

Englefield Parish News

April - May 2023



The Parish of St Mark's, Englefield

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St Mark's Church website: www.stmarksenglefield.org.uk
Englefield Parish Council website: www.englefieldpc.org.uk

Front cover: *The official emblem designed for the Coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6th May. The Englefield Big Coronation Tea Party is being held on the green behind the Village Tea Rooms on Sunday 7th May. See the back cover of this issue for more details.*

Englefield Parish News is published every two months and is distributed free to all households in the parish of Englefield. Contributions are welcome and can be emailed to catherinehaig@gmail.com or to rector@stmarksenglefield.org.uk, or handed in to the Village Stores by the 20th of the preceding month.

From St Mark's House



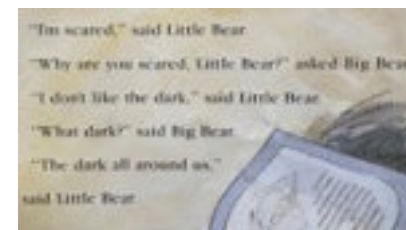
Hello Everyone!

Isn't it wonderful to have lighter and longer days?...and even better when the sun actually shines!



We had our grandchildren to stay recently and they love to read a family classic, *Can't You Sleep Little Bear?*. Little Bear can't sleep because of 'The dark all around us'. I remember being scared of the dark myself; imagining who or what might be there. Afraid of what I could not see. I have met with many people, young and old, who are afraid about things they can't see. I am interested therefore when people also tell me they have faith because they can't believe in something they can't see. It is easy to be fearful but not faithful about the unseen. I agree with the Psalmist: 'For there is darkness all around us - darkness of different kinds.'

Each of us are likely to have our own versions of 'darkness' and suffering to face. It may be a physical or a mental health darkness, or a spiritual one. It may be a darkness that someone else causes, or that is caused by us watching a loved one suffering, or it may even be a darkness of our own making. Darkness is scary and it can make us feel very alone...but God is not *feeling* God is there or *you not believing* God is there. The Latin '*Vocatus atque non vocatus, Deus*' Erasmus that Karl Jung had above his door *bidden, God is present*'.



The hospice movement founded by Cicely Saunders uses a ‘Total Pain’ model that she devised. It acknowledges that a person can feel pain in four areas: physical, psychological, spiritual and social. As Spiritual Care Lead in a hospice, I have witnessed how powerfully prayer and even the smallest iota of faith in an *unseen* God can have a profoundly positive effect on a person’s suffering - psychological *and* physical. The spiritual dimension of us is real, very real.

God was 'seen' in the human form of Jesus. As Easter approaches, I want encourage you to focus on your spiritual self and ask the risen Christ to make Himself known to you somehow.

Let me know how you get on!

With warm wishes for a Happy Easter.

Your Rector, Julia

Diary dates

Englefield Big Coronation Tea Party: Sunday 7th May, 3pm-5pm, on the green behind the Village Tea Rooms - for more information see back cover.

West Berkshire Mobile Library: Wednesday 19th April, 10th and 31st May, outside the Old Fire Station Nursery, Englefield, 2pm to 2.25pm.

Let's Talk Theology: Wednesday 10th May, 7.30pm, at St Mary's Sulhamstead, contact carolboulter@ntlworld.com if you would like to be added to the mailing list for this group looking at current issues of faith and life.

Time to Pray: half an hour of prayer, Bible reading and reflection in the Englefield Chapel, restarting on Monday 8th May, 6.30pm.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting: Monday 15th May, 6.30pm, St Mark's Church.

Annual Parish Meeting: Thursday 18th May, 7pm, in the Village Hall.

Local contacts

Englefield Estate Office	0118 930 2504; office@englefield.co.uk
Englefield Estate Yard	0118 930 2538; maintenance@englefield.co.uk
Englefield Stores & Tea Room	0118 930 2479 admin@englefieldstoresandtearooms.co.uk www.englefieldstoresandtearooms.co.uk/ https://www.englefieldvillagehall.co.uk/ info@englefieldvillagehall.co.uk
Englefield Village Hall	
Cobbs Farm Shop	0118 930 4064 englefieldshop@cobbsfarmshops.co.uk
Theale Medical Centre	0118 930 2513
NHS online coronavirus service	111.nhs.uk/covid-19 or call 111
Royal Berkshire Hospital	0118 322 5111
West Berks Community Hospital	01635 273300
Theale Pharmacy	0118 930 2542
Lloyds Pharmacy (Calcot)	0118 938 2265
NHS dentist Dentalcare, Pangbourne	0118 984 5894
West Berkshire Council	01635 551111 (out of hours 01635 42161) www.westberks.gov.uk/ www.englefieldpc.org.uk/ www.thealeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Englefield Parish Council	
Theale Parish Council	
Englefield Primary School	0118 930 2337; www.englefieldprimary.co.uk
Police	101 or 999 (for emergencies)
Utility suppliers: Electricity - SSEN 0800 072 72; Oil - Ford Fuels 0148 872 829;	
Gas - National Grid 0800 111 999; Water - Thames Water 0800 714 614;	
Drainage - Total Drainage 0118 9421140	

Congratulations

To Reg and Molly Sherwood who will be celebrating Reg's 80th birthday on 23rd April, St George's Day, their 28th wedding anniversary on 29th April and Molly's 70th birthday on 30th April.

To Dawn Sharp in the Estate Office accounts team on becoming a grandmother to Bonnie Mae born 25th February to Harrison and Clare.

Annual Parish Meeting

Englefield Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting is being held on Thursday 18th May at 7p.m. in the Village Hall. Please do join us to hear the updates, and to give your thoughts and input on what matters to you in the local community.

There will also be refreshments available following the updates.

Nia Rands, Parish Clerk



Volunteer Treasurer needed

Englefield Village Hall charity is seeking a volunteer to join the friendly team running our Village Hall. See www.englefieldvillagehall.co.uk.

The Treasurer's responsibilities include liaising with our Bookings Coordinator ensuring payments in and out are accurate and timely, preparing monthly and year end statements and attending committee meetings. Applicants should be well organised and computer literate to manage records and online banking but do not need accounting experience.

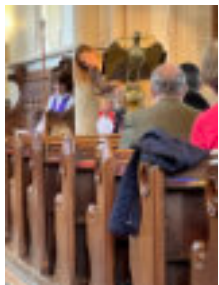
If you are able to commit to an average of three or four hours a month we would love to hear from you. Simply email info@englefieldvillagehall.co.uk with your contact details and we will be in touch.

Village Hall committee

APCM and Electoral Roll

The Church Electoral Roll contains the names and addresses of those who can vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. The Roll is revised annually. Those already on it will be carried forward, those wishing to have their names added will need to apply before 21st April. The new Roll will then be published in the church for two weeks prior to the APCM. Application forms can be downloaded from www.stmarksenglefield.org.uk or contact richard.smith.ufton@icloud.com or 0118 983 3258.

The APCM is on **Monday 15th May** at 6.30pm at St Mark's. All members of the congregation and the parish are invited to attend.



New faces welcome

Sunday School has evolved with Julia's arrival to give children and parents more choice: babies and younger children invited into crèche reinvigorated with new toys and scripture-based storybooks, and older children can now choose whether to join activities in the vestry, or collect colouring and puzzle clipboards to complete alongside their parents in the pews.

The children enjoyed composing prayers for Mothering Sunday but were slightly reluctant to read them on the day! We love to see new faces of all ages each week; please do drop in on Sunday mornings.



Marathon in a month?

Can you complete a marathon in a month? PACT invites you to take on its challenge! The aim of Marathon in May is to complete a total of 26.2 miles over the 31 days in May. Run, walk, hike, cycle, wheel, with children, with your dog, with friends or on your own; it's your challenge, your way! You can do the distance all at once, or break it down into daily or weekly chunks. With every mile you cover, you will be helping the families, women and children PACT supports every day. It costs £15 to sign up and every penny goes towards the people PACT supports through its outstanding adoption services, specialist therapeutic support, women's community project Alana House and domestic abuse recovery programme Bounce Back 4 Kids. Register today at <https://register.enthouse.com/ps/event/MarathoninMay2023> and get ready to do your Marathon in May!

Ascension Day Songs of Praise

St Mark's and Holy Trinity, Theale, are joining together to celebrate Ascension Day this year. Come and join in 'Songs of Praise for Ascension' on Thursday 18th May at Holy Trinity Church, led by Rev Martin Davy and Rev Julia Myles, starting at 7.30pm.



St Mark's on Facebook

If you are on Facebook don't forget to follow the link below to the St Mark's Englefield Facebook page. You will find regular updates and information about services and events. Do like us and follow us for up to the minute posts and share with your fb friends: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088397906146>.

Thank you

A big thank you to Emma Crookes who has managed the advertising for the Parish News with great efficiency for many years. The magazine would not exist without the support of our kind and generous advertisers and we are very grateful for all the work that Emma has put in to ensure that invoices are sent out and monies received. She has now handed this over to Paul Myles and our thanks to him for taking it on.

Why give to your local Foodbank?

- 400% increase in take up since March
- 16 tonnes of food parcels a month (up from 4 this time last year)
- A growing need in Theale

DROP OFF LOCATION:
Holy Trinity Church, Theale

WHEN?
SUNDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS
10.30AM TO 4.00PM

West Berkshire
foodbank



Easter plans at the Tea Room

Our newly decorated Tea Room has been buzzing since we re-opened in January, with a wonderful response to the bespoke Englefield wallpaper. So many people enjoying breakfast or lunch and then take a picture of the wallpaper to send on to a friend. Really lovely to see how others think it's just as special as we do!

We have just celebrated Mother's Day with many Afternoon Teas and it was lovely to be part of that special celebration with you.

We are busy now getting ready to open the outside area for Easter, which will give us more seating with tables under the marquee as well as outside overlooking the stables and fields.

Our summer menu will launch too, with refreshing salads, homemade pizzas and we are very excited to start serving Carte D'or ice creams from the Store for takeaway customers and also the Tea Room customers to enjoy after their lunch with us.

Let's just hope for a beautiful summer like last year!

Liz and Team



BHCT Englefield lecture

Professor Nigel Saul is Emeritus Professor of Mediaeval History at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is a leading expert on mediaeval history and author of numerous books including *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England*, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages*, and *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England 1066-1500*. At the invitation of the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust, he will be speaking about the rich diversity of mediaeval churches in Berkshire, on Tuesday 2nd May, in the Long Gallery, Englefield House, 7pm for 7.30pm.

Tickets, £15 to include a glass of wine, are available from www.TicketSource.co.uk/Berkshire-Churches-Trust or by telephone 01628 482637.

Join us in 2023!

Burghfield Bowls Club would like to invite you to one of our Open Days, where you can try the sport of Lawn Bowls for free and without any obligation.



The club will be holding Open Days from 2:00pm - 5:00pm for prospective members on Sunday 23rd April, and then again on Monday 29th May. These are open sessions for people to visit our green in James Lane (behind the BCSA) and try the game. Please check our website www.burghfield.bowls-club.co.uk, email burghfieldbowls@btinternet.com, or ring David or Pat Glover on 0118 9833812 nearer the time to check the latest details. All you need do is bring along some flat shoes, as all other equipment is provided.

If you are unable to make any of these Open Days, feel free to contact us and we will arrange something.

Bowls is an easy sport to learn, and with our focused coaching program you could be playing in club matches within a few weeks. Every year several new bowlers find themselves playing in league matches in their first season. Others just play informal games with friends or join our regular Tuesday evening club nights. Bowls does not need excessive strength, speed or stamina, nor does it require an intensely competitive attitude. What Bowls does provide is moderate exercise in fresh air and in a sociable environment with moderate competitiveness that is ideal for both physical and mental health.

The club has planned a full fixture list for 2023 with friendly and league matches including mens, ladies and mixed events. We also run internal club competitions and organise social events which include skittles, barbeque, and candlelit bowls.

*Burghfield Bowls Club
James Lane, Burghfield, Reading RG30 3RS*

Clerk to the Governors

The position of Clerk to the Governors at Englefield School is still open. This is a part time role involving some daytime and some evening hours. See the school website for more information or ring the school office on 0118 9302337.



Anne Hallifax RIP

From the eulogy given by Anne's son, Tom, at her funeral at St Mark's on Friday 20th January.

My mother was born in 1934 and raised on the County Down coast and then at the much-loved family home of Beltrim in the Sperrin Mountains in Northern Ireland, one of five sisters and a brother. The Blakiston-Houston sisters cut something of a swathe through Northern Irish society, and I have met quite a few men of their generation who remember them with a misty look, though often without knowing exactly which was which.

My mother, though always elegant, was something of a tomboy in her youth, setting up a workshop in the cellar at Beltrim, where she learnt to make pots with locally dug clay, and to work with wood. She went on to work for Alan Caiger-Smith, of Aldermaston fame, when he was still in London, and she became a very skilled potter. She also worked as a furniture restorer and was a very fine china restorer. Sadly an excess of perfectionism as well as distractions (like us children) prevented her from exploiting these talents fully, though we still have the very well made stables, tack-room and truck that she constructed for Louisa's toy ponies.

Instead, she poured her love of hands-on creativity into gardening, becoming a real expert, and creating beautiful, romantic gardens at Scrag End (our childhood home), in the moat of the Round Tower at Windsor Castle where we lived, and on a small scale at the Brewhouse when she and my father moved to Englefield in 1992. The intensity of her involvement in the garden, and the nature of the garden at Scrag End, with its many little wildernesses, meant that our childhood was often blissfully free range, our usual outfit of choice being wellington boots and nothing else. But there was always a plate of hot-buttered marmite toast with a glass of milk on the lawn at teatime, and she was deeply involved with her children's lives, as I have been reminded by going through some of her letters to my father recently. Those letters were often their only contact for months when he was away at sea, while she looked after the household on her own. Her fierce independence meant that she did this with considerable determination and style, while an aversion to systems, punctuality and, sometimes, logic, meant that life often veered into amiable chaos.

She was a true eccentric, and this contradiction was one of many. She was both practical and chaotic, incredibly stubborn but full of self doubt, deeply kind and occasionally alarmingly insensitive; she had a firm respect for social conventions and hierarchies, but was constitutionally entirely unconventional and egalitarian, which gave her a great interest in everyone she met, young or old, wherever they were from. Sometimes a little testing when you were trying to order a meal and she

insisted in getting a full set of opinions, and possibly a full family history, from the waiter, but invaluable in her role supporting my father in his public life; her interest and charm were completely genuine and I think everyone she met felt that.

These qualities were also invaluable in her amazing work, after my father died, as president of the Motor Neurone Disease Association; her kindness, charm and determination meant that she was able to raise huge amounts of funding for the MNDA, while also personally giving emotional and practical support to the sufferers of this cruel disease and their families. I believe her own experience of the illness, as she almost single-handedly cared for my father, gave her an understanding and empathy that was a very great help to many people in the most difficult circumstances imaginable.

She faced the great trials of her own life- the early death of her adored son Matt, and the illness and premature death of the husband to whom she was utterly devoted - with extraordinary stoicism, helped by her clear and simple faith, and by the support of the many, many friendships that her kind attention to others brought her. I can only hope and pray that she is re-united with those who went before her, as she firmly believed that she would be.



The sight of Anne on her tricycle was familiar to everyone who lived in Englefield as she cycled up and down the drive right up until the week she died and, adorned with flowers, it was displayed in the church during her funeral.



RDA cake and plant sale

Newbury Riding for the Disabled is based at Hampstead Norreys next door to The Living Rainforest. The charity is dedicated to providing riding as physical therapy to local children with special needs.

We will be holding our popular annual Plant and Cake Sale in Yattendon by kind permission of Yattendon Estate and the Village Stores. The sale will be held on Wednesday 10th May from 9.30am to 11.30am.

The cakes are all home baked by RDA volunteers and supporters and all the plants for sale have been reared from seed or cuttings from our gardens. If any local gardeners have surplus cuttings or seedlings to offer us at the beginning of May we would be most grateful. Please contact me if you would like more information about the charity or the sale. We hope to see you on 10th May.

Jo Stevenson-Hamilton
jo@hayfieldhouse.net

Berkshire Young Farmers Club

What a night we had for Pancake Evening with the Club! Close to 90 pancakes were made, flipped and consumed. Much fun was had by all as we supported British Farming by using only British ingredients for the evening.

We had a great turnout of members for our Stock Judging refresher with Steve Waters at Rushall Farm. Assessing and grading livestock and giving reasons for those assessments is a great YFC skill, but also utilises public speaking and communication skills and builds confidence. Obviously at this time of year members HAD to have a cuddle with the lambs...

All our teams had been training hard to hone their Public Speaking skills for the Area Competitions and our members excelled themselves, winning the Reading, Speaking and Braintrust classes! The Speaking team scored an amazing 100% and all three teams qualified for the National Finals. Members have also visited Vicars Game in Yattendon for a butchery demonstration and in the coming weeks will be getting prepared for Stock Judging comps and the Berkshire Country Fayre on May 7th at Newbury Showground.

Bradfield YFC meets at Milehouse Farm every Wednesday evening. Contact Gordon Fletcher gffletcher@drorganic.co.uk or follow the Club on social media.



Deanery talks

The series of events for 2023, organised by the Deanery Spiritual Development Group, continues with Baptist Minister and author, Richard Littledale, speaking on 'Finding God in the Garden', on Thursday 27th April at All Saints Church in Upper Bucklebury.

Richard now lives in North Wales but has family in Newbury. He has recently published a book by the same name (*Tales from an Under Gardener: Finding God in the Garden*, Authentic Media, 2021).

Rev Peter Dewey will lead another quiet day of meditation at Goring Heath on Thursday 6th July. More details to follow. And finally, advance notice that the poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest and academic, Malcolm Guite, is coming to speak on 'A poetic journey through the Psalms', on Thursday 19th October, 7.30pm, at Bradfield College (by kind arrangements of Peter Hansell). Malcolm is also a regular *Church Times* contributor.

Let's Talk Theology will resume in person in the summer term at Sulhamstead. Please contact Carol Boulter if you would like to join this group exploring current issues of faith and life (carolboulter@ntlworld.com, 0118 9303182).

Carol Boulter

Changes to the way we vote

On Thursday 4th May there will be elections in this area to elect councillors to West Berkshire Council and local town and parish councils. The government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station and this new requirement will apply for the first time at these elections.

Many people may already have a form of photo ID that is acceptable. This could include your passport, driving licence, blue badge, certain concessionary travel cards, identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme), Biometric Immigration document, defence identity card and certain national identity cards.

The provision of a polling card alone will not entitle you to vote.

More information is available on the Electoral Commission website, www.electoralcommission.org.uk, or you can call their helpline on 0800 328 0280. If you do not a valid photo ID you can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

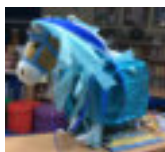


From Englefield Primary School

'Sowing the Seeds for a Flourishing Future'

At Englefield it's been a busy Spring Term with a lots of enrichment activities on top of classroom learning.

We have a House system, with the Houses being named after Greek Gods: Athena, Demeter, Hermes and Poseidon. This term the House Captains came up with the idea of making 3D mascots to represent their Houses. They had great fun working together and the mascots look great!



Our new ECO group has set up a litter-picking rota to keep our school grounds looking nice. Great job!

All pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 recently had a taste of judo with Jason from Southern School of Judo. Some of the benefits of judo include getting fitter, learning values and having fun with friends. Jason runs a weekly club before school so some of pupils

do this activity on a regular basis.

Early in February, ten of our Year 5 pupils headed off to Elstree School to watch a French play. It was a clever mix of French and English which helped the children to understand what was going on. A huge thank you to Elstree for inviting us.



We are so delighted that over half term work began on Ruby's Garden. Ruby, the younger sister of one of our pupils, sadly died last year following an illness. In the short time that the Englefield community knew Ruby she touched us all with her bravery and resilience and her family wanted us to have a

permanent memorial in her name. The redevelopment of our allotment area, with all the work being undertaken by Ruby's family and their friends, has been an incredible transformation and something that the school and children will enjoy using for many years to come.



To celebrate our Book Week, author and illustrator, Mark Robertson, came in to talk to the whole school and then gave a workshop to each class. The talk included information about how Mark gets his inspiration for his stories, the story-writing process and how to be a good illustrator. The FS2 children enjoyed a story time then the other classes learned how to draw a dragon...such detailed pictures. At the end of the day, Mark signed books for the children...the queue went out the door!

The whole school also enjoyed a wonderful final to our poetry performance competition. Over half term, every child in school learned a poem which they then performed in front of their class. The best from each class were selected to perform to the whole school plus our two judges: Mr Chris Gittins (Chair of Governors) and Reverend Julia Myles. All fourteen finalists performed brilliantly and the judges had some very tough decisions to make. In the end, our five winners were: Ben, Austin, Ella and Ryleigh. Well done to them and all our finalists.



We also had two competitions for Book Week: Mrs Kelley's 'guess the character from the silhouette' competition and a great dressing-up competition for wooden spoons. The children dressed up a spoon as their favourite book character and then went into a prize draw to win a book. Some of the spoons were really creative.

We recently had our church school inspection (SIAMS) and we are delighted to have been awarded 'good'. Some of the comments in the report were particularly pleasing (the full report is on our school website):

There is a deep feeling of togetherness and love at Englefield.

...rich opportunities for spiritual development.

The school's use of 'therapeutic thinking' results in good behaviour and pupils are able to make positive choices.

Collective worship is a joyful and uplifting experience for pupils and staff alike.

Englefield's vision encompasses everything the school stands for, empowering everyone to succeed.

This is making a difference to the lives of all pupils and adults.

We are still looking for a Clerk for our Governing Body. This is a part time position and would suit someone who works part time or who is looking to get back into the world of work after a career break. The hours range from day time meetings to some evening meetings so some flexibility is essential. Please see further information on our school website or contact the office.

Finally, Pebbles, the school tortoise, has come out of hibernation; he has been in the fridge for the past 22 weeks! He slowly warmed up and then had a bath to re-hydrate. He enjoyed sitting under his basking lamp which will help him to warm right through and give him more energy. He isn't ready to eat yet but hopefully will start this in the next two or three days. The children were delighted to see him back in school and now look forward to taking him home at the weekends...some warmer weather would be appreciated!



Hilary Latimer, Headteacher



Eastertime at Five A Day

Our wonderful gardening volunteers are back in the garden with a vengeance cutting the willow whips and hazel which is on sale directly from the garden on Tuesday-Friday mornings, from 10am to 12.30pm. Cash only please. We are also selling wreaths ready to decorate for Easter that can be purchased from the garden. Enquiries can be made by emailing the address below.

PALS will be visiting Five A Day over the Easter holidays and the schools return from April.

We ran some very successful willow workshops making obelisks for the garden. These proved very popular as shown by the big smiles in our photo!

Our rhubarb will be ready to crop soon and for sale in the garden and at Englefield Garden Centre.

We have recently started running weekend gardening sessions on Saturdays for families or those who work. The sessions will eventually run twice monthly during the warmer months.

The seating has been completed in our new shed ready for everyone including schools, the Thyme Together group, workshop participants, corporate groups and anyone else who enjoys the garden. Huge thanks to Ian for his hard work!

If you are interested in any of the items mentioned, volunteering or know of a business which supports staff volunteering please email info@fiveaday.org.uk or call 07555 184343. Please leave a contact number where you can be reached.

Wendy Cadman, Five A Day committee member
<https://fiveaday.org.uk/>



Spring in the air at Rushall Farm

There is more than an air of spring at Rushall Farm today. With extra help this year Farmer Steve is ploughing and preparing the land for planting wheat and barley. Oats are already in the ground and have been growing since last November. At harvest these will be sold for porridge and cereal bars. The wheat goes for bread making as long as the protein is high enough and it is sufficiently stretchy when made into dough; the barley with its wispy ears is used for malting and beer. Lambing of the second group of 300 ewes is just starting and it has been a successful time calving the first 30 cows. Winter has been interesting, with the hard frosts wiping out kale and turnip crops usually used to finish last year's lambs, coupled with silage stocks being tight.

But what a lovely time spring is, with lambs gambolling for the pure joy of being alive. The woodlands are ringing with bird song as well as a flurry of activity nest building and providing food for their young. You can actually stand and watch buds bursting into leaf AND the succession of wild flowers; snowdrops, celandines, wood anemones, yellow archangel and, of course the intoxicating smell and sight of carpets of bluebells. All have to 'perform' by absorbing as much energy from the sun as possible before the canopy of leaves from the overhead trees dominates the scene.

It is not just spring in the air on the farm and woodlands, but a busy time for school visits, camps and another season about to start with events at the Manor site. Yesterday it was little ones learning about where their food comes from. It was cold but try suppressing the excitement and fun of being out of the classroom for a day, to include a tractor and trailer ride. An older group were not convinced it was cool to wear waders. They had constructed rafts plus a teddy and now it was time to test their efforts on the water. They returned knowing more about themselves, maritime engineering, what else lives in the River Pang and that wearing waders was OK!



John Bishop
www.rushallfarm.org.uk



Schools Days 2023

Preparations for the annual Englefield Estate Schools Days are well underway. This year's dates are Wednesday 14th and Thursday 16th June 2023.

The broad theme of the event is Sustainability - the ability to meet current needs without infringing on the capacity of future generations to meet their needs. Children will learn about a range of topics, including growing trees, conserving water, producing renewable energy and growing arable crops.

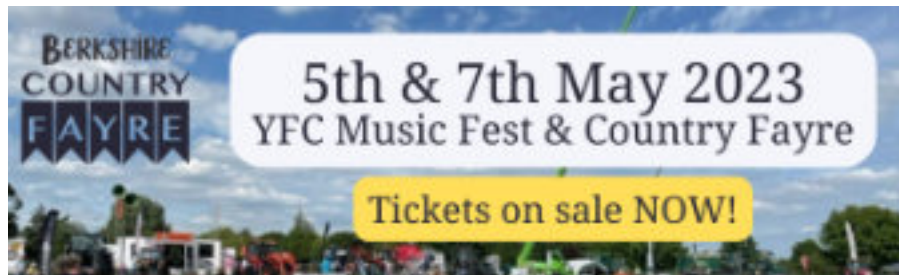
Our staff are busy preparing, and amazing local organisations such as Butterfly Conservation, Small Fire Big Adventures, Action for the River Kennet and the Museum of English Rural Life are also taking part.

Classes will be diverted away from The Street while on foot to maximise safety, but please could residents take extra care and be patient when driving on these dates.

We'd like to make you aware that coaches and minibuses carrying schoolchildren will be present at the start and end of the days, with particularly busy times between 9:00-10:00am and 2:00-3:00pm. We ask that you kindly avoid parking along The Street, which should be much easier now the new car park is in operation. Following the morning school run, essential areas will be coned off to ensure access.

Please keep your fingers crossed for fair weather. Once again, we are fully booked with over 1,500 children due to attend and want them all to have a lovely day at Englefield!

Dr Liz Mattison, Education & Environment Officer



BLUEBELL WALKS AT RUSHALL FARM

Come and enjoy a family walk
in the bluebell woods at Rushall Manor
Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd April
Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th April
11am - 5pm



Walks up to 5 miles
Wheelchair access to bluebells
Family fun in the Barn
Free treasure Hunt for Kids
Refreshments - home-made cakes
Hot & cold food
Donation of £5 adults/£3 children
(sorry, no card payments)
All proceeds to the
Reading Multiple Sclerosis Society



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Old Village Houses

Even before 1800 when the main part of the village of Englefield still lay along what is now the private drive to Englefield House there were a few scattered houses on what is now the village street. These houses still remain and some are listed by Historic England.



One of these early houses is number 10 in The Street, shown here, sometimes said to be the earliest house still standing in the village and supposedly dating from 1760 because of that date on a plaque on the front of the house in what looks like a blocked-up window. The presence of an apparent bricked-up window opening is popularly taken to indicate a window blocked up to avoid



Window Tax, which came into force in 1696. Initially, the tax came into effect when there were more than ten windows, but this 'window' would only have been a seventh in 1760 so would not have been taxed anyway, although the threshold was reduced to six windows in 1766. This supposition is demonstrably not necessarily true anyway because the next-door number 9, which until 2017 had just such a feature, was not built until some 30 years after the tax was repealed in 1851.

Actually, there are several clues to suggest an even earlier date than 1760. The side wall facing the road is constructed with brickwork having alternate courses of bricks all laid as 'headers' (bricks laid with the end outwards) and those all laid as 'stretchers' (with the side outwards), called 'English bond'. The front of the building, including the 'window' where the 1760 plaque is situated, is constructed with 'Flemish bond' brickwork (alternate headers and stretchers in each course), which is supposed to have superseded English bond in the late 17th century.

The catslide roof down over the single-storey larder at the rear and the low ceiling height of the other ground floor rooms might well indicate that the original building was entirely single-storey, as many pre-18th century cottages were, and it had an upper storey added later, at which time the house had a new front built, perhaps that was in 1760.

Both English and Flemish bond gave solid walls of two leaves tied together by the headers but (as many will know) these were prone to penetration of damp and near the end of the 19th century cavity walls were introduced with two separate leaves all as stretchers with an air space between them and the linking provided by metal ties. The style of brickwork might therefore be used to date houses very roughly but appearances can be deceptive. For example, the vestry under the church tower (built in 1868) is in English bond inside and Partridge Gardens, built in the 21st century long after cavity walls became a legal requirement, appears to be



in Flemish bond – a deception achieved by the use of ‘snapped headers’, ie half bricks laid to give the appearance of a full header while maintaining the air gap.

Number 1, shown here, is another of the early houses and is listed as ‘early 18th century’ so would be older than number 10 if that indeed dated from only 1760. It is perhaps the house featured in a newspaper advertisement in 1782: a ‘modern-built sashed house with coach house and stables for four horses’ in the Street and standing in half an acre

of ground with two and a half acres of pasture adjoining. The accommodation then consisted of ‘...two parlours, kitchen, stores, servants’ hall, pantry, brew house, cellars, six bedrooms, lobby and four garrets’. It may also be the ‘Georgian house (probably for the Agent)’ referred to by Betjeman in 1949. In the middle decades of the 19th century, at least, it was the Crown Inn.

Like number 10 it is built sideways on to the road, a characteristic of early houses, and also like number 10 shows different styles of brickwork. In this case the bricks to the left of the chimney breast in the wall facing the road are laid in Flemish bond while on the right of the chimney and on the front of the house the bricks are laid in header bond with rusticated quoins. A plan of 1822 appears to show the house to have a considerably larger footprint than it does now, so perhaps it was later reduced in size and re-fronted. Header bond seems to have been the popular style for houses built around the outskirts of the estate in the 1830s and 40s.

Number 4/5 dates from the mid-18th century too, according to the listing. Interestingly, the front is in header bond, apparently the style copied for many of the early ‘new-builds’ outside the village thought to date from the 1820s to 40s, such as Parker’s Corner Lodge, Bostock Lodges and some houses in Ufton. Sometimes the side and rear walls that are not normally seen are in Flemish Bond, which used fewer bricks and hence was cheaper. Aaron Grey, a shoemaker (or cordwainer), originally from Yattendon, was trading at number 5 by 1841 and until his death in 1883.

One building from the old village days, although unlike the others it is not listed by Historic England, is what became the old school at what is now Number 11/12. In 1762 before it became a school it was owned by Thomas Horne and consisted only of the two-storey middle section of the modern house, parallel to the road, and a single-storey projection towards the road that later became the schoolroom. It remained in this form until after the new school was opened in 1863 but by the end of the century had been divided into two houses with an upper storey added to the school room (obvious from the different styles of brickwork on the gable facing the road) and a whole new wing built at the back.

Richard Smith

Reflections

Thoughts for the week

These reflections are just some of the short commentaries that are compiled by Aldo Guiducci each week on the readings in church. They are all available, week by week, on the pew sheets and on the church website.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother... he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son’ (John 19: 25-27)

On Mothering Sunday, it is fitting that our passage focuses in on those last moments of Jesus on the cross. John tells us that Mary, Jesus’ mother, was one of the onlookers stood near the cross. What a terrible experience that must have been for her: to look upon the son she had given birth to and raised, watched over and cared for all these years, now hanging in agony as he waited to die a cruel and shameful death. To see her boy condemned on false charges and sentenced to death must have been heartbreaking.

In spite of his own suffering, Jesus’ compassion still finds its focus in those around him. Towards the end of his life, he asks his disciple John, ‘the one whom Jesus loved’, to take the widow Mary in as if she were his own mother, thereby assuring her of shelter and protection in a society in which such widows were frequently disadvantaged and at risk. Equally, he asks Mary to regard John as if he were her own son. They will be able to comfort one another in the grief that will be theirs, before they encounter Jesus risen once more.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5 v 6-8)

It has been said that until you find something worth dying for, you aren’t really living. What would you die for? Through the years, numerous people have sacrificed themselves for their country, for loved ones, for noble ideals. It makes those left alive pause and reflect, as the sacrificial act reveals much about the character and motivation of the person who died.

Self-sacrifice is a big deal, Paul is saying. Christ’s sacrifice is on a whole other level. God’s love dwarfs the very best examples of self-sacrificial love that we can think of, because Christ willingly died for us while we were his enemies. Far from being a righteous person that somebody might dare to die for, each of us was God’s enemy, living in active rebellion and hostility against him, when Jesus chose to die in our stead.

This should humble us as we reflect on it – firstly, that we were spiritually in far worse shape than we probably thought, and secondly that Jesus willingly died for us in the full knowledge of the state we were in. If we have understood this amazing good news, the only appropriate response is to bow down in wonder and praise him for what he has done.



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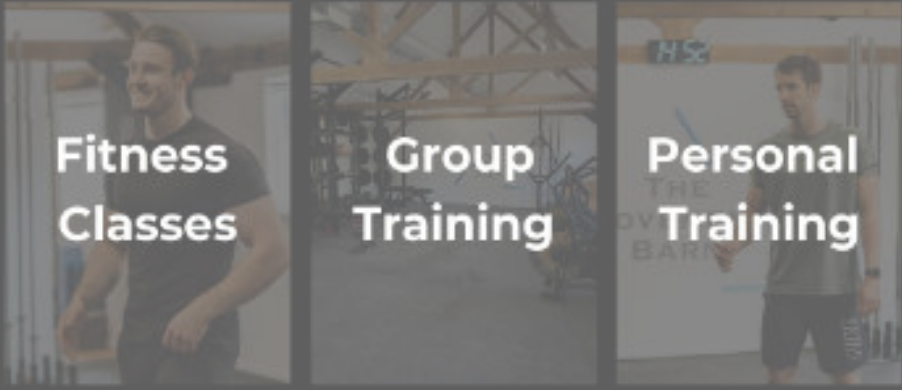
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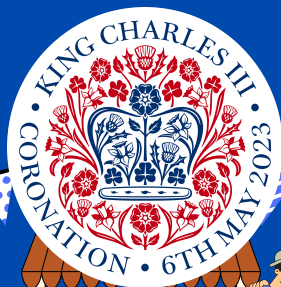
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