bishop Philip made the necessary oaths and declarations. He was then met in The Square by a number of dignitaries including the Mayor of Winchester, the Chief Executive of Winchester City Council and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Portsmouth, who then processed together to Winchester Cathedral.

Following tradition, Bishop Philip then knocked on the West Doors of the Cathedral and was greeted by a child asking 'Why have you been sent to us?', to which he replied, 'I come as one sent as Bishop to serve you.'

The themes of love, humility and service continued throughout, in the carefully-curated prayers, oaths and in the beautiful selection of music, sung by the Cathedral Choir, the Junior Choir and School Choirs.

The involvement of children was central to the proceedings and included performances from school choirs and the presentation of the crozier (hooked staff) by a child.

Other symbolic ceremonial acts during the service included the 'installing' of the bishop into his 'cathedra' (throne), anointing the new bishop with holy oil, and a final act of blessing which took place outside the cathedral when the bishop prayed for the City of Winchester and the whole diocese.

Bishop Philip gave the sermon, his first public address since he legally became Bishop of Winchester, in which he expressed his hopes and priorities for his leadership.

Two days previously, on Friday 11 January, Bishop Philip delivered his Maiden Speech in the House of Lords in a debate on the UK's contribution to international development, particularly in relation to the impact of climate change on developing nations. Bishop Philip spoke on the importance of holding globalism with localism, recognising that while global problems require global solutions, the distinctiveness of the local must not be lost. He also stressed the importance of tackling Freedom of Religious Belief and climate change together.

Editors, c/o Diocese of Winchester

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Potting Shed Cuttings for February

New(ish) gardening books to try:

The Gardening Book - Monty Don;

Why Women Grow: Stories of Soil, Sisterhood and Survival - Alice Vincent;

The Green Gardening Handbook - Nancy Birtwhistle;

RHS The Resilient Garden, Sustainable Gardening for a Changing Climate - Tom Massey



Pruning

February is a good time for pruning a whole host of trees, plants and shrubs in your garden. In the fruit and vegetable plot, autumn raspberries should be cut back to the ground if you haven't already done so and pruning of standard apple and pear trees completed before they start to produce buds. Shrubs such as spotted laurel, which have become overgrown or untidy, can be cut back a little; take out any branches which are diseased, mis-shaped or rubbing against each other. It's better to do this lightly, as hard pruning will result in more vigorous growth. Be wary when pruning evergreen shrubs, as hard pruning can damage the plants and is best left to later in the year; only with tough varieties such as spotted laurel is it safe to cut back now. Winter flowering jasmine, mahonia and hamamelis should be trimmed after flowering has finished.

Lavatera, buddleia, caryopteris, plumbago, santolina and later-flowering shrubs can be cut back almost to the ground; leave a couple of buds on each shoot. If you have left ornamental grasses to show off their winter beauty, cut them back now; if they are congested, lift and divide the plants. Although some prefer to prune roses earlier in the winter or to leave the job until March, in more sheltered spots pruning can begin now. Cut back wisteria summer growth to 2 or 3 buds. Group 2 clematis (they flower in June and often have a second flush of flowers later in the year) should also be cut back to healthy shoots this month and winter flowering heathers tidied up.

Sowing

Special varieties of early peas, broad beans, carrots, turnips and salad crops such as lettuces and radishes can be sown now in sunny, sheltered spots. You will need to provide some protection such as fleece or cloches. Towards the end of the month, beetroots, summer cabbage and spinach can be sown. Under glass, cauliflowers and tomatoes can also be sown this month. For the flower garden, hardy annuals can be sown under glass in trays and grown on in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse. Sweet pea seeds should germinate when sown outside; it is sensible to provide some protection with a cloche.

Planting/Potting Up

Shallots, Jerusalem artichokes, bare-rooted fruit trees and blackberry, raspberry, logan- and tayberry canes can all be planted this month.

Lift and divide overcrowded rhubarb crowns and re-plant in well-manured soil. Divide and re-plant snowdrops and aconites which have finished flowering and plant lily bulbs in containers for summer colour. If you lifted dahlia tubers for the winter, now is the time to start them off again in trays or individually in pots. Cuttings from their shoots will root easily to increase your stock of plants.

Miscellaneous Jobs

Continue to chit potatoes; stand them in egg boxes placed in a light, frost-free position to keep the tubers and their tender shoots safe.

Clean and check tools and lawn mowers which have been stored over the winter.

Clean pots and trays which will come into use next month in the March rush.

Feed borders with an organic fertiliser such as pelleted chicken manure.

When you buy bags of compost or growing bags, make sure they are new stock and not stored from the previous summer.

If the weather permits, complete your winter digging programme and make sure your greenhouse is cleaned and disinfected before the planting and sowing frenzy begins in March.

Micki Nadal



Stockbridge Parish Council Surgeries

The Council will be holding community engagement 'surgeries' at the Thursday Community Market at the Town Hall.

Councillors felt it was important to make themselves available for residents to be able to share their concerns at times other than the formal Council Meetings. The Surgeries will start in February and will be held on every third Thursday of the month.

Do come down and have a chat with a Councillor and feel free to raise anything you feel can be improved or discuss any concerns that you have. The Councillors can also advise on communications with Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council. Community Groups will also be welcome and the Councillors will be able to help them with grant applications.

Belinda Baker

*Clerk to Stockbridge Parish Council
clerk@stockbridgeparishcouncil.org.uk*

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4 Generations of Family Service

**Geoff Merritt Remembers:
The Wheatsheaf Pub
(present day Broughton Crafts)**



According to the 1901 Stockbridge Census, Stephen Pilcher was listed as the Publican in The Wheatsheaf public house, which was selling Hamman's of Andover ales and stout; maybe he was still there in 1908 when it closed. After the pub's closure, it was demolished and rebuilt bringing the roof level up to the adjoining buildings on either side.

The 1911 trade directory shows that Thomas Sutcliffe, a grocer, took over the new building. By the 1920's, Henry Stratton's Groceries was trading here and also using the building to its left as well.

Mr. W. G. Cox took over from Henry Stratton as Baker and Grocer in the 1930's but he was only using the left-hand building. In 1939, the old pub site was in use by W J Pierce who was a Chemist.

Later, in the 1950's, Southern Counties Agriculture Trading Society (SCATS) began trading here, using the old air raid shelter as a storeroom (where today's toilets now function).

Just after SCATS had vacated in the late 1970's. Bryan and Shirley Castleton were using it as an antique shop.

The well-loved Broughton Crafts have been established here ever since.

Now let's see what has been happening to the other two buildings:

Living next door in the newly-built 1897 Bridge House at the time of the pub's closure, was my son-in-law's great great granddad, Cornelius Fry, and family. His wife Emma opened a new shop here and was trading as a Draper. This was also the first house in Stockbridge to have gas lighting and legend has it that people came from miles around just to stand and stare.

In 1939, Bridge House was listed as the Bridge Temperance Hotel, with the proprietor Mrs. J. Bartley providing board residence and bed and breakfast. Meanwhile, Cornelius was trading as Master Baker and Grocer in the building on the other side of the pub as Fry's Model Bakery and General Store.

Succeeding Mr. W. G. Cox in the right-hand building in the picture, Mr. Albrough was to continue for many years as a Baker and Grocer until Malbart's, Stockbridge's first supermarket, moved here from next to the Greyhound pub, where it began in 1963.

In 1977 the store then incorporated the Post Office, becoming the Wavy Line Post Office and Food Store, until it ceased trading at the start of 2006. The premises now house the present day Orvis.

**The Caravan Café
(present day Prego)**



I am sure many readers of this magazine were familiar with the Caravan Café, more recently Domum (left), and now Prego.

In the early 1900s, this site was S. Stares, Family Butcher.



When that business was moved to a former

doss house (demolished for the Garden Inn) next to the Waggon & Horses pub (Lillie's), Mrs. Mowatt opened her little confectionery shop. I can recall that when you walked into her shop, there was a loud ding from the bell above the door, and a frizzy haired, lovely smiling lady appeared from behind a huge stack of Smith's crisp tins stacked almost to the low ceiling. It was a lovely port of call on the way to the 'pictures' at the Town Hall each Monday evening to stock up with sweets.



In the late 1950s, Mr. Frank Cooper (left), arrived from Alresford each day, and from his parked caravan that stood outside the old air raid shelter (now the present day toilets), he started selling cups of teas, cooked sandwiches etc. to long distance lorry drivers and anyone else who fancied a cuppa.

Despite the objections from several established cafe owners in the town, he won his battle to open another café.

He proceeded to purchase Mrs. Mowatt's shop, transforming the premises into a café, very suitable for the long distance lorry drivers and holiday makers, on their travels to and from the west country, as the A303 was not a suitable route for them at the time.

Geoff Merritt

Hm & G

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Roasted Squash, Parsnip and Spinach Gratin

It's soon to be Valentine's Day and the Editor has just informed me this month's magazine footers will focus on food and its delights! No pressure I said... So, for a change, I have come up with something vegetarian. It's a variation on the traditional theme of a 'Gratin'. The most famous gratin is Potato Dauphinoise. However, many chefs will tell you that the potato can be easily replaced by other vegetables and the results are just as creamy. In summer, add slow-roasted tomatoes and top with anchovies to turn it into a Mediterranean delight.

Gratin dishes sit wonderfully as a luscious side dish but just as easily as a hearty main. It really depends upon what you choose as your main ingredients. The sauce requires a little patience, but it's not difficult and represents a culinary achievement once mastered.

I'd serve this version as a lovely warming lunch partnered with some warm bread, possibly after a healthy walk, or as part of a delicious supper to admirably partner my Stuffed chicken breast wrapped in bacon. Keep an eye open as that could be resurrected for next month's recipe.

Ingredients

- 1 medium Butternut or Winter Squash
- 2 parsnips, peeled and cut into 2 cm chunks
- 1 bag of spinach leaves, approx. 400g
- 2 large brown onions, finely chopped.
- 5 tablespoons Olive Oil
- 40g plain flour
- 30g butter
- 100ml white wine
- 250ml whole milk
- 250ml single cream
- Grated nutmeg
- 70g coarse fresh good breadcrumbs (sourdough is brilliant for this).

Method

Preheat oven to 190°C fan.

Use a Gratin dish or heavy roasting dish.

Cut the squash in half and remove seeds, then continue to cut the flesh into 2cm pieces leaving the peel on. Place the squash and the parsnip pieces into the dish so they are not overlapping but are a snug fit. Drizzle over 2 tablespoons of the oil and season well with salt.

Roast in the oven for about an hour, turning if required to make sure the vegetables do not burn or stick.

Whilst this is cooking, wash the spinach thoroughly. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large pan on a medium heat and add the spinach for a few minutes until it has wilted (you may need to do this in smaller batches), then transfer to a colander and leave to drain.

Return the pan to the heat and add the butter. Once melted, add the onions and a good pinch of salt, cook for approximately 15 minutes until the onions are very soft but not too brown.

Add the flour to the pan and stir it through, turn the heat to low and allow the flour to cook through for a couple of minutes stirring it; do not let it burn. Add a splash of the wine and whisk to combine with the flour. Continue to add small amounts of milk and the rest of the wine, whisking to prevent lumps. Finally, add the cream. Doing this slowly ensures it is well mixed and stops any chance of lumps.

Add the nutmeg to the sauce and have a taste as more seasoning can be added at this point. You have just made a Béchamel sauce! Well done!

Remove the squash and parsnip mix from the oven and turn the oven up a notch to 200°C.

Arrange the drained spinach over the top. Pour the sauce evenly over, pushing around the sides of the vegetables so the sauce can penetrate to the bottom of the pan. Finally, sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the top and drizzle just a little more olive oil.

Place in the oven and cook for 30 minutes until the Béchamel sauce is bubbling and the crumbs are golden. If you want a darker version, then place under the grill for a minute or so to brown to your liking.

Enjoy!

Linda Hotchen



World Day of Prayer 2024 Palestine Friday 1st March

The World Day of Prayer (formerly Women's World Day of Prayer) is held on the first Friday of March each year in over 146 countries and islands. This year's service was prepared by an ecumenical group of Christian women from Palestine, with the theme: "I beg you, bear with one another in love".

There will be no formal services held in the Benefice. If anyone would like to join in praying on the day, they will find booklets of the service displayed in St Peter's from 25th February which they can take home.

Janet Williams

Olive tree in the garden of Gethsemane, West Bank, Palestine



Mid Test Benefice - Interregnum

As many parishioners are already aware, our Rector, the Rev'd Philip Bowden, took his last service with us on 31 December. He will be taking up an appointment at Acocks Green which is about 4 miles south east of Birmingham.

In the four plus years that he has been with us, his administrative skills in particular have enabled our Churches in the combined Benefice of Stockbridge to function efficiently and be used regularly for a wide variety of purposes such as Sunday worship, weddings and funerals and, equally importantly, social occasions such as concerts, plays and lectures. Additionally, there are many families and, indeed, individuals who have benefitted from his pastoral care at times most needed.

The Benefice goes into something called an interregnum or more easily, vacancy. During the interregnum, the church wardens become sequestrators, together with the Area Dean, Rev'd James Pitkin. This means they, with the Area Dean, are responsible for ensuring the rota of services has someone to cover each service and bear responsibility for all church activities. The Benefice Council asked the Ministry Team to ensure cover for each service, so, with the help of Rev'd Sue Pitkin and Rev'd John Rennie, together with our talented licensed Lay Worship Leaders, the pattern of services will be maintained. We will also use the Clerical Registry, a service offered by Winchester Diocese, and they provide (mostly retired) clergy who have Permission to Officiate (PTO) to fill the gaps we have. We also have an excellent Benefice office run by Lois Opperman who will take care to make sure that we are all informed (as in the past) of what is going on throughout the Benefice. Likewise, the churchwardens in each parish will undertake their duties as normal, assisted by members of the Parochial Church Council.

The churchwarden team is working together and we have met with the Archdeacon for Bournemouth, The Venerable Rev'd Jean Burgess. A pack will be given to each PCC member so they, as trustees, can understand the process.

Firstly, we have to update and amend the Benefice Profile. This is important as this is the document which will go to prospective candidates for the rôle of Rector of the Mid Test Benefice.

The PCC's meet collectively to meet the Acting Bishop of Southampton, Bp Geoff Anas, who will explain the whole process and answer questions.

At something called the Section 11 Meeting, the PCCs need to agree:

- The Benefice Profile
- The person who will be the Parish Representative for the recruitment process

- Items related to the recruitment process.

Things are already moving in that we have a date for the meeting of PCC's – 12 March 2024. The Section 11 meeting will take place by 30 May and the recruitment process will take place in July 2024.

Please pray that suitable candidates will apply, so we will be able to select the most suitable person for the needs of this Benefice, with the help of God.

Please also pray that we will work in harmony as a team, meeting the needs of each Parish.

Maddie Hedley

Leaving Party for the Rev'd Philip Bowden

The Benefice Service at St Mary's on 31 December was the last one presided over by Rev'd Philip, who had told us he was moving on to an urban parish in Birmingham. The church was full with 110 people all wishing to be there and having the opportunity to say goodbye and 'Godspeed' at the 'do' after the service in Longstock Village Hall.



The party was a great success and we were able to give Philip a cheque for over £2000 for him to use as he chooses.



He did say he would use the money to buy a container for his model railway – so he could transport it easily . . . or maybe something else will come up.

We will all miss him and we wish him well in his new parish.

Maddie Hedley, photos Nigel Rugman



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).

We had two lunches in January – the 4th and 25th. In February, we are back to one lunch which will be on Thursday 29th February. An extra day in February, telling us it's Leap Year!

December was bittersweet – the services for Christmas were wonderful, but with the sadness of saying goodbye to Rev'd Philip. The Story in the Barn on 9 December, at Charity Farm House was lovely. Paul, Loz and Arthur had decorated the barn with lights, a star and a pen keeping actual sheep. A great addition. Mulled cider and plenty of nibbles provided a great atmosphere. Many thanks to the Hardys for their gracious provision of the barn. The next event was the Crib Service, well attended with the children, as usual, bringing all the people and animals to the crib during each carol. Christmas Day provided a lovely service with plenty of adults and children sharing their Christmas. John Rennie took the service and it was so nice that at least 48 people stayed for Christmas Communion. The Magi were on their way, appearing on 7 January at the All Age Epiphany service.

The Plough Service on 21 January is always a joy. The old plough owned by Ian Smith comes into the church and it, and the seed for sowing, are blessed. A great way to keep the rural traditions alive. This year we had 30 adults and 4 young children at the service with all enjoying seeing the plough and singing well-loved hymns.



February is well into the New Year, and the church cycle continues. The Christmas Season ends at Candlemas - 2 February - with the church celebrating on 4 February with the All Age Service at 9.30am. The advent candles disappear and the cribs are put away until Advent 2024.

The start of Lent this year is 14th of February. There will be the customary Communion Service at St Mary's where those who choose can have ashes

applied to their forehead. We repent of our sins and prepare for the season of Lent. We can give up something, say a favourite food, or we can commit to reading a chapter or two of the bible; meditate on a passage each day; or maybe do a good turn when the opportunity arises. It would be lovely to see a full church.

A bible study was started in January, with two further sessions in February (6th & 20th). For details, please contact John Rennie.

Church Services for February at St Mary, Longstock are listed on page 31.

Please see the separate article on page 28 for what is happening in the interregnum.

If you have any questions on 'The News' please contact Maddie Hedley Churchwarden, 810284, email mjh723@btinternet. For queries during the interregnum, please contact Maddie (details above) or the Benefice Administrator, Lois Opperman at midtestbenefice@gmail.com

Maddie Hedley

Prayer for February

Lord, we thank you for Christmas – a time of light and hope in the middle of winter.

We see signs of hope – the snowdrops pushing through the hard earth, the green stalks of daffodils and tulips, and the days beginning to lengthen.

We wait for the start of Lent and the opportunity to reflect and meditate on our faith, and your Passion, but anticipating the glorious time of Easter.

We are fortunate that we can prepare in peace, without the threat of bombs and drones. So we pray for Gaza and Israel locked in hatred and revenge; for Ukraine, battling to keep their land and way of life. We pray that the way of peace can be found, with the chance to rebuild homes, for families to live without fear.

For reconciliation.

So, we wait and hope that the words of Julian of Norwich will be true – 'All will be well and all will be well, and every kind of thing shall be well'.

Amen

Note: *Julian of Norwich was one of the most remarkable mystics ever to grace the English Church. She lived in the 14th century during a time of incredible turmoil. There were wars and the bubonic plague was rife in Europe. Her well-known saying quoted above brought great comfort.*

Church News

St Peter's and Old St Peter's Stockbridge



Since January 6th we have been in the period of Epiphany when Christ was made manifest to the world in the form of a child, born in the manger.

St Peter's, together with the other churches in the Benefice, is now entering a period of interregnum after Philip Bowden left the incumbency to continue his ministry in a parish in Birmingham. During his incumbency, Phill developed a team of Lay Worship leaders to support the Benefice churches. Now that he has left, this team will work together with the churchwardens to ensure that our pattern of services is maintained throughout the interregnum. Where services require a priest, they will call on the Rev'd Sue Kipling and the Rev'd Dr John Rennie and priests from the Registry. The Lay Worship team will cover other services. Our teams are supported by the Area Dean, the Rev'd James Pitkin. Lois Opperman, as the Benefice Administrator, will continue to help with day-to-day administration so the interregnum should have minimal impact on our worship.

Our PCC has appointed a new organist, Sarah Seymour, and we are delighted to welcome her. As well as being a musician, Sarah is also a talented artist. She exhibited at the Hampshire Open



Studios in August 2023 and she does small group and individual tuition at her studio in King's Somborne. Dawn and Mollie would be so happy to hear the organ bringing music to our singing again.

December 1st seems a long way back, but that is when the Christmas period in Stockbridge got under way with the lighting of the Christmas tree, carols sung by children from the Primary School, and mulled wine and mince pies enjoyed in the church. It was good to have both of our schools in St Peter's for their Christmas Carol Services during December: the Primary School on the 11th, and the Test Valley School, with their own talented musicians, on the 13th.

On the 15th December, St Peter's held the joint Carol Service with the congregation from St Thomas More. Readers of the lessons included men and women from both churches. Guy Boney played the organ for the rousing and well-known carols, Helen King on the piano accompanied pieces sung by the choir and the Roman Catholic Bishop Peter preached a moving sermon. It is always a pleasure to welcome our friends from 'over the road'.

We owe huge thanks to Angela McMeekin and her team for providing refreshments after both these occasions, the talented flower arrangers for the festive decorations and for the unsung heroes behind the scenes who clean and freshen up the church after all these occasions. There were three services on Christmas Eve, Communion in Old St Peter's, the Christmas Story for children in the early evening and Midnight Mass later on. All were very well attended.

Phill led the last service of the year, a United Benefice Service, in St Mary's, Longstock on 31st December. Many of the congregation of 110 went on to the Village Hall afterwards for a food and wine gathering to say goodbye to him, to thank him and to present him with contributions from across the Benefice in the form of a cheque for £2,370. Our Church Warden says 'thank you' to all the people from Stockbridge who contributed so generously to this gift.

Looking ahead

Friday, February 2nd

Candlemas, commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple of Jerusalem, and the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary.

Sunday, February 4th

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

Wednesday, February 14th

Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent.

Friday, March 1st

World Day of Prayer.

Janet Williams

Editors' Note

Speaking of Church teas, we have been sent this lovely photograph of the church tea in January, and been asked on



behalf of everyone who was there 'to pass on their thanks to all the kind hard working ladies for making our afternoon teas so enjoyable'.

Church News

From the Area Dean

What is Lent?

Lent is the six week period leading up to Easter. It's one of the most important times of year for many Christians around the world, held at a similar level of importance to Advent – the build up to Christmas.

While Advent is a celebration and a time of great anticipation, Lent is more frequently seen as a time of solemn observance and preparation for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. From its start on Ash Wednesday (14th February) until its conclusion on Easter Sunday (31st March), Lent has been a traditional time for fasting or giving something up. Just as we carefully prepare for events in our personal lives, such as a wedding or a birthday, Lent invites us to make our minds and hearts ready for remembering Jesus' life, death and body resurrection.

What do Christians do during Lent?

These days, Christians around the world observe Lent in many ways. Many from more orthodox and traditional denominations will still observe the fast strictly, beginning with the wearing of ashes on Ash Wednesday and not eating meat, fish, eggs and fats until Easter Sunday. Others will choose to give up just one item for Lent, more commonly a 'luxury' such as chocolate, meat or alcohol. Some people give up time-consuming activities (such as social media) to focus on their faith in Lent. Many Christians also use Lent to study their Bibles and pray more intensively, making use of the many available books and courses. Sundays during Lent are very important to Christians around the world. Where the six Mondays to Saturdays are concerned with fasting and abstinence, the Sunday is a celebration symbolic of Christ's resurrection and Christians hold feasts in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice. The fourth and sixth Sundays are particularly important in the UK – the fourth because it is Mothering Sunday (Mother's Day 10^h March), the sixth because it is Palm Sunday (24th March). What will you do this Lent?

Your Area Dean, James

Revd James Pitkin - romseyareadean@gmail.com

The Column for December and January

Baptisms and Weddings

There were no baptisms or weddings in December or January.

Funerals

The funeral service for John Cousens took place at 12 noon at St Peter's Church, Stockbridge, followed by burial at Broughton Cemetery.

February Services for Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford

4th February

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

11th February (Sunday before Lent)

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

14th February (Ash Wednesday)

19.30 **Longstock** Holy Communion with ashing

18th February (Lent 1)

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

21st February (Wednesday)

10.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

25th February (Lent 2)

11.00 **Stockbridge** Morning Worship

St Nicholas' Leckford


Sung Evensong at Leckford

6pm, 18th February

On the third Sunday of every month we hold a traditional Book of Common Prayer (BCP) Evensong service.

Please come and join us to take part in a service of sung evening prayers, whose beautiful language offers a quiet and contemplative end to our weekend as we await the coming week. Shaping what Anglicans believe and how they worship for nearly 500 years, the BCP is considered one of the most beautiful prayer books ever composed.

Micki Nadal





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