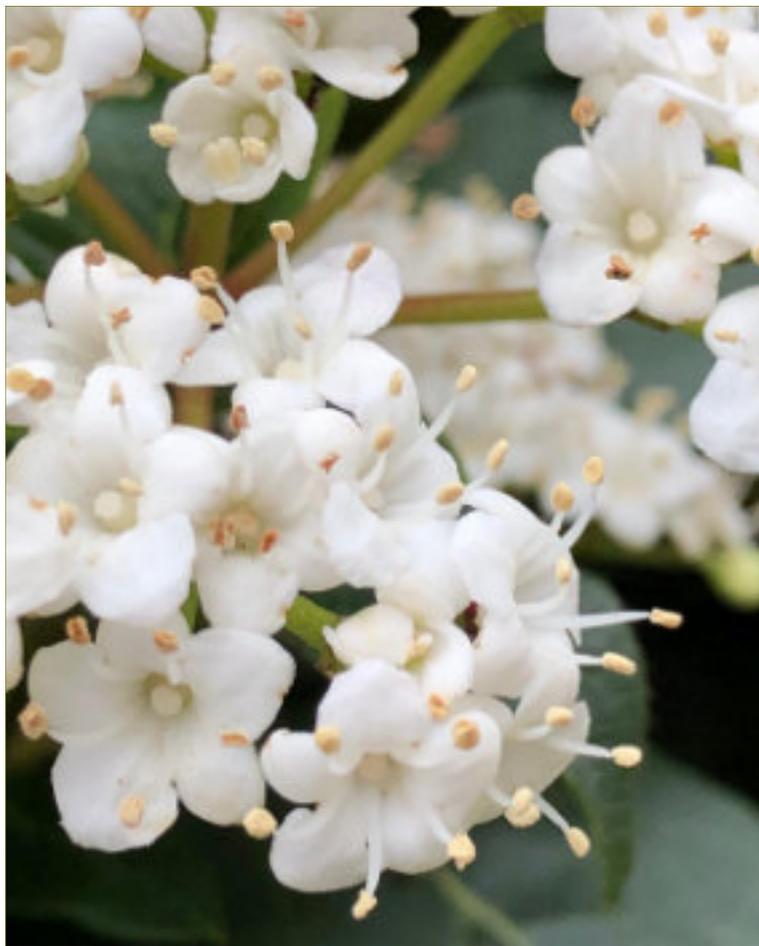


Englefield

Parish News

February - March 2023



The Parish of St Mark's, Englefield

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rector@stmarksenglefield.org.uk

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Nia Rands

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

Front cover: *The promise of spring blossom - an early flowering viburnum photographed in Englefield by @carolynmc_photography.*

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!

It was so good to meet so many of you over the Christmas period! I wonder what you do in the New Year?

For the last few years, every January, I go on a retreat for two days at St Bruno's, Worth Abbey. This year the theme was Wisdom. In a way, any retreat aims to gain wisdom because it involves listening of various kinds...and listening always brings some kind of wisdom.

We listened deeply to one another, to our own hearts and our bodies. We tried to stop the chatter in our minds. We listened to God in different ways and we listened

'Listen with the ear of your heart...'

St Benedict

to one of the Benedictine monks about wisdom. It was a pearl a minute! He spoke of the Prologue to 'The Rule of St Benedict' that they live by. It says 'Listen with the ear of your heart'. It is a deeper listening than we are used to doing in everyday life. He spoke of learning to engage with and trying to understand one's own irrational fears, not to beat them down, because that's where they came from and sending them back down will only cause more problems. He told us how the repeated times of prayer and the three vows, of stability (to always remain in the same community), conversion (to change within) and obedience (to God and the Abbot), combine to result in a holistic, creative balance. 'Positive things happen when we are in balance', he said, 'and when we are not, things go all over the place!'

'Listening is the beginning of wisdom'

When asked about wisdom in his practical experience, he said, 'Times of the most growth are the times of the most challenge and feeling the pressure'. He was honest and down to earth, saying that wisdom came when he took responsibility for things, not because he had been told to: a 'positive obedience'.

'Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom'

Aristotle

He recounted how he and another novice as 'hating each other's guts' and after six months he got to crisis pitch of wanting to grab the other and smash him against the wall! He told the Abbot 'I have to leave!'. The wise Abbot said, 'Okay, but do one thing for me. Give it three days'. The monk told us, 'Those three days were long! ...Long enough to realise that I needed to change.'

A Benedictine monk's advice for gaining wisdom?
Listen with the ear of your heart - Find your balance - Be ready to change yourself
And if in doubt... 'Give it three days!'



A beautiful 'wise' owl at a recent wedding!

Your Rector, Julia

Diary dates

West Berkshire Mobile Library: Wednesday 15th February, 8th and 29th March, outside the Old Fire Station Nursery, Englefield, 2pm to 2.25pm.

Let's Talk Theology: Wednesday 8th February and 8th March, 7.30pm, on Zoom, contact carolboulter@lukers.org.uk to be added to the mailing list.

Ash Wednesday: February 22nd, service of communion, 6.30pm, St Mark's.

Mothering Sunday: March 19th, family service, 10.30am at St Mark's.

St Mark's PCC meetings: Monday 30th January, 6.30pm; Saturday 4th March, Prayer and Planning, 9.30 - 12.30; Monday 27th March, 6.30pm.

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 Lucinda Atkinson and Charlie Walker married at St Mark's on Saturday 3rd December.

To Abbie Frain and Robin Lawrence married at St Mark's on Saturday 17th December.

To Andrea Kean and Richard Kirby married at St Mark's on Friday 23rd December.

Lent

Shrove Tuesday is on February 21st this year and Lent begins on Ash Wednesday the following day. There will be a short reflective communion service with 'ashing' at 6.30 that evening, at St Mark's. All are welcome.

Mothering Sunday is on March 19th and Easter Day is Sunday 9th April.

RIP

Marjorie Metcalfe who died on December 6th and whose funeral was held at St Mark's on Tuesday 20th December.

Annie Stone who died on December 13th and whose funeral was held at St Mark's on Friday 6th January.

Anne Hallifax who died on December 16th and whose funeral was held at St Mark's on Friday 20th January.

Dick Kennedy who died on January 1st and whose funeral was held at St Mark's on Thursday 26th January.

Clerk to the Governors

There is a vacancy for a new Clerk to Governors at Englefield School. This is a part time role involving some daytime and some evening hours. More information is available on the school website - <https://www.englefieldprimary.co.uk/job-opportunities/> - and the closing date for applications is February 3rd.



Happy New Year!

December was full of Christmas cheer in the Tea rooms, serving Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, puddings, quizzes and a sing song. It was lovely to serve so many people with their friends to help celebrate a very special time of year. We enjoyed having regular faces alongside new faces as well as our Englefield neighbours and the Garden Centre gang for their works do - what a great bunch they are!

I went along to the school's Christmas play and it was so lovely to watch the children and all their hard work - thanks so much for the invitation.

We have been so busy this new year, decorating the Tea Room. The new kitchen was installed late last year but we have now decorated the seating area with some beautiful bespoke Englefield wallpaper and new furniture. We look forward to welcoming everyone back from January 23rd onward.

Liz & Team

Farewell and welcome

At the end of last year, we bid farewell to Andrew Rowland who relocated to the north of England following six successful years at Englefield.

We are delighted that Harriet Thresh will join us in the role of Rural Estate Surveyor from 27th February 2023. For the past four years, Harriet has been working as Estate Manager at the Berkeley Castle Estate in Gloucestershire. Prior to that, Harriet worked for Strutt & Parker in its Canterbury office, where she qualified as a chartered surveyor in 2017. We very much look forward to welcoming Harriet to Englefield.

James Meade, Head of Rural Property & Land



Loving home needed

Marme (Marmelade) is hoping to find a new loving home in Englefield, after Lady Anne's sad passing. Marme is just turning two, and is the sweetest little ginger girl cat. She is spayed and microchipped. Marme is very playful, so affectionate, and is an adorable companion!

Please phone Michèle 07512 027473 (Garden House, Englefield).



St Mark's on Facebook

If you are on Facebook do follow the link below to the new 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>.

World Day of Prayer 2023

This year's event, an ecumenical day of prayer across the world, is being led by the women of Taiwan on the theme of 'I have heard about your faith', from St Paul's letter to the Ephesians (chapter 1, v 15). There will be a service locally at St Mary's Church, Sulhamstead, on Friday 3rd March at 2pm, with refreshments after the service. All are welcome.



For more details please contact 07443 578614.

Dinah Perkins

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



Annie Stone RIP

From the eulogy given by Annie's son, Christopher, at her funeral at St Mark's on January 6th.

Annie was an extraordinarily brave person. Her courage and perseverance through suffering was astonishing - she never complained. She knew that God had purpose in everything. Her gracious wisdom, honed through a lifetime of Christian devotion, was invaluable to so many. Annie always joked about being a mistake – her brother and sister were 16 and 12 when she was born! She therefore grew up more like an only child and when her sister, Vera, died in a bike accident it made her childhood at home all the more lonely. But Annie

thrived at school and went on to study at the Royal Free School of Medicine. One of only three girls in her year! In 1952 she married Peter, our dad, who was studying architecture.

It was in 1954 that Annie experienced a transforming moment in her life - Billy Graham, the American evangelist, came to London on Mission and she and Peter went to hear him speak. That day she committed her life to Christ. Nicky was born in 1955 whilst Annie was still a medical student. It was also the year that Britain was experiencing a polio epidemic. When Annie contracted polio she became paralysed in both legs, her back and one arm. Her recovery was a long process but through prayer and fortitude she recovered some movement. The agonising decision she then made was to give up medicine and focus on raising her family. Fitty, myself and Tina then followed and our childhood years were magical, full of love, joy and our fair share of adventures! Annie was an exceptional organiser. She and Peter etched lifelong memories of happiness for us children - we were blessed.

1974 brought a bombshell to Annie – after 25 years of marriage Peter wanted a divorce and Annie entered a deeply sad period of her life. A failed second marriage followed which devastated her further. But as we know Annie was brave and her faith held her up. She never allowed her inner sadness to infect us children but it was an intensely challenging time. With God's strength she did however turn this time into a period of great Christian growth. Her church here in Englefield became a central plank in her life. The friendships across this community, some of which spanned over 50 years, were wonderful to witness. Tidmarsh Grange played a major part in this and her hospitality was legendary. She recognised this as a gifting and shared her home all the more. She also continued to support us four children and her many grandchildren in astonishingly selfless ways. For Annie, joy was not a product of her circumstances, she displayed it despite the challenges and poured bucket loads of

that joy into our lives. A whole new chapter began for Annie in the 1990's. The clouds cleared when David Stone came into her life. They were married in 1992 and we all felt the warmth of the wider Stone family. These were happy times. Their move to Flowers Court Coach House in 1994 gave them an exciting building project to create a new home together. We all continued to experience wonderful hospitality, but enhanced all the more through David. Annie and David's final move back to a flat at Tidmarsh Grange in 2009 was timely. Annie's stroke in 2010 was just another hurdle to overcome, and again, with God's strength and her determination, she prevailed. In 2014 David passed away and Annie felt the loss enormously. Her mobility was faltering but that did not deter her. She was widely known as a 'Prayer Warrior' and she continued to be that until her very last day. The reassurance so many of us felt that Annie had us on her prayer list was incredible. Through these last few years Annie was supported by amazing care from Cathy. To witness their friendship and Cathy's professionalism was exceptionally special. In her final hours Annie's peace was an encouragement to us all as she spoke clearly of seeing the Holy Spirit and many people with twinkling eyes welcoming her. Annie was an incredible mother, grandmother and great grandmother. When she listened, we felt heard. She was always interested in the details of our lives and those of our friends and their children. We had lively conversations around domestic and international news and the impact of that news on future generations. She was always there for us. Love was her constant. She was grace in action. An encourager. She never let disability define her. We loved her deeply. God's good and faithful servant, rest in peace and rise in glory.

Thank you

We are so grateful to all at St Marks for the extraordinary amount of care and kindness that you have given us over the funeral for Annie.

We as a family have been coming to worship at Englefield for over 50 years; the girls were married from here, our children have enjoyed Sunday school here and over those years we have watched Annie through so many ups and down loved and supported by this church family.

Her funeral was absolutely as she wanted, she had chosen the readings, hymns and the prayers and wanted Robert Slipper, from her new home, and Julia from here to be involved. Thank you all, for the music, the incredible flowers and the live stream which enabled over 100 further people to be there.

At the Sunday service on 11th December she saw you all turn to look at the live stream camera...that was a very special moment for her, thank you.

Nicky, Fitty, Christopher and Tina

Marjorie Metcalfe RIP

On December 6th Marjorie died at the age of 97. A lady of tremendous resolve, her determination was evident throughout her life from the perusal of her career as a speech therapist, to her role as a naval officer's wife and latterly in dealing with her great loss when her husband Tony died.

When they left the Royal Navy, she and Tony became members of the Pangbourne College community, and bought their much loved house in North Street. This allowed them to put down roots in the area from which they drew strength for the rest of their lives. Many good friends were made and St Mark's and Englefield became an important focus. Both daughters were married in the church, three grandchildren christened, one confirmed and many Christmas and Easter services were attended with the whole family.

Eventually the house became too much for her and she moved to a retirement village in Henley where she received excellent care and remained quintessentially herself until the end. May she rest in peace.

Julia Ogunyemi



Berkshire Young Farmers Club

Bradfield YFC members had a busy festive period with talks on photography and deer stalking, a stall at the Bradfield market and a trip to Yattendon Estate's Christmas Barn, not to mention the Club Christmas party and a festive film night. January has made a fantastic start to the year as our older members were treated to a First Aid Evening from Laura of Resus

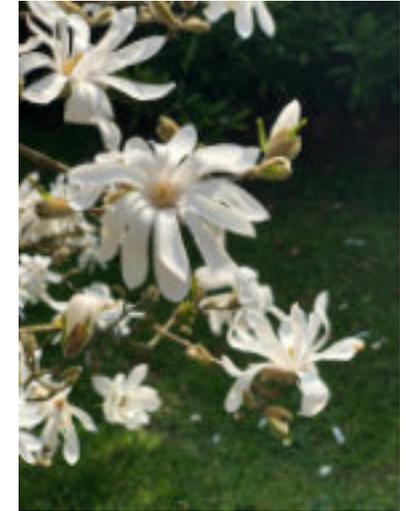
ABC. Basic Life Saving first aid was demonstrated and practised. Hopefully our members will never need to use it, but now they have some idea of what to do in an emergency and how to locate and use a publicly accessible defibrillator. We have had a games night at Bradfield Social Club – pool, darts, cards and a chance for the members and parents to have a drink and a social catch up.

Members practised hard for the Public Speaking and Member of the Year competitions. Bradfield had entries in every section. What a set of results and what an amazing display of performances our members put in - a clean sweep across every competition! The Club is now preparing to take part in the County Sports day and we're getting ready to host the County Stock judging competitions in April and before we know it everyone will be looking forward to the Berks YFC Music Fest and Country Fayre in May.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Club Leader Gordon Fletcher on 07939 504145 or you can follow the Club exploits on Facebook.

Notes from the Englefield Garden team

Snow drops and winter aconite bloom in the woodland in January; Iris reticulata, Cyclamen coum and Leucojum vernum create carpets of colour in February; Scilla and Chionodoxa give us little jewels in March; these are just some of the spring flowering bulbs to look out for in the gardens here. We all look forward to daffodils and tulips from April onwards but if you haven't planted your tulip and daffodil bulbs yet (November is the best month generally!) you can still put them in before the end of January for a spring flowering.



At Englefield we are winter pruning our roses, so if you are looking for a task outside on a cold but sunny day then sharpen up those secateurs and tackle them before they come into leaf bud!

The winter garden of daphne, winter honeysuckle and Cornus alba will soon make way for the spring flowering camellias with the largest planting being found near the pebble mosaic garden. Don't miss the magnolia trees in April, fingers crossed we don't get any frost when the flowers are out as it will shorten their life! However, they are also beautiful with the upright, soft, fur-like buds in place on the branches long before they open. In May the stream is backed by stunning blooms of azalea shrubs planted in 1936, it is truly a riot of colours; these are complimented by the bluebells.

It may be too late to remind you by the time you get this magazine, but 27th to 29th January are the dates this year for the RSPB's bird count. You can take part by: watching the birds around you for one hour; counting how many of each species of bird land on your patch; and going online and reporting your results. There's lots more information on the website <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>.

Sue Broughton, Head Gardener

Getting ready for the start of the season

Well Christmas and New year have been and gone and now seem like a distant past. At the Garden Centre, we have spent a lot of time getting ready for the new season, cleaning greenhouses and getting them prepped for the start of the season. Our seed potatoes have arrived and already started selling fast (don't worry we have plenty). We have 4,000 herbaceous plant plugs due in any minute now so the team and the people we support are busy filling pots ready and also putting labels on the pots too.



Also this year we have managed to source a fantastic supplier for our starter plant range (as seen here) which means for those of you who like to grow your own plants we have a fantastic variety to choose from this year. We look forward to seeing what you can grow yourselves. These will be ready from mid February. We will of course be growing all our own bedding again this season with lots of help from our fantastic workshop team of people we support who enjoy pricking out and making up trays. See you all soon.

Austin, Garden Centre Manager



Can you help?

We desperately need volunteers to help at our shops, drive our vans and assist in admin tasks. Whether young or old, in or out of work, you could help serve the people of Reading in many practical ways.

Just a few hours a week can make a huge difference, easing the workload on our personnel and reaching out to people in your local community. We need volunteers to help serve in the shops, to train as assessors in the Support Centres. Van drivers and able-bodied crew members are needed to collect and deliver furniture. The following skills are always needed: Administration, IT, painting, decorating, plumbing, electrical work, Public Relations and Human Resources. You can also download an application form from our website www.ccam.org.uk/ volunteering or contact the office on 0118 951 2336 or email mail@ccam.org.uk for an application form.

Deanery diary dates

There is an exciting schedule of lectures planned for 2023. In March, date to be confirmed, Adam Boulter will speak from France on Zoom on 'Art for Theology: Painting and Spirituality'.

Baptist Minister and author, Richard Littledale, will be speaking on 'God in the Garden' on Thursday 27th April at All Saints Church in Upper Bucklebury.

Finally there will be a chance to hear the poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest and academic, Malcolm Guite, who will speak on 'A poetic journey through the Psalms', on Thursday 19th October at Bradfield College.



Kick start the New Year at Cobbs

'Beet' winter with fresh seasonal produce from Cobbs! Eating more fruit and vegetables is the easiest way to get back on track with a healthy lifestyle. Here is a list of what seasonal produce is at its best at this time of year:

February: fruit - apples (end of the season), clementines (end of the season), kiwi fruit, lemons, oranges, passion fruit, pears, and pomegranate; vegetables - cauliflower, celeriac, kale, leeks, mushrooms, parsnips, potatoes, purple sprouting broccoli, rhubarb, shallots, swedes, and turnips.

March: fruit - kiwi fruit, lemons, oranges, passion fruit, and pomegranates; vegetables - cauliflower, celeriac, leeks, peppers, purple sprouting broccoli, rhubarb, shallots, spinach, and spring onions.

Purée goodness: smoothies are a really easy way of making sure you squeeze in those all-important '5 a day' - great for people on the go and great tasting too! Our frozen fruit from Field Fare is perfect for popping into your smoothie makers. And if you don't have time to 'squeeze' in a homemade smoothie, pop into our café and we'll make one for you! We have a delicious range of smoothies and specialty tea from Canton Tea (the UK's most premium tea supplier) that would make a great, healthy alternative to your usual coffee this winter. Our vitamin-boosting, vegan-friendly smoothies are available all year round.

The Cobbs team



From Englefield Primary School

'Sowing the Seeds for a Flourishing Future'

Happy New Year to you all!

This always seems like a funny time to be writing about school as Christmas seems such a long time and we have just started a new term. We had such lovely festive celebrations that we would still like to share them with you.

First of all, parents, pupils, voluntary helpers, the local nursery and some of our local residents thoroughly enjoyed our production of 'Christmas Counts'. The children sang beautifully and acted out the story of the Nativity with sensitivity and feeling. The children looked great, wearing a great array of costumes and performing in front of a beautiful backdrop of Bethlehem. A huge thank you and well done to the pupils and staff from FS2 and KS1 for getting our celebrations off to a great start.



The whole school plus parents turned out on a cold and frosty morning to take part in our annual Santa Fun Run. Each age group either raced or jogged the Englefield drive - the youngest group did half! The children were sponsored and the money raised will be shared between the school's PTA and UNICEF's Soccer Aid. We are awaiting news of the final amount.



Next came a concert performed by 25 of our pupils who have weekly iRock lessons with their teacher, Jonny. The children have formed their own bands and either sing or play the drums, guitar, keyboard or bass. The enjoyment was very clear on the band members' faces and they each received rapturous applause.

Our choir visited two care homes to sing carols and Christmas songs. Firstly they sang at Greenfield House in Calcot and then at Purley Park Trust. The singing

was enjoyed by all and a good number of our audience joined in. This was a lovely way for our children to show 'Love of Others' in the local community.



The congregation of St Mark's were treated to 'Child in a Manger Born' and 'Ding Dong', sung by 15 of our choir members during the candlelit carol service. It was such a special evening. The choir enjoyed listening to several Christmas songs sung by a quintet...it was so good for them to hear truly beautiful adult singing...something to aspire to.

St Mark's was packed for our own Candlelit Carol Service...not a seat left in the house! Amid the flickering candles, Eliza started our service with a beautifully clear rendition of Once in Royal David's City. Children from all classes then read the story of the Nativity as told through the gospels and sang their carols and Christmas songs with enthusiasm. Such a special part of our school year. Thank you to our parents for the kind donations towards our two charities for this Christmas: New Beginnings and CIRDIC. We raised a total of £220 to share between them. CIRDIC's share enabled them to provide a hot meal to 60 people.



We finished the term with 11 of our children entertaining us in a music concert. From new beginners to seasoned musicians, we were treated to range of Christmas carols as well as tunes learned during lessons. Performing in this way does so much to boost children's confidence which then spreads into other areas.

Now we are into a new calendar year and have been enjoying the crisp winter weather...at least since the rain finally decided to stop! We now look forward to the coming of spring when more of the learning can move outdoors.

In the next edition I hope to be able to update you on our refurbished vegetable patch. This work is generously being carried out by Steve and Debbi White and will be a lasting memorial to their daughter, Ruby. We can't thank them enough for this wonderful addition to our school and we look forward to many years of planting and harvesting.

Hilary Latimer, Headteacher



Looking towards springtime at Five A Day

The garden is having a rest for the spring while our gardening volunteers have enjoyed a well earned break. We are looking forward to an early crop of onions and garlic while our produce sales from the gazebo in the garden centre of root vegetables have almost finished. We will be cutting the willow and hazel soon and hope to offer willow weaving sessions later this year. The willow is for sale directly from the garden. Enquiries can be made by emailing the address below.

Thyme Together, our sessions for older folks continue to run although when the temperature reached -5°C for the final session before Christmas it was too cold even in the polytunnel! Wreaths were made for the regular participants and delivered to their homes instead. We continue to offer these free sessions which are open to people across Berkshire and are always looking for more people to join us. For more information please visit our web-site www.fiveaday.org.uk or email on the address below.

We held very successful wreath making sessions with many people returning to join in the festive fun. The cold did not put people off and everyone proudly went away with a unique and personal Christmas decoration for themselves.

We have a lovely new shed providing a covered seating area to be used by the Thyme Together group, schools and everyone else who enjoys the garden.

If you are interested in volunteering or know of a business who 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

New season, new birth at Rushall Farm

For many the last few weeks have been dominated by very soggy weather, dismal news and rather dreary, dark days. The River Pang however, has thrived, with all the rain producing a good flow of water to scour the gravel perennial stream bed ready for another fresh season for trout, shrimps, mayfly, crayfish and a host of other aquatic life.

For us, our lives have been seriously altered by a litter of six Labrador cross puppies. You cannot walk in the areas we share for fear of treading on them or something worse. At eight weeks old they are bundling together in front of the Aga in between destroying various shoes, oven gloves, socks or toys. They grow on a daily basis and with size comes also a boldness to express their individuality. Their mother, having dealt with weaning, now insists on getting in touch with her inner puppy and joining in the playtimes, which then give way to long periods of deep motionless sleep. The good news is that they all have eager homes awaiting them and if they are like their mum and dad they should be a real joy and blessing as well as a lot of fun.

More new birth is taking place here at Rushall Farm. Steve's cows are calving, his two sows have had 18 piglets and the first batch of ewes is about to lamb. Last summer's drought means this group of early lambers will have mainly singles and twins. (Nutrition at mating determines both the number of lambs conceived and the size of lambs at birth.) The hope is that last year's big flush of autumn grass will result in lots of twins and triplets for his main flock lambing in April.

Greenham Common Trust gave us 1100 large hedge and tree plants for the Rushall Manor site which have now been planted. Volunteer groups have been laying the hedge above Rushall so a large number of stakes and binders have been cut from surrounding woodland. The view across the valley as you walk is stunning, but colder without the hedge, especially when the wind is in the west. We have a busy year ahead with school visits and camps and the Black Barn to rethatch in the autumn. So please come and visit. It is a beautiful place to come to walk, or just be, and enjoy the countryside as another year unfolds.



John Bishop
www.rushallfarm.org.uk

Where's the rota?

The rota has for years occupied the centre pages of the Parish News but in the interests of renewing and refreshing the format of the magazine it has now moved to a more direct form of communication! If you are one of the many kind volunteers whose names appear on it you should receive a copy in your inbox every two months. If not, please let Julia or Saffy know. Copies will also be available in church. As ever, if you swap duties please let Saffy and the churchwardens know - saffyosullivan@gmail.com. Any prayer requests should be sent to Linda - pricelinda8@gmail.com - and will be included in the prayers the following Sunday.

And a heartfelt plea please: should you not yet be on the rota, the offer of help is always most gratefully received - whether to read, lead intercessions, become a sidesperson or sacristan, help with Sunday School, flowers, cleaning, coffee, admin, IT, website or parish news - all of which enable St Mark's to function as the warm and welcoming and active place it is. For example, Julia is seeking a volunteer for a simple home-based, monthly task to enter the hymns we sing each week onto the Churches Copyright Licence website. This ensures that the writers get paid their due for their art. This can be done weekly if preferred, or saved up and done monthly. Julia would very much appreciate a volunteer for this who likes detail and is at ease with online working. Please do get in touch!



Shop from home

Did you know that you can now order a range of food and meals online from Cobbs. Whether it's a full English breakfast or a Sunday roast for four, a box of local cheeses or a selection of local meat, orders can be placed as a one-off treat or to arrive weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The boxes are carefully packaged in environmentally friendly materials which can be reused or recycled afterwards and are delivered within 24 hours, delivery £6

or free for orders over £100. See the Cobbs website for more information: <https://www.cobbsfarmshops.co.uk/cobbs-foodbox-store>.

New groups in Theale

In September 2022, I started as the Community Chaplain for Theale, linked with Holy Trinity church. My role allows me to engage with all members of the community, but my focus has been on the younger and the older members of Theale. With the support of the church, I have been able to establish groups which help to strengthen the connection between the church and the village. We have created a youth group, Explore, which runs on a Sunday afternoon (4.30pm-6pm) in the John Cumber Hall and is a space of fun, games and friendship, with a short bible reflection included. The group is open for anyone from 13 to 18 years old, and if anyone in Englefield would like to attend, they would be most welcome.

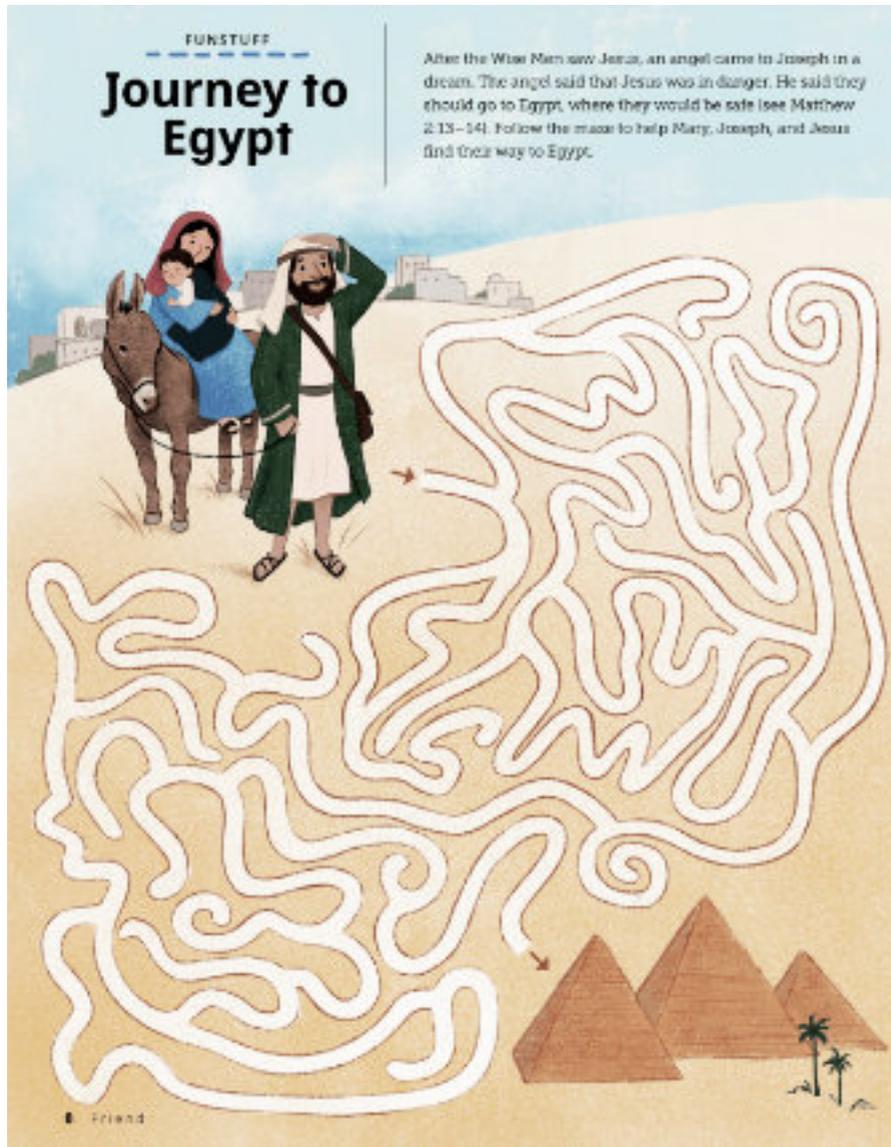
We will also be creating a seniors group, run by the church, and supported by a number of individuals and businesses in Theale. The group will be called 'Connections'. We plan to have our first session on Tuesday 21st February at 10am and hope that all will enjoy it as a place to catch up with individuals over a cuppa, have a hand massage, engage in some low intensity work out, share some craft ideas and receive support from a number of local businesses.

2023 is shaping up to be a busy year but Romans 3: 12-13 reminds us all to be 'joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality'. This is a constant reminder of why my role is important, there is so much that can be done, I need to remember to be thankful and patient, keeping Theale and all that will be happening in my prayers. Whilst ensuring that I continue to be there for Theale, putting God and all the residents at the heart of my work.

Jacinta Holmes, Community Chaplain



St Mark's Sunday School



St Mark's Sunday School meets each week in church at 10.30am. During the service, the children go out to the vestry for activities, games, art and craft, rejoining their families in time for communion. All are welcome - more information from rector@stmarksenglefield.org.uk.

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Not So Common

It is a widespread misconception that there is such a thing as 'common land' that is owned by nobody and there is therefore a 'right to roam' on it so that anybody may come and go as they please and do what they will on it. This is not entirely true, for all land in England is owned by somebody and always has been since feudal times. Some land may nowadays be classed as 'open access land' and marked as such on official maps, in which case there is what is called a legal 'right to roam' but that simply means the right to go on foot anywhere on the designated land and very little else. There is also such a thing as 'permissive access' to designated areas of private land on conditions set by the landowner.

The old concept of common land ceased to exist at the time of the enclosures, at the latest in the early 19th century, but even when it did exist it did not mean a complete free-for-all. 'Rights of common' as they were called were restricted to only some people and even then, the rights were strictly limited. The exact rights that applied to any piece of land were determined and enforced by agreement among the commoners themselves and this system still exists today in the New Forest with the Verderers' Court.

*'Rights of pannage
and pasturage'*

In Englefield the biggest area of common land was the common woodland that lay on the north slope of Common Hill alongside the River Bourne between the modern road and a point approximately opposite Bournefield Farm. Here the particular right of common would almost certainly have been the right of 'estover', that is the right to take limited amounts of specific timber products from the land, for example firewood, or whole trees for building purposes. In view of the large number of oak trees, there may also have been a right of 'pannage' (also called 'mast'), that is the right to put pigs out to feed on fallen acorns.

There was also common land in the Theale Meadow. The Meadow occupied the area that is now the Theale Fishery at Haywards Farm. Most of this land was divided into individually owned strips like the main part of the open fields but part of it was a single large block. As the individual strips were not separately fenced, they would presumably have been used by their owners for a hay crop to provide

*'Rights of common
were clearly seasonal'* winter forage for their own animals, but the large single block would probably have been for common grazing of animals under the right of pasturage.

Rights of common such as pannage and pasturage were clearly seasonal so the commoners would have determined exactly when they applied by agreement amongst themselves. The seasonal right of common pasturage generally also extended to all the strips in open field so that while in the growing and harvest seasons each strip was for the exclusive use of its owner, once crops were gathered and until the time came again for sowing the whole of the open field became common pasture for cattle which put back fertility into the soil.

By 1762 the whole system of farming in common was largely being discontinued elsewhere, often through agreement but sometimes by Act of Parliament. In some places an earlier set of enclosures during the 16th and 17th centuries had been largely forced on the smaller landowners by powerful lords of the manor. In Englefield there must have been a second cultivated area in addition to the Great Field that was still in use in 1762 because there always had to be two separate such fields (sometimes three) in order to achieve proper crop rotation. This second field probably occupied the area between the village and the River Pang where the mill was and it may have been enclosed in the late 17th century to create Chalkpit Farm. What mechanism was used to do this is unknown but in 1762 the tenants and landowners who farmed strips in the remaining Great Field agreed amongst themselves to suspend the practice of common pasture for seven years. Then in 1774 they went the whole way and reallocated all the scattered holdings across the Great Field into consolidated and enclosed blocks. In 1791 the Englefield Meadow was similarly rearranged, again by agreement.

Finally, in 1809 it was decided to complete the enclosure process and end all rights of common in the parish and a private bill was introduced into Parliament for the purpose. All those with rights of common had to lay a claim with the Enclosure Commissioners. Three of those who did so were William Horn at Hogmoor, his brother John at North Street and James May at Park Farm (Wimbleton's). James May's claim was lodged on his behalf by his mother Isabella because his father had died in 1805 and he was not yet of age.



The parliamentary enclosure was a protracted process and was not completed until 1829, perhaps because there were two stages. In the first stage all the claims were considered, and freehold land allocated elsewhere in exchange for the loss of common rights. In Englefield this was often to the advantage of the small landowners, for example both William and John Horn exchanged their rights of common in Englefield and Theale for additional land that was contiguous with the land they already owned so they gained the advantage of not having to travel miles to cultivate a small piece of land somewhere else. Then in a second stage, not really part of the enclosure process, many of the smaller landowners sold their land to Richard Benyon. According to life-long village resident Miss Winchcomb, a descendent of the Horns, her great-grandfather 'sold all the land and the farm and went off and had a good time', which she thought 'really rather annoying'.

Richard Smith

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.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.' (Luke 2 v 13-14)

There are two misconceptions about these verses, which are often missed by those familiar with the Christmas story. The first is trivial: notice that the great company that appears is not described anywhere in the text as singing! And yet, how many times have you heard about the 'choir of angels'? This perhaps illustrates how we can unwittingly distort familiar passages by superimposing ideas of our own on them without realising it.

The second is more serious. We often hear talk about Christmas being linked with peace on earth, but what do the heavenly host actually say? Who is peace coming to? Perhaps to our surprise, we see that the answer is not 'everybody' but those 'upon whom God's favour rests'. The host are not saying that Christmas will bring universal peace to the earth, but rather that there will now be peace between God and his people; those on whom his favour rests. The rest of the gospel makes clear that humanity will be divided by his Son: there will be those who accept him as saviour and Lord and those who reject him and prefer to go their own way. This truth should remind us that the decision a person makes about who Jesus is and whether to follow him is the single most important decision they will ever make.

'This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians 3 v 6)

At Epiphany, we remember the visit of the wise men as they came to see the infant Jesus (Matt 2:1-12). It was quite a trek; these men had come from far off in the East and travelled for many days following the star that led them to Jerusalem. If to our ears their story, and the symbolism of their gifts, is striking, even after our familiarity with the nativity story, imagine what the first century Jews must have made of it. Why did these Gentiles travel such a distance, and bring their gifts to this baby? What did they have to do with him?

In this passage, the apostle Paul spells it out. Through God's grace, the old barrier between Israelite and Gentile has been broken down. Jew and non-Jew alike have been welcomed into the inheritance God has prepared; both are cleansed from their sin and reconciled to God the Father through Jesus' death

and resurrection. The promise made in Christ is offered to all without distinction - nobody who trusts in Christ will ever be cast out by him.

'Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.' (Psalm 40 v 4)

Where do we put our trust? As the rollercoaster of our lives suddenly throws us from blissful heights to terrible lows, where do we turn? Who do we look to?

In an era of social media and online influencers there are no shortage of voices which tout the secret of wellbeing, security and a comfortable life. They live a life of plenty and of ease, and hold out the promise of the same thing to us. A hefty bank balance, a solid job or a meaningful career, a good reputation and status within our social circle, or a life carved out on our terms in which we are 'true to ourselves': these are the sorts of things they steer us towards. All of these things are false gods, the Bible warns us, and unable to save us from what lies ahead. David, the great king of Israel, was careful not to look to these to save him. Despite being king, he was humble before God, recognising the truth that all that he had came from God as a free gift. The right response to this was to put his trust in the giver, not the gifts themselves, and to avoid trusting in created human beings rather than God the creator.

For many of us living in the West, enjoying the material blessings that we do, the lure of false gods can be subtle and powerful. We should examine ourselves carefully, to ensure that beneath the surface we are not clinging excessively to the gifts God has given us, but rather are able to hold them loosely and willing to surrender them in his service if necessary.

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