St. Michael & All Angels
CHURCH IN THE PARK | LIVING, LOVING, SERVING

outLook

The magazine for the people of Hughenden Parish | **JANUARY 2024** | FREE

ALSO INSIDE: *Wycombe Homeless Connection* | Bookends | **January Recipe**

Welcome to **Your Church**

This magazine serves the parish in which our beautiful church of St Michael & All Angels is situated. Outlook aims to give you a flavour of what it is to live in Hughenden and to worship here.

There has been a place of worship and prayer on this site since the 12th century and today the church is open for anyone wishing to wander around or sit a while in its peace. We are an open, welcoming and inclusive church where there are many opportunities for fellowship, social activities and of course the possibility for spiritual growth.

Outlook is published monthly. Articles or comments can be submitted to mag@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk. The deadline is the 15th of the month. If you would like the magazine delivered then please contact Andrew Cole - 01494 305020.

We hope you find something here to interest, inform or enlighten you. We wish you well and would love to have the chance to get to know you.

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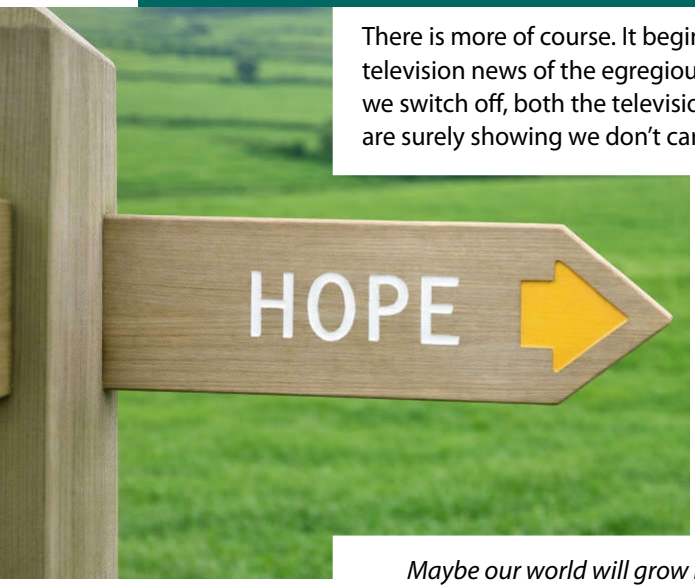
Grant us Lord, faith to believe and strength to do thy will

www.hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Dear Readers

So, did you send Christmas cards I wonder? Did you worry about all the trees that had to be cut down for the vast amount of card and paper that would be used? (that's before we think about plastic coatings!) All this does not feel remotely eco friendly but on the other hand, if the pandemic and the lockdowns taught us anything, we know how important it is to communicate and care for people; to keep in touch, and to do so by an email is OK but at Christmas it is not as good as a card. The cost of stamps is now extortionate but then again everyone wants to keep their post office open and we know that charities rely on selling Christmas cards for vital funds. Oh my goodness, how complicated it now seems to do the right thing.



There is more of course. It begins to feel voyeuristic to watch the television news of the egregious events in the Middle East but if we switch off, both the television and our minds and hearts, we are surely showing we don't care and we are opting out.

It might feel difficult to start this new year full of hope but that is what we should do. So, as I make myself a New Year's resolution to stop overthinking everything, I offer you these words from Mary Oliver, a New England poet that I 'found' during the pandemic.

Maybe our world will grow kinder eventually.
Maybe the desire to make something beautiful
Is the piece of God that is inside each of us.

Mary Oliver (Taken from Blue Horses)

That's hopeful isn't it? I wish you and those you love all that is good in 2024,

Susan Brice
Editor

from the Vicarage

Keith Johnson

Vicar

St Michael & All Angels, Hughenden

What are your hopes and dreams for the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-four?

Once the festivities of Christmas have past, and we have seen in the new year, our thoughts often turn back to the last twelve months, as well as looking ahead to all that the next year will bring.

I wonder what were your highlights of the past year? Memorable occasions with loved ones, special anniversaries and birthdays, a long awaited trip, catching up old friends and making new ones? We will all have disappointments and sadness to also reflect back upon as well – of those we have loved and lost, health concerns, and life's challenges that seem to crop up at the most unexpected times.

What do you expect to be the highlights of 2024? Do you have exciting plans in the diary, hopes and dreams for a more restful and prosperous year?

We have all watched the images of destruction and unimaginable suffering broadcast on our screens from Ukraine, and more recently Israel and Gaza during 2023.

The world longs for peace in these lands, for the good of all parties, for an end to the suffering of all, especially innocent women and children caught in the crossfire of warring factions.

It is quite natural to feel helpless thousands of miles away, but we can always respond in a way that supports the work of peace. We can pray for peace, write to our local MP, support the work of peacemakers in these war zones – such as Kevin and Jen Cable working at Christ Church Guesthouse in Jerusalem, and Embrace the Middle East projects in Gaza.

Let us never tire of doing good my friends – may the Lord give us a renewed sense of love and compassion for those who are suffering in the world, coupled with the courage and willingness to do something to help.

Happy New Year

Wycombe Homeless Connection

Wycombe Homeless Connection's vision is to see south Buckinghamshire transformed into a place where no one is homeless and that there is suitable homes and housing security for all – because we believe that is what God wants for our community.

We serve people like Tony, who came to our door cold and hungry, having slept on the streets for a number of nights.

Struggling with his mental health and addiction, he had been sleeping on the sofa at a family member's house, but relations had broken down and he was left with no choice but to leave. He didn't know what to do or who to turn to, but a local resident who saw him sleeping rough suggested he come to our door.

Within minutes of arriving, Tony was given hot food and warm clothes. We organised emergency accommodation so he was safe that night.

We then began working with him to find longer term solutions. We helped Tony register with a GP and access other support including regular parcels from a local foodbank; we connected him to local addiction support services and helped him apply for the benefits he was entitled to.

Tony's story isn't over yet, and whatever it takes we want our door to be open to more people like Tony this winter.

Our first winter night shelter opened in Wycombe in 2008 when hundreds of people from across the town, including six church fellowships who hosted the shelter on a rotating basis, stepped forward to make sure people who were sleeping rough had a safe, warm place to stay. In the years that have followed we have widened our work. We run a support centre in the Wycombe, a homelessness helpline and a homelessness prevention service. We have stretched across the county to areas where we are needed most; we have just doubled the amount of help we are offering in Chesham as one in six of the people we help already come from the town.

We provide emergency accommodation in the winter for people who fall through the cracks of statutory support. These are vulnerable people who do not qualify for help and can get stuck in homelessness. A team of volunteers run drop-in sessions where people can get food, a shower, laundry and companionship and hope.

Wycombe Homeless Connection is our mission focus for the first quarter of 2024. Heather Stanley will be speaking about the charity's work at our services on Sunday 11th February.

Mission Support Group

At our housing advice clinic, people facing a housing crisis can get specialist legal support. Our 'truth and grace' project focusses on people who are 'stuck' in homelessness because of unresolved immigration issues. We help people work out what their rights are, what support they may be entitled to and to apply for help from the Home Office. We also help people who want to go to a home country get there.

Our Big Sleepout will be on Saturday 2nd March 2024 and we need people to join us at Adams Park football stadium in Wycombe, to sleepout 'at home' or host own mini-Sleepout at a Guide or Scout hut, at church, in the school or work playground or somewhere similar. Not only will you raise much needed money but you will act in solidarity with the people we serve. You can find out more on our website.

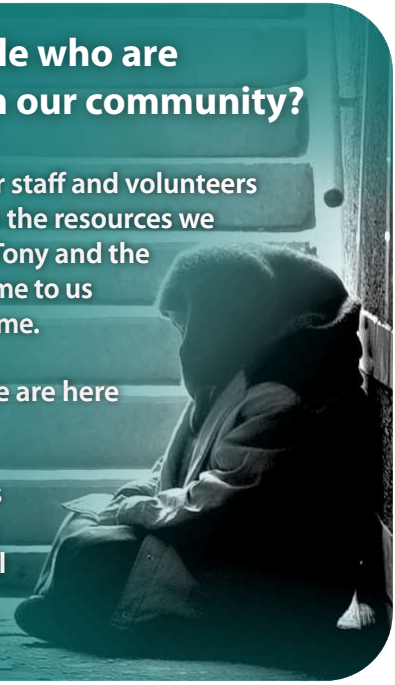
We believe that every single person who is homeless, or in fear of losing their home, has worth, is loved by God, and should be given help and hope and a home, no matter what their situation. Thank you for all you do, and have already done for the people, we serve.

How can your fellowship help people who are homeless or facing homelessness in our community?

PRAY Please pray for the people we serve, our staff and volunteers and that God continues to bless us with the resources we need to do God's work. Please pray for Tony and the hundreds of people who we meet or come to us every year for help to find and keep a home.

TELL We would love for you to tell people we are here for them if they are in a housing crisis.

GIVE Every single gift helps us be here for as long as we are needed. We humbly ask for financial help and gifts of goods. All the details are on our website, www.wyhoc.org.uk, or call 01494 447699.



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What about the Gold, Frankincense & Myrrh?

The story of the coming of the Magi, celebrated on the 6th January with the Feast of Epiphany, grew in the telling. By the 6th century they had acquired names: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. By medieval times they were considered to be kings. Whoever they were, we do know from Matthew that they brought three gifts to Jesus.

What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? While we cannot know for sure what was in the minds of first century Magi, one Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation as to the significance of their gifts. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote his much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'.

Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine, and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people.

The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. What faith they had! They travelled for months over difficult terrain, they never saw any evidence of Jesus' kingship, His divinity or His sacrificial death. They worshipped Him through faith in God's promises about Him. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light,

and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi's eyes of faith saw clearly and far into the future.

Compare that with the High Priest and religious leaders whom the Wise Men saw in Jerusalem when they first arrived. These head priests knew all about the prophecies of their own coming Messiah, but not one of them travelled to look for Him in Bethlehem. And it is only six miles down the road!

From the Parish Pump

Where did the Wise Men come from?

Magi from the East – it isn't a lot to go on. The Magi had originally been a religious caste among the Persians. Their devotion to astrology, divination and the interpretation of dreams led to an extension in the meaning of the word, and by the first century the Magi in Matthew's gospel could have been astrologers from outside of Persia. Some scholars believe they might have come from what was then Arabia Felix, or as we would say today, southern Arabia.

It is true that in the first century astrology was practised there, and it was the region where the Queen of Sheba had lived. She of course had visited Solomon and would have heard the prophecies about how one day a Messiah would be born to the Israelites and become their king.

Matthew's gospel (chapter 2) is clear that the Magi asked Herod: 'Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.' So it is possible that in southern Arabia the Queen of Sheba's story of how a Messiah would one day be sent to the Israelites had survived. Certainly, there are a number of other early legends that connect southern Arabia with Solomon's Israel.

To many people this makes sense: that the ancient stories of a Messiah, linked to later astrological study, prompted these alert and god-fearing men to the realisation that something very stupendous was happening in Israel. They realised that after all these centuries, the King of the Jews, the Messiah, was about to be born.

One more interesting thing that gives weight to the theory that the Magi came from southern Arabia is this: if you study any map of Palestine as it was during biblical times, you will find that the old Arabian caravan routes all entered Palestine 'from the East'.

An Intriguing Staircase
at Hanbury Hall, Worcestershire

We have family photos on our staircase wall. But in Hanbury Hall (about which there was an article in last month's Outlook) they have a magnificent set of murals covering three huge walls and the ceiling. They depict the story of Achilles from Greek myth. The paintings were created by James Thornhill (who was the first British painter to be knighted) for Thomas Vernon and are the sole reason that the house was rescued for the nation by the National Trust.

A little back story is necessary.

Achilles was born to the sea nymph Thetis and his father was a human (though a grandson of Zeus) Peleus, a king in northern Greece. Achilles thus was a demigod, and was fervently interceded for with the gods, by his mother. He was trained in his youth in the arts of war by the centaur Chiron, and became the greatest of the Greek warriors, the 'best of the Greeks' in their war against the Trojans.

This is however to get a little ahead of the painting's scenes.

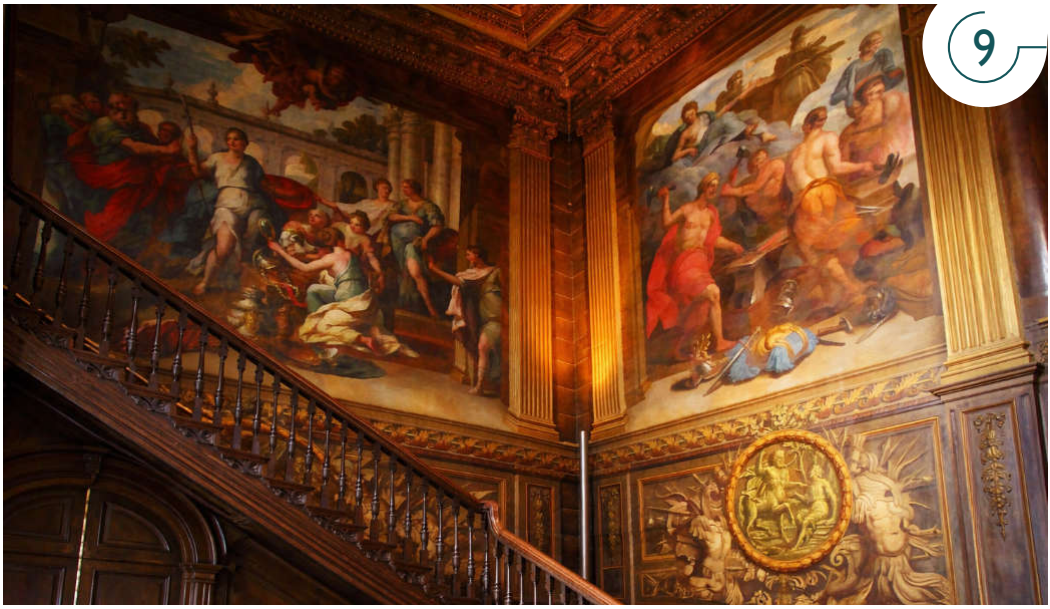
Thetis wanted above all to protect her son. Famously she dipped him in the River Styx as a child to confer immortality on him. Unfortunately, the heel by which she held the child did not get dipped, so that place was the one area by which he could come to harm. (His Achilles heel).

When Thetis learned that Greek warriors were being called up to fight the Trojans for the return of Helen to Menelaus, her husband, after her abduction by Paris, she was determined he would not go, so hid him, dressed as a girl, in the court of Lycomedes.

Wily Odysseus, the cleverest of Menelaus's lieutenants, was sent to find soldiers from all the high born families of the land. Suspecting Achilles was in hiding, Odysseus offered all manner of trinkets to the girls, plus one sword. Achilles immediately was drawn to the weapon and brandished it aloft, thus 'blowing his cover' and being thereby exposed, he was recruited into the Greek army.

The painting shows Achilles dressed as a girl in this episode, in the central tableau. Before going to war, however, mother Thetis persuaded the god Hephaestos and the Cyclops to make a suit of impenetrable armour for her son: shown adjacent to the last scene in the murals.

However, the paintings are thought to have another meaning, and refer to the political Whig-Tory struggles during the time, where most of the gentry had to make clear which 'side' they were on.



The figure of Mercury (the messenger of the gods) is shown flying up to the ceiling (which is decorated with The Assembly of the Gods), carrying an anti-Whig pamphlet written by one Dr Sacherverell. Dr Sacheverell was a high church Anglican clergyman who preached an inflammatory sermon for which he was later impeached and sentenced. However, his sentence was comparatively light, and he became something of a folk hero, contributing, it is thought, to the Tories' election victory in 1710. The Tories were the party of the High Church and included many provincial gentry. The Whigs were supporters of the Glorious Revolution which ousted the Catholic King James II.

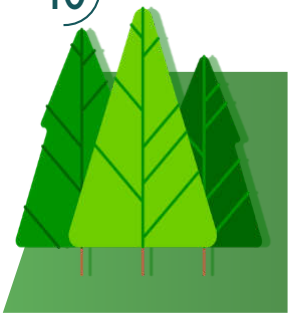
The Whigs v Tories politicking is also the background to another reading of the paintings. The painting of Achilles-dressed-as-a-girl is thought, because of its similarity to other known portraits, to represent Sarah Churchill (duchess of Marlborough and a Whig supporter) one of Queen Anne's favourites. The Queen appears to be at her extreme right, (seemingly in the midst of one of her 17 pregnancies) and the woman who supplanted Sarah as the Queen's favourite, Abigail Masham, (when the Queen tired of Sarah and the Whigs' machinations) seated and pointing at Achilles/Sarah.

Achilles was of course killed by Hector, the hero of Troy, and Menelaus's brother, when his arrow, penetrated Achilles' only weak spot. His wonderful armour was fought over by 'wily Odysseus' and 'mighty Ajax' a scene shown in the last painting.

The painter Thornhill went on to decorate part of Hampton Court, the Painted Hall and Greenwich and Chatsworth.

If you are in the area, Hanbury Hall is certainly worth a visit, and make sure to get the excellent talk about the murals. Certainly a more intriguing staircase to climb than ours with our range of family photos.

Jane Tyrer



Nature Quest

0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, 377, 610, 987, 1597, 2584, 4181, 6765, 10946, 17711, 28657, 46368, 75

Welcome to the Year of our Lord MMXXIV, or AD 2024. I daresay you could work out the Roman numerals, even if I hadn't added our conventional numbers. But if you were faced with XXIV/VI would you quickly agree = IV? Or XCIX/IX = XI ? Thank goodness for Leonardo of Pisa, better known as Fibonacci. He introduced us and the Western world to Arabic numerals and their much simpler ways of calculation which we all learn at school.

Fibonacci (died about 1240 AD) was adept with numbers, a true mathematician. He is famous for his Fibonacci sequence: 0 1 1 2 3 5 8 13 etc. Each number in the sequence is the sum of the two previous numbers e.g. 13 = 8 + 5. And therefore the next number will be 8 + 13 = 21. If you continue to the 19th number in the sequence you can work out whether for example 2024 is a Fibonacci number. Also if you divide each number by its previous number, you'll find the answer soon settles to about 1.618 (e.g. 13/8 = 1.625), which is known as the Golden Ratio or Divine Proportion.

That Golden Ratio had long been recognised as expressing beautiful design, aesthetically pleasing, (e.g. by Euclid c300BC). It is found in the relative sizes of human hand and arm bones, facial structures and other anatomical features. Measure your credit card: its length divided by width is about 1.618. This proportion also crops up in many instances in Nature. Johannes Kepler (c1608) was amazed to find this number also coming from Fibonacci's sequence, because Fibonacci's sequence is found in very diverse ways in Nature, a naturally occurring pattern.

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If you draw squares exactly to scale, (inches, cm or whatever) as in the diagram, the only squares that can fit are Fibonacci numbers, and more and more squares can be added ad infinitum. A spiral can be smoothly drawn through the places where the squares join. Such spirals are found in diverse situations in nature: see the pictures shown here:- sunflower seeds, nautilus seashell, spiral galaxy, hurricane.

If you follow the spirals of the sunflower seeds, you will note that the seeds grow bigger as they grow out from the centre, but at all times there is no gap between the curves of seeds. Each arc of the spiral is rotated slightly from the adjoining arc. The angle of this rotation fits the Fibonacci sequence. Any other rotational angles would leave gaps and the seed head would fall apart. Likewise the "camerae" (box sections) of the nautilus continue to grow throughout its life. If its rotation angle was other than Fibonacci's the nautilus would have slits between the camerae and it would not survive. This use of the Fibonacci sequence is a mathematical necessity.

Other rotational examples are the numbers of petals around a flower, mostly Fibonacci numbers though some are not. Leaves sprouting from a stalk are not generally exactly above each other, but are rotated (to allow better light exposure presumably). The number of rotations before arriving at the original angle is, you've guessed it, Fibonacci.

There are so many examples that The Fibonacci Quarterly is a publication solely for examples of Fibonacci in nature and their study!

Such universal mathematical design has caused people to gaze in wonder at creation and contemplate the great mind of its Creator. For some, this is sufficient proof of God's existence. Others might say it is like it is, because that's the only way that it would work, or the most efficient way for it to work. Either way it is truly amazing and the more you look at it, the more amazing nature seems.

Mike Hill
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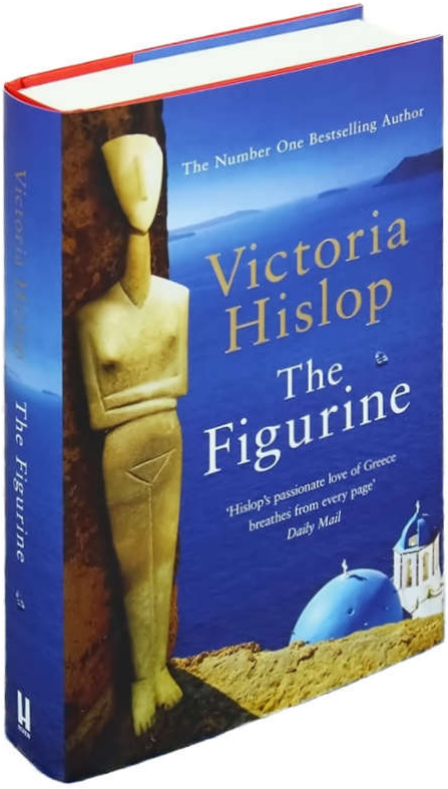
BOOK-ENDS

The Figurine by Victoria Hislop

I'm not altogether keen on hardback books: very expensive, very heavy and somehow they feel very self important. They are certainly not books that I can read in the bath! The problem is that I have to wait usually at least 6 months for a new book to appear in paperback. Normally I can be patient and wait. Just occasionally I really can't.

A new book by Victoria Hislop is cause for some celebration and so, dear reader, I bought the hardback!



Victoria Hislop is the writer of many bestselling stories set in her beloved Greece, as well as a few concerned with lands further afield, particularly Granada in Spain. Greece has had a long and difficult history, and through the 20th century into the present times those dramatic, emotional and sometimes aggressive periods have continued. All this provides excellent material for any novelist, particularly one with a very Greek sort of passion for the country, including all its islands.

In 2020 the author was made an honorary citizen of Greece. Honorary? Does that mean she is a citizen or not I wonder and more interestingly she is on the British Committee for the reunification of the Parthenon (Elgin) Marbles. This is a subject

suddenly become very topical. The new Victoria Hislop book was written before the present very political situation but it is, by chance, very relevant to the plot.

So, we are in the late 1960s, when after political and economic chaos in the decades following the Second World War, a repressive and violent military junta is in power (nicknamed 'the Colonels') who are prepared to put down the communist party by any means at all, including torture and execution. Our main character Helena, who lives with her Greek mother and Scottish father in East Anglia, spends her childhood summers in Athens with her maternal grandparents. As the years pass, her relationships with her grandmother and the diminutive housekeeper deepen but her grandfather scares her slightly and makes her uncomfortable. As a teenager and student she begins to make sense of these feelings and tensions and realises that her grandfather is a general in the military government and he is the reason that her mother will not return to holiday in Greece.

On an ill advised student summer on a remote Greek island, helping with an archaeological dig and following an also ill advised love interest, Helena learns of the lucrative and secretive trade in Grecian antiquities. Activities that appeared simple and straightforward suddenly become complicated and surrounded by difficult moral questions. At this point Victoria Hislop leaves the reader to sort out for themselves when payment is in fact bribery, when stealing is just that and when maybe it is acceptable in a case of survival, particularly when what is being stolen is being dug from the earth. What do individuals own and can therefore choose to sell and what actually belongs to a country and should live in a museum? This is all before we move onto what is real and what is fake! The appropriation and acquisition of cultural treasures is muddied by the colonial past and hence (just to add to the British Museum's difficult year) the Elgin Marbles is a case in point, which has simmered away under the surface for very many years and then suddenly reaches boiling point. I suspect it is not hard to guess Victoria Hislop's opinion on this situation.

This author has proved she is skilled and experienced at crafting a story with a plot that is rich and satisfying, based on deep and careful historical research. Her characters are rounded, well developed and believable, whether they are British or Greek. I enjoyed reading this book immensely.

Susan Brice

Go to beyondtheairingcupboard.co.uk and read about two books concerned with cellos. They are totally different! 'Take nothing with you' by Patrick Gale and 'The cellist of Sarajevo' by Steven Galloway. Have a look. Both are interesting reads.

I think I might commit myself to another year of reading from my bookshelves. There is still so much to revisit. However, there are the Christmas books to enjoy first.

Happy reading.

King Charles The Martyr, Tunbridge Wells

At the southern end of the High Street, in Royal Tunbridge Wells, at a junction and on a corner, is the Parish Church of King Charles the Martyr. It is both an oddity and a rarity but, nonetheless, a thriving church of worship and witness.

It is an oddity because of its architecture and a rarity because it is one of only three nationwide churches dedicated to King Charles I. Understandably, they celebrated the coronation of King Charles III last May with particular interest in the new connection.

It originated in the late 17th century, in 1684 to be precise, after the Restoration of King Charles II which, as all good historians know, took place in 1660. At that time, Tunbridge Wells, which had been staunchly Royalist in the Civil War, was just a village with a number of non-conformist chapels. The first stage of the creation of the church is dated from 1672, with a small rectangular chapel being the first creation. Its original size can be seen from the surviving ceiling, a square of ornate plasterwork, now with a central chandelier, which delineates the

original frame. This impressive ceiling was designed by John Wetherell, and constructed under his supervision by local builders.

By the time of the second and third stages, built to cater for the burgeoning congregation, there was more spectacular plasterwork designed by Henry Doogood, the plasterer to Sir Christopher Wren. The fourth and final stage took place between 1882 and 1912.

This last work more or less coincided with the incumbency of the Revd W L Pope. He was incumbent between 1828 and 1872, a period of 44 years, a significant achievement indeed. He was widely acknowledged in Tunbridge Wells for his good works. Indeed, the memorial tablet erected to the wall on the right side of the Chancel, erected on his death, reads that he was "beloved, esteemed and regretted by all who knew him, for his excellent personal characteristics, for the admirable manner in which he performed his duties and for his constant attention to the education of the School's children, attached to the Chapel." Much of the cost was found by local subscription following his death.

Originally standing within three parishes, it is now a parish church serving that part of Kent, in the Diocese of Rochester. The congregation is warm and welcoming and busy.

One interesting feature, on the stairs leading to the gallery which now surrounds two sides, is a framed parchment, recording the names of all those subscribers to the fourth stage restoration and reordering. And, of course, like all churches with an historical past, it is seeking funds for restoration and refurbishment now and for its future witness.

Christopher Tyrer

January Recipe

January is such a cold unwelcoming month I always feel, Christmas finished and a long way until spring and we want comforting food.

I was just planning what to do for the January recipe this week when I went to the Toddler group at church and Jane, one of our dedicated organizers for the toddler group had made the most delicious cake with cranberries. An ideal recipe if you have cranberries or cranberry sauce left over from Christmas! And as a special treat you can top with orange liqueur for adults. I know we have had bottles of Drambuie and Cointreau in our cupboard for years as not very fashionable drinks now, so something else to use it up with.

Julia Grant

Cranberry Cake

INGREDIENTS

200g unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for the tin

200g caster sugar

3 eggs

200g self-raising flour

2 tbsp milk

2 lemons zested (optional)

2 heaped tablespoons of bitter orange marmalade

125g fresh or frozen cranberries, plus 2 tbsp extra defrosted to garnish

handful of pistachios, roughly chopped (optional)

Icing

100g unsalted butter, softened

200g icing sugar

½ lemon, juiced

1 tbsp of orange marmalade

METHOD

1. *Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4 and line a 900g loaf tin with butter and baking paper, hanging the paper over the edges slightly. Put the butter and caster sugar into a bowl, and beat with an electric whisk until smooth, pale and fluffy. Scrape down the edges of the bowl and gradually whisk in the eggs. Tip in the flour, milk, lemon zest and 110g cranberries, 2 heaped tablespoons of marmalade and fold in until you have a smooth batter.*
2. *Tip the batter into the loaf tin and smooth the top so it's level. Dot over the remaining cranberries and press them lightly into the mixture. Bake 55 mins-1 hr or until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Leave to cool for 10 mins in the tin, then remove to a wire rack to cool completely.*
3. *Meanwhile, make the icing. Beat together the butter and icing sugar with an electric whisk for 5 mins until pale and fluffy, and then beat in the lemon juice*
4. *Once the sponge is cool, put on a serving platter. Spoon the lemon icing on top of the loaf and swirl so the top is coated. Finish with a few more cranberries, chopped pistachios and some lemon zest. Cranberry sauce or jam can be added as a decoration on top of the butter cream (but don't add too early as can bleed on icing).You can swap the lemon for oranges if you have any, it will change the intense citrus flavour to a more subtle one. The sponge can be made up to a month in advance, wrap it and freeze. When you're ready to serve, defrost at room temperature and then decorate.*
5. *And finally for boozy option sprinkle a slug of any orange liqueur on the cake before icing!*

Holy Day in January

25th January – St Paul, the first Christian intellectual

This month, on 25th January, the Church celebrates probably the most famous conversion of all. At least, what happened to a young man called Saul on the road to Damascus has become a byword for all instant conversions – what is known as a 'damascene' moment. Saul was a devout Jew, a Pharisee, a student of Gamaliel and a fierce critic of the followers of Jesus, then a very new sect on the religious scene.

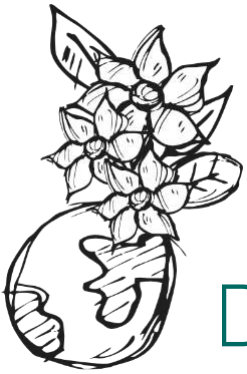
On his way to Damascus to start a purge of Christians in that city, he was blinded by a bright light and heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' He asked the identity of the voice, and was told: 'Jesus, whom you are persecuting'. Stunned by the experience, he followed further instructions which led him to a Christian man in Damascus, who prayed with him. As he did, Saul's sight was restored.

The experience convinced Paul that Jesus – crucified in Jerusalem four or five years earlier – was in fact the Messiah and had risen from the dead. After a period of instruction, Saul was baptised and took the name Paul. At first, some Christians were wary about the reality of his conversion, but over a period of time he was accepted and indeed eventually recognised as an 'apostle', a 'special messenger' of Jesus Christ.

His intellectual stature and leadership gifts quickly marked him out, and within a few years he became a leading figure in the emerging Christian Church, preaching and founding churches all over the Middle East, largely of Gentile converts. He was eventually martyred in Rome, probably in 65AD.

Paul was the first intellectual of the Christian Church, the man who was able to set the events of the life and teaching of Jesus, and especially His death and resurrection, into a coherent theology, with its roots very clearly in the Jewish faith of his own upbringing.

Many people think of Paul as a rather negative, narrow misogynist, but even a quick reading of his letters actually reveals a person of great warmth, who evoked enormous affection and devotion from others. 'You would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me!' he writes



Foam Free Flower Design Demonstration

to the Christians at Galatia. As for the charge hat Paul disliked women, even a quick read of his letters will reveal how large a role women played in his churches. In terms of the first century, St Paul was a dangerous liberal! So, all in all, the amazing Paul of Tarsus deserves a bit of celebrating on 25th January.

From the Parish Pump

As mentioned a few weeks ago in the Church Notices, I am very aware that the floral foam we use is not good for the environment. Although it makes flower arrangement much easier as flowers tend to stay where they are put, it does not bio-degrade when it comes to the end of its life. Instead it breaks down into tiny pieces which, in many cases, find themselves on the seabed, thence into the stomachs of various forms of marine life including, of course, fish.

As we are striving to become an ecologically friendly church, I am hoping to dispense with floral foam altogether. Therefore, I have booked an afternoon in Church House on Friday, 19th January 2024 at 2.00 pm at which Carol Bennett will be demonstrating flower designs without using foam. Carol is an Area Demonstrator for the Bucks, Berks & Oxford area of NAFAS (National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies) and I am sure will give us some useful and inspirational ideas.

After the demonstration tea/coffee and home-made cake will be available – and maybe a little wine! Do come along and bring your friends. There will be a £5 per head charge to help with expenses and it would be very helpful if you could let me know if you are able to come. My email address is: sylviaclark919@btinternet.com and my telephone number is 01494 562801 or mobile 07570 876530.

I very much look forward to seeing you.

Sylvia Clark

Tiny Tots

14th December was the last meeting before Christmas. Although a few of our regulars were smitten with Christmas colds, we had a full house to make Christmas craft - putting appropriate stickers on pictures of stables.

The children listened excitedly to Helen telling the Christmas Story, using her Knitivity to illustrate it. The older ones were able to call out the names of Mary and Joseph, Bethlehem and shouting: 'There's no room!' in response to repeated knocking at the doors.

Singing with Nicki at the piano followed: the highlight surely being : Old Macdonald had an Inn!

And of course no Tiny Tots morning could be complete without cake!

Presents were handed out and Christmas wishes shared - a lovely morning.

Tiny Tots Team

Mothers' Union

We held our Advent Service on 5th December. It was led by Helen. We followed with a delicious tea of mince pies, biscuits, mulled wine, tea and coffee. A short period of silence was held to pray for and remember those members who were unable to join us due to illness or death.

All the donations to the Women's Refuge were taken to their office and gratefully received.

Our next meeting will be the AGM on 6th February 2024.

Ann Gee

The Rotary Club of Princes Risborough

This is a busy time for us. We held our 'Over 75's Christmas Lunch' on the 9th December for those living alone in Princes Risborough and the local area. Our recent participation in the last 2 Farmers' Markets of the year raised nearly £1,000 for our charity, and our Golf Day was successful despite the weather and raised over £2,200.

On the social front, we had a visit to the HS2 site, organised a Curry Club night and a Club cycle group outing. Additionally, we have a Christmas quiz planned for our members, plus our excellent list of Monday night speakers - further details available on our website (see below). On the 3rd December we held our annual Tree of Light dedication, in remembrance of those who have passed away, which also raised funds for the Rennie Grove Charity. We helped with the Street Closures for the Christmas lights switch-on and are running our usual Christmas collections in the Town. We continue to support the Risborough Upper School and Royal Grammar School Interact Clubs and the Risborough Youth Club.

In 2024 we are running our Schools Art Competition and Chess Competition again. We are at an early stage of planning a Rotary Race Night, in the spring, and a Risborough Ramble to coincide with the Town Festival. It's a packed schedule, and we would welcome new members to help fulfil it. We are pleased to have welcomed several recently, however, more are always welcome. We're looking for people to help make a difference. As ever, we remain a fun, friendly Club, and organize several social events for members. If you would like to be part of it and help us contribute locally and internationally, visit our website and consider coming to one of our meetings to see if it might interest you. Also, if you know of local causes that would benefit from our support, or you would like to donate to our Charity Account, please use the contact details below.

A very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

You can contact us at: rcpr.org.uk or call the Club President, Graeme Card on 07827 298411 or email: gpcard@gmail.com

Chiltern Arts
Art & Poetry Competitions 2024
Celebrate the heroes in your world by creating artwork and poetry that explores real human stories
Open to all ages
To enter and for more details visit chilternarts.com/competitions-2024
Deadline: 29th February 2024
OUR EVERYDAY HEROES

What's On at St Michael & All Angels

January

1	1.45 pm	New Year's Day Walk: Church Car Park
6	8.30 am	Men's Breakfast: Church House
16	2.00 pm	Mothers' Union Committee Meeting: Church House
19	2.00 pm	Flower Demonstration: Church House
27	10.00 am	Marriage Preparation: Church House
27	6.45 pm	Burn's Night: Hughenden Village Hall

February

6	2.00 pm	Mothers' Union AGM: Church House
14	7.00 pm	**Ash Wednesday** Holy Communion: Church
22	10.00 am	Marriage Preparation: Church House

1st & 3rd Sundays

9.00 am **Choral Communion**
11.00 am **Service of the Word**
6.00 pm **Evensong (Sung)**

2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays

9.00 am **Matins (Sung)**
11.00 am **Family Communion**
6.00 pm **Evensong (Sung)**

Tuesdays

11.00 am **Holy Communion (Said)**

One morning service is usually live-streamed on Sunday. Find it on our website, or on the church YouTube channel: youtube.com/hughendenchurch

Regular Groups

Hughenden Community Singers

Mondays from 7.30 to 9.30 pm. No need to be able to read music or to have sung before, and no auditions. Under-18s welcome with parents. Contact Liz on 07768 790029 or evmoseley@btinternet.com

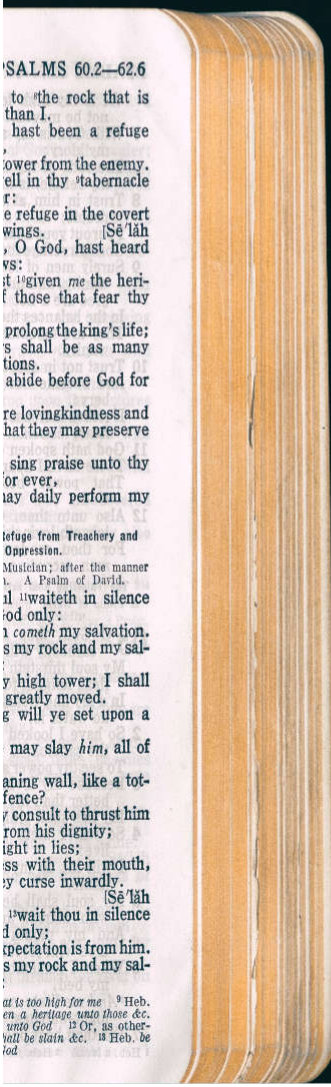
Friendship Morning

This is a get together in Church House on the third Thursday each month at 10.30 am. Primarily for those who are bereaved, who live on their own or who are lonely. The emphasis is on companionship and the atmosphere is light and cheerful. Contact Penny Austin on **01494 529596.**

Tiny Tots @ St. Michael's

Tiny Tots @ St. Michael's meets every Thursday in term time from 9.30 - 11.30 am in the North Room. Come for chat, play, craft and refreshments. Included, every second Thursday of the month, will be the Tiny Tots Service, a time of fun worship in church. For details contact Helen Peters - **helen.peters@peters-research.com**

January Lectionary



7th : The Epiphany

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Ephesians 3: 1-12

Matthew 2: 1-12

Evensong: Psalm 98

Baruch 4:36 – 5:end

John 2: 1-11

14th: Second Sunday of Epiphany

1 Samuel 3: 1-10

Revelation 5: 1-10

John 1: 43-end

Psalm at 9.00 am: 139: 1-9

Evensong: Psalm 96

Isaiah 60: 9-22

Hebrews 6:17 – 7:10

21st : Third Sunday of Epiphany

Genesis 14: 17-20

Revelation 19: 6-10

John 2: 1-11

Evensong: Psalm 33

Jeremiah 3:21 – 4:2

Titus 2: 1-8 & 11-14

28th: Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18: 15-20

Revelation 12: 1-5a

Mark 1: 21-28

Psalm at 9.00 am: 111

Evensong: Psalm 34

1 Samuel 3: 1-20

1 Corinthians 14: 12-20

Who's Who at St-Michael & All Angels

Keith Johnson
Vicar

Home: 01494 257569
Mobile: 07772 642393

keiththevicar@gmail.com

Day off: Friday

Helen Peters
Associate Minister

Home: 01494 716772
Mobile: 07792 118357

helen.peters@peters-research.com

Day off: Monday

Parish Office
Administrator: **Lynn Brooks**

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

07928 536543
office@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Licensed Lay Minister	David Tester	563354	Church Flowers	Sylvia Clark	562801
Churchwardens	Julia Grant	565746	Captain of Bellringers	Andrew Ottaway	07899 986644
	Frank Hawkins	565050	Safeguarding Officer	Roger Grant	07909 960938
Parish Clark & Verger	Arthur Johnson	521471	Crèche Rota	Agnes Dodwell	07958 568538
Church Notices & Website	Ben Brice	445899	Social & Outreach	Antony Rippon	07747 643270
PCC Secretary	Susan Brice	445899	Mothers' Union Parish Link	Louise Stallwood	712705
PCC Treasurer	Brian Morley	528633	Hughenden Village Hall	–	07815 163269
Organist & Choirmaster	Neil Brice	445899	Naphill Village Hall	Norma Clarke	563116
Servers	Andrew Cole	305020	Friendship Morning	Penny Austin	529596

All numbers are High Wycombe area code (01494) unless otherwise stated.

OUR VISION IS

to know God's love, and to share that love with everyone.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:16-19

Our aim is that all may know Jesus Christ, become his lifelong followers, and grow into mature members of the Church.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Our Church family will actively contribute to the life of our local community. Our Church activities & facilities will be accessible and we will welcome all with warm and generous hospitality.