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

outLook

The magazine for the people of Hughenden Parish | **JANUARY 2025** | FREE

INSIDE: *Murmurations* | Alpha Course | **Learn to Ring**

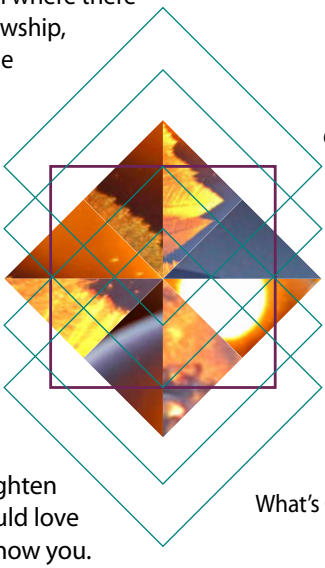
Welcome to **Your Church**

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

At my gym, the first few weeks of January are hectic and then everything gets back to normal! It is the same every year. Resolutions are difficult to keep. However, I'm aiming for two this time round. The first is to conjure up a positive attitude and to look for the good everywhere. It might seem a vain hope to search for that in our broken world but there really is so much of it out there. I truly believe that, but you just have to look a little deeper as the media is determined to only show us everything that is bad.

The second resolution is to try and spend at least half an hour outside each day. If you are someone who suffers from the lack of light and sunshine in these dark months or you just feel rather low, then getting outside really helps. Also of course, when you come back inside you then feel fully entitled to make a warming drink, find a cosy armchair and enjoy reading your copy of Outlook!

I have several friends who are very apprehensive, some even verging on the edge of fright, about what might happen to the world in the next few years. I offer you these words, which I find both positive and comforting, from one of my favourite poets: Mary Oliver.

> ***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.***

Happy 2025 to you from the whole Outlook team.

Susan Brice
Editor

from the Vicarage

Keith Johnson

Vicar

St Michael & All Angels, Hughenden

Another Year

Another year is dawning, Dear Master, let it be,
in working, or in waiting, another year with Thee.
Another year of mercies, of faithfulness and grace;
Another year of gladness in the shining of Thy face.
Another year of progress, another year of praise,
Another year of proving Thy presence all the days.
Another year of service, of witness of Thy love,
Another year of training for holy work above.
Another year is dawning; Dear Master, let it be
on earth, or else in heaven, another year with Thee.

Author Unknown

Dear friends, as we remove the last trappings of Christmas and look ahead into the new year, it has traditionally been a time to take a personal inventory of our lives. To look back at the happy memories of the past year, the special occasions we have celebrated, as we look at photos of birthdays, anniversaries, holidays and memorable get-togethers with families and friends.

How to make the most of your New Year resolutions

My mobile phone photo archive offers some suggested photographic highlights of the past year. As I gaze at each photo my mind drifts back months to each of those events, and I am reminded what a varied year 2024 has been.

We also naturally reflect on the more difficult challenges which the past year has thrown our way, such as loved ones we have lost and health concerns.

What hopes do you have for the New Year?

I love the sentiment of the poem Another Year. I invite you in joining me in hoping and praying that we would each know the loving and guiding presence of God in our midst in 2025 and beyond.

Happy New Year and God bless you.

What are your New Year resolutions for 2025? Sadly, one in four of us will give ours up by Epiphany, on 6th January.

Why so soon? According to behavioural scientists at University College London, we make our goals both too big and too vague. So, instead of resolving to 'lose a lot of weight', decide to 'lose three pounds in the next month'. With 'success' not far off, you will be motivated to keep going.

Another way to keep your New Year's Resolution is to involve a friend to aim for the same thing. As one scientist puts it: "the involvement of a partner has a sustained effect."

As for the time involved in reaching your New Year's Resolution, new habits are hard to build. Behavioural scientists say that on average, it takes 66 days to form and embed a new healthy habit into your life. So be patient, keep going, and look for some success in mid-March.

Remember what one scientist says: "Your vision is your destination, and small, manageable goals are the motor that will get you there."

From the Parish Pump

Kevin and Jen Cable - *A Change!*

Background

Kevin and Jen Cable have been our link ministry partners, serving in Jaffa, Israel for over 3 years. Their original aim was to reopen the Anglican church of St Peter's there, a church which had not been used since 1948, as well as to "strengthen the presence of Christ in the Middle East." As a church we have followed them with regular video and written updates, and we were delighted to have them speak in person at events here in May this year. So many of you will be up-to-date and familiar with the twists and turns their journey has taken and will also be aware of their future plans. However, we wanted to ensure that as many people as possible were aware of what they will be doing in future and why.

Recent Events

The reopening of the St Peter's has had to be put aside due to complex legal issues, and Kevin and Jen have concentrated on ministering to their congregation and to others using the facilities at Beit Immanuel Lutheran church, with which they have had a good relationship. However, events since the Hamas attacks in southern Israel on 7 October 2023, such as regular rocket attacks from Gaza, attacks from southern Lebanon by Hezbollah, and terrorist attacks in Israel as well, have made life in Israel a tense and at times terrifying experience.

Emotional visit to UK

As planned, Jen travelled to the UK in September to be with her daughter for the birth of their granddaughter, ahead of Kevin joining her before they went on to the USA for a planned visit. The night after she flew was the night of an Iranian missile attack on Israel and the night their dear friend and immediate neighbour, Inbar, was killed in a terrorist attack on the light rail station in Jaffa. The attack on 1 October killed 7 people, but Inbar's 8 month-old son survived. Not only was that attack exactly where Kevin and Jen walk and shop every day, but those few

hours were at a level of stress they had not experienced before, with Kevin locked in their shelter hearing shooting, screams, shouting in Arabic, fearing for his life and sending Jen farewell messages by phone. So, they gave very heartfelt thanks for God's protection and for an emotional reunion three weeks later at Heathrow, as well as for several days near family here in the UK!

Visit to the US

In the US, Kevin and Jen were able to unwind, relax and enjoy some peaceful space. Kevin preached at a number of churches, gave presentations at the Diocese of Fort Worth annual conference and at other places. He also made some videos for a mission newsletter. They were well looked after and were also able to meet up with Kevin's Spiritual Director.

Future – in the US!

Over several months, Kevin and Jen have had many conversations and prayers seeking the Lord's will for the work in Jaffa, with guidance and counsel from CMJ (their sponsor organisation - The Church's Ministry among Jewish People), the Diocese of Fort Worth, and the Anglican Church in North America. In an unexpected turn, Kevin was offered, and has now accepted, the position of Rector for the parish of St Mary of the Snows, Eagle River, Wisconsin. It was clear to both Kevin and Jen that the Lord had gone before them, putting people and things in place ready for the visit to the US and that had been instrumental in guiding them in discerning the way forward.

Immediate future

Kevin and Jen have now returned to Israel to begin the process of applying for visas to enter the US, and to prepare to handover the ministry in Jaffa. The visa process might take three months, so they could probably move early this year. Meanwhile, their ministry has been busy with Advent and Christmas, baptisms, etc, never mind the complex problems of an international move from Israel.

The Jaffa congregation?

Jen writes in a December e-mail, "Our congregation has welcomed us back although we have kept in close contact with them whilst away to offer pastoral support. They have not really been surprised by our decision to move on. They have journeyed with us, some for the whole time of being with the Diocese of Jerusalem, CMS and then CMJ and they have seen how difficult it has been here."

What does this mean for our church?

Hughenden church will continue to support the Cables both financially and in prayer while they are in Israel. Once they leave our financial support will stop, although we should continue to support their transition in prayer. The Mission Support Group will discuss and recommend to the PCC how our church

should continue to support mission in the wider world. We will update you in due course. Meanwhile, please pray for God's guidance in this process.

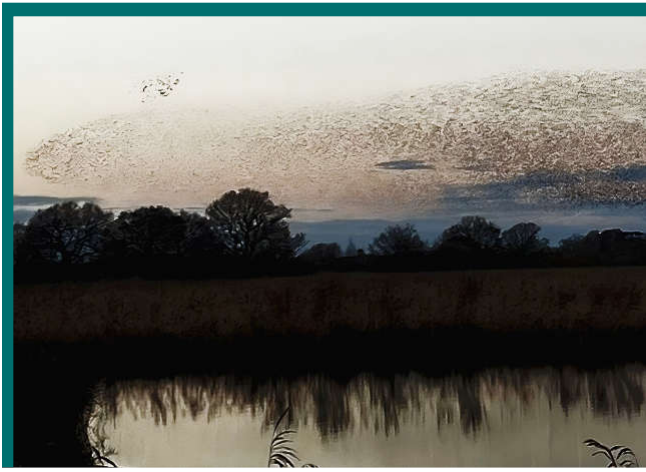
Thank you

Kevin and Jen write to us as a church, "We are so thankful for your prayers and financial support. We have felt the power of intercessory prayer in emergency situations, pastoral situations and personal situations. We know and believe that prayer changes things, and ask you continue to pray for us." Please continue to hold Kevin and Jen in your prayers as they make this change. Please pray for all the arrangements that need to be made and pray also for the continuation of the ministry in this region after they have left. Please also pray for peace in this troubled region!

Mission Support Group

Patiently waiting: not a bird in sight!

Oooh! Aaah! A magn



Murmurations

On Advent Sunday a few carloads of us left a damp and dismal Wycombe to experience the murmurations of starlings at Otmoor. It didn't look promising. However, once past the Chiltern ridge, the skies cleared and we enjoyed a beautiful late afternoon.

Otmoor is a wetland reserve. Its raised pathways were mostly puddle-free, but some stretches affirmed the advice that wellies were necessary. Those of us who thought boots would be adequate had to take detours.

There were surprisingly few birds on the walk to the observation area, but beyond the hide were cormorants, coots, and marsh harriers overhead.

Beautiful and still. Just the occasional starling. Then around dusk, as the sky turned a deep coral, a few more, and then a lot more, in flocks of 20 or 50, swooping down over water and reedbeds, and up and around, flocks merging, hundreds, now thousands! Suddenly a gentle whirring as a great cloud of starlings passed over our heads. Behind us, and in front, to left and to right. Now countless thousands, their seemingly random flightpaths more and more often skimming the reeds, and some just vanishing instantly into the reeds. Gradually less and less flocks flying. All groups soon disappearing into the reeds. Just the odd straggler arriving late, yet finding a vacant reed somewhere. All our oohs and aahs and wows fell silent, listening to the distant murmur of a million birds settling for the night.

Daylight was fast fading as we wandered back to the cars, avoiding the deepest puddles and peering into the ground for somebody's lost binoculars case. Of course we didn't find it, until back at the car we found it in the car-boot!

Mike Hill

nificent murmuration!

Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust

Armenia – Rebirth of the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Centre

A ray of light is shining from Armenia, where the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Centre has been re-established following the dire exodus at the end of 2023 from Nagorno Karabakh, its original location. Now it is to have a new home in Yerevan, whilst the centre's treatment and home visit services have already been resumed. An event to celebrate the re-inauguration was held there on 30 October 2024 where the UK Ambassador to Armenia was joined by Lady Cox and the local partners together with their patients and staff.

A Guest House to the North of Yerevan, the capital, has been acquired and is now being renovated. Continuation of care is led by Vardan Tadevosyan, the founder and director of the centres. With his unique experience, including continuing to work through two recent wartime events, Vardan is one of Armenia's most experienced rehabilitation therapists.

Around 9,000 of the refugees who were forced to leave Nagorno Karabakh have ongoing disabilities. They include children with cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome and autism. Some survivors from the violent fuel explosion that took place during the exodus are still receiving burns treatment.

More information on the rebirth of the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Centre, together with means of donating, can be found on: www.hart-uk.org

Christopher Mettem
Mission Support Group

Specialists from the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Centre treat severe burns at Armenia's Burn Centre in Yerevan.

HART attends a home visit for a patient with cerebral palsy.

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Got Questions?

Alpha

explore life faith meaning

on the

Hughenden Church Alpha Course

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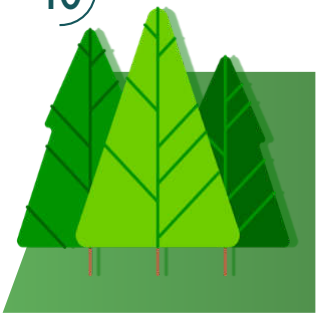
hughendenparishchurch.org.uk/Alpha

Starts 5th Feb



Nature Quest

"Perseverance" has persevered to the rim of Jezero Crater. For three years it has crawled around the flat floor of the crater, drilling samples of rock, but in recent weeks has slowly ascended the 500m rim to commence a new landscape for sampling. The crater is bone dry, but in times past was probably filled with water. The drilled samples should prove that. However, the estimated cost of retrieving the samples from Mars back to Earth is about $11billion, which is outside even NASA's budget! So that's not going to happen any time soon!

"Where there is water there is life" is true enough on Earth, but not necessarily so on Mars, or anywhere else beyond our planet. The geological structures on Mars are almost certainly created by rivers and seas, in a time of abundant water. All surface water has now gone and most of the atmosphere too, but it is conceivable that some forms of life existed in those watery times, and possible that fossil evidence will be found in Perseverance's samples. No-one is looking for little green men, but perhaps some basic life-forms like bacteria. Possibly they still exist, if there is dampness deep in the subsoils. Or possibly there never was any life on Mars.

Millions or billions are being spent world-wide on this question of "Is there life beyond this planet, or are we humans alone in the vast universe?" One might wonder how we can justify such expenditure. Who cares if there are bugs entombed in some distant planet? Shouldn't we spend it on solving the crises on our own planet?

The truth is, we have a deep and existential fascination with this question, and all the studies and test flights and

samples and telescopes and data and AI to crunch the data, are not going to stop. The huge expense gets justified by national prestige, political power, economic benefits and some inflated egos! But behind it all is this fascination.

Where might we find life out there? Too near the sun is too hot. Far out is surely too cold. But about 93 million miles is just right: the Goldilocks zone! Actually it's more complicated. Even our planet has a wide range of conditions for life, and some are very harsh: baking desert, frozen tundra, darkest deep sea, polluted streams: only the toughest can survive there, those evolved for the extremes. But if life-forms can evolve for our extremes, maybe they can evolve for other kinds of extreme?

Within our Solar System, the other planets are the obvious place to look for life, but the moons around Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus are possibles too. More fascinating are comets and meteors. They travel through different parts of our Solar System and may come from beyond, possibly carrying traces of life elsewhere. Many meteors have been collected and studied in laboratories, and comets are always studied (by telescope). Ten years ago the Philae lander touched down on Comet 67P/Churyumov–Gerasimenko, to directly test its dust and gases. Organic molecules are found, which could be the building blocks for the complex molecules of life, but as yet there has been no definitive sign of life in the Solar System other than on Earth where life thrives.

Further afield the search is for exoplanets orbiting distant stars: more than 5,800 have been found so far, and a few of them are not dissimilar to Earth. The difficulty is the vast distance to even the nearest of them. Any evidence of life there could only be observed indirectly. Thirty years ago exoplanets could not be observed at all, but science is developing rapidly and the two Space telescopes (Kepler and James Webb, mounted on satellites) have been key to the discovery of exoplanets.

Up to now our Nature Quest pages have mostly considered life on Earth, but the quest for nature beyond Earth is a quest on a far greater level. And as Christians, our understanding of God as Creator also needs to rise to a greater level.

Mike Hill
nature@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Nature Note

'for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace'

Isaiah 9:6

I know, I know, Christmas has come and gone - or has it?

Isaiah wrote in the present tense above but it was a prophecy for the future. Poetry I guess. For me the statement is a truth, for all time. For anyone, whenever, so yes for now in the New Year - a son is given.

How am I sure?

Do you remember the craze a few years ago where you were asked to look at a page of coloured dots, look hard sometimes for ages and a 3d picture would jump out at you? Most of them were a mystery to me, just occasionally I got lucky but at the expense of going boss eyed for a couple of days. This book we have, The Bible, can operate in much the same way.

Forget commentaries and guide books, all you need is a pair of eyes and The Holy Spirit then read, read, read … and the inspired word of God will come alive for you. I'm not saying that commentaries and guides are redundant, to be ignored. Educate yourself with those, understand the culture and history of the times, BUT you live now in the 21st century. I'm not talking about general principles or themes, I'm pointing out that the very words of Isaiah (for example) were written TO his compatriots but written FOR us and all who live after him, so they can jump out of The Bible and hit you between the eyes because God is talking directly to you. It can be so 3 dimensional that you could almost walk into the image you are given.

This Bible is the Living Word of God.

Look, I didn't mean to belt on so, blame Isaiah!

Did you know that the oldest recorded mother in scripture is Sarah, Abraham's wife, who bore Issac when she was 90? Crazy!

I thought of that when I read about Wisdom, at around 74 she's recently laid an egg, the oldest record of a bird reproducing. She's a Laysan Albatross, a big bird (2½ft long and 6½-7ft wingspan) who spends most of her time on the wing close to the ocean surface, maybe flapping her wings once every other day! In her lifetime she's reckoned to have flown more than 3,000,000 miles, over 120 times round the earth by length. Which makes a marathon seem microscopic.

A human mother at 90, a bird at 74, age is a funny old thing. Consider a pygmy shrew that lives a mere 12 to 18 months but is reckoned to make as many heartbeats in its lifetime as an elephant does in its 70 years. Are they comparable in other uses of time? In other words does the shrew pack as much into 12 months as an elephant does into 70 years?

Then we have trees, the biggest and oldest individual living organisms that have lived on our planet. Both natives of California, the giant sequoia and the bristlecone pine live not far apart. Bristlecones live on the slopes of the White Mountains and the oldest individual is close to 5,000 years old, meaning it was already 3,000 when Jesus lived and 1,000 when Abraham met the angels by the terebinths of Mamre. They've been around for the bulk of recorded human history.

So when you say you're getting old, remember the pygmy shrew and the bristlecone, think of Sarah and Wisdom and you can stand with the psalmist and say

> ***'O Lord, our Lord,***
> ***How excellent is Your name in all the earth!'***
> Psalm 8:1

Especially when those words of Isaiah jump at you

'for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given'

Happy New Year

Mike Bevan

Have you ever visited …
Great Marlow and its Bridge?

Crossing the Thames, west of London, fewer opportunities are on offer. In the Thames Valley there are but four bridges that come to mind: Maidenhead, Marlow, Henley and Reading. Three of them are obviously solid – the fourth, Marlow, less so. "Great" Marlow, as Marlow used to be called, was to differentiate it from Little Marlow and is a pleasant and very popular market town and retail therapy opportunity. Getting into, through and out of it can be a challenge because of the bridge.

Marlow Bridge was built in 1835, one year after the parish church. Both are described in Clement Shorter's "Highways and byways of Buckinghamshire": the church was dismissed as "modern" and the bridge as a "moveable suspension bridge." The poet Shelley lived nearby in West Street, in Albion House, between March 1817 and February 1818, the street then described as a country lane with houses few and distant apart. Now, of course, it is central in the town geography.

Marlow Bridge has an interesting history. It was designed and built by William Tierney Clark who graduated to design and build its bigger sister, the Széchenyi Chain bridge, which spans the Danube in Budapest. Marlow Bridge is the only surviving piece of his work in this country. It spans two counties, Berkshire to the south and our own Buckinghamshire to the north, whose unitary authority, Buckinghamshire Council, takes responsibility for its upkeep and maintenance, It took three years to construct, between 1829 and1832, replacing a wooden bridge which was located downstream and which collapsed in 1828. There has been a bridge over the Thames at Marlow since the time of King Edward III, whose reign in the 14th century lasted over fifty years.

Those who have driven over it will be well aware of its limitations. Some may have left paint on the guarding bollards (Buckinghamshire Council officially describe them as "flexible alignment markers"), that limit the size and weight of vehicles permitted to use it. It is a Grade 1 listed building, with a weight limit of 3 tonnes and, although elegant in both design and construction, is a delicate structure.

There have been many incidents that have either caused damage or blocked the bridge or both. In 2023, a motorhome blocked the bridge by exceeding the weight limit and getting stuck on the bollards, followed by a livestock trailer

which shared the same fate and had to be subjected to the indignity of being freed both as to itself and as to its livestock. A visitor, on holiday left both sides of a brand-new car on the bollards and the resulting cost to the car alone exceeded £1,000. Cameras, installed by the Council, recorded 97 breaches of the speed or weigh limits in a single day.

Few will have forgotten the incident involving a foreign lorry, weighing 37 tonnes, so 34 tonnes over the limit, which managed to get onto the central arch of the bridge, where one of its tyres burst and caused it to block – and seriously damage - the structure. The claim, finally, was £200,000, although the initial estimate was thought by structural engineers to challenge the future viability of the bridge. What the claim was from the Town's traders for loss of revenue when the bridge was closed for months, has not been made public.

The threat to the future of the bridge is perceived to be from smaller HGVs, taking a short cut over it. That was why Buckinghamshire Council has progressively narrowed the gap between the bollards in order to limit and discourage such risk taking. Additionally, there is the ever-vigilant Marlow Bridge Preservation Society on hand to keep careful eyes upon its welfare. It is walkable from one side – All Saints Parish Church on The Buckinghamshire side – to the other – the Compleat Angler on the Berkshire side. Rowers beneath on the almost straight stretch of waterway between Marlow Lock and the route in the Henley direction, provide a spectacle of effort on a pleasant landscape

Christopher Tyrer

16

Cartmel Priory

William Marshal - or William the Marshal, reputedly England's greatest knight - is inexplicably omitted from schoolroom history. However, his beginning was far from auspicious. Just six years of age in 1152, King Stephen, in his tussle for the throne with the Empress Matilda, placed the unwitting boy in a trebuchet and threatened to catapult him into Newbury Castle if his father, John Marshall, failed to surrender the stronghold. Making it vociferously clear to Stephen that he had other sons, John stood his ground, but for reasons unknown, William was spared.

His achievements are legendary. He unhorsed Richard the Lionheart in battle and spared his life. He loyally served five Plantagenet kings, including Richard, his long-time enemy. He defeated over five hundred opponents in single-combat tournaments, knighted two kings, ruled England as Regent, beat a powerful French army at Lincoln (aged 70 years!) and saved the kingdom of England. Also, in 1189 he founded Cartmel Priory. His intention was that the monks, brought from Bradenstoke Priory in Wiltshire, would offer daily worship to God and prayer for his family in perpetuity.

Situated in a remote landscape, the priory remained a backwater for centuries and, in addition to constantly struggling for funds (raised through tithes and donations), endured raids from Scottish armies in 1316 and 1362 and the collapse of the southern end of the building.

As well as daily mass, the main duty of the monks was to pray, which they did nine times a day. In the chapter house, under Augustinian rule, business was transacted, faults corrected, punishments inflicted and other decisions made.

Medieval wood carvings are a feature of the priory. Exploiting their skills, the carvers sculpted a unicorn, pelican, elephant, birds, fanciful heads, and even the devil enthroned. Around the interior you will meet several figures, including St Catherine, St Peter, the archangel St Michael, St John the Baptist and St Mary Magdelene. The stained-glass windows are stunning, particularly the magnificent west window and the Great East Window. The 'misecord' in the 15th century choir stalls provide an amusing note. These truncated, 'mercy' seats allowed the old and infirm monks to rest their bodies and remain standing while singing. And, unique in England, the upper section of the tower is situated at an angle of 45°, ostensibly to prevent the interior arches in the Church from falling outwards.

Sadly, as a result of the Dissolution of the monasteries, the priory was stripped of most of its fittings, vestments, lead and timber. However, the building itself was saved from destruction, it is believed, because Henry VIII felt an obligation to William Marshall for saving the realm. William died in 1219, and his statue stands behind the throne in the House of Lords, holding a copy of the Magna Carta.

This was the third time that Julia and I have visited Cartmel and, as with many of our ancient church buildings, we find there is always something new to learn.

Roger Grant

BOOK-ENDS

The Booker Prize has been in existence since 1969. The hope was that newly published work would become as central to the English speaking world as the winners of the Prix Goncourt are to that of France.

Publishers Graham C Greene and Tom Maschler came up with the original idea and then of course needed a financial backer. As so often happens, this came from a strange and unrelated place, through a friend of a friend. A conglomerate in Guyana called Booker McConnell, at the time a large wholesale food distributor, was interested in diversifying into literary estates and this seemed to them a useful connection.

Looking a little deeper, the colonial history of this company in South America is decidedly unsavoury as they were undoubtedly involved in slavery on sugar plantations. Although this was obviously long gone by the time they began to back the Booker Prize, there are many memories of the financiers being called the 'sugar daddies,' alluding to their past.

So, this year the prestigious literary prize went to Samantha Harvey for her book: 'Orbital.' The story takes place over 24 hours on the International Space Station as six fictional astronauts circle the Earth. This is a slim volume, only 136 pages and a novel that slides over the boundaries of various genres: literary fiction, sci-fi and philosophical drama. The author started to write in 2010 and then stopped, being overtaken by the inadequacy that can afflict many, i.e. how can I know what it is like in space? I have never been there and I will never go. They then remember the power of the imagination and that they are aiming to write fiction. After some confidence boosting research, Samantha Harvey finished the book during Covid lockdowns.

This would not normally be the sort of offering that would immediately attract me but as I was asked: 'would you like the new Booker Prize winner?' by my husband,

as his finger was poised over the button, inevitably I was going to say yes please. Blackwells speedily delivered it through my letterbox.

And I'm glad! This is not someone I had heard of before but I was quickly delighting in Samantha Harvey's use of language. I suspect I have written before in these columns that I love poetic prose and it was a lovely surprise to find this book full of such treasure. Take for instance: ' The Milky Way is a smoking trail of gunpowder shot through a satin sky,' or ' Over its right shoulder the planet whispers morning - a slender molten breach of light.'' The earth is the face of an exulted lover; they watch it sleep and wake and become lost in its habits. Eyes filled with sights that are difficult to tell.' As I am in danger of drowning here in a syrup of metaphorical indulgence, I will stop … but I do love it.

And so to the book, short on traditional plot but full of happenings.

What happens to time when you are orbiting the planet and a day lasting 24 hours no longer makes any sense? The rules and patterns that we live by on Earth are irrelevant when you are living in a small group of people who are essentially strangers to each other and yet in closer contact that they might usually choose. The mother of one astronaut dies unexpectedly. Her daughter cannot quickly go home. Does she feel disassociated from what her Earth bound family are going through? Maybe she knows her space tasks are for the greater good and uses this to cope with her individual loss. Reality says that those in the space ship can communicate with Earth but do they really? The astronauts find it difficult to relate their space experiences to those who are bound to solid ground. How to make sense or explain clearly?

This is an unusual book and I think a courageous Booker choice.

I enjoyed it but find I won't be in a hurry to find more by Samantha Harvey. She received a prize of £50,000 and when asked how she would spend it, she said she would buy a new bike! I liked her answer; very earth bound! Anyway, her book has leapt straight to the top of the bestseller lists, which is apparently called 'the Booker bounce.'I hope it fulfils the aim of the competition: to stimulate discussion of contemporary fiction.

I had fun looking at the backlist of Booker winners. Had I read many of them I wondered. Well, more than I would have thought actually, definitely the two writers who are double winners of this prize: Margaret Atwood and of course Hilary Mantel. Then there is Moon Tiger by one of my favourite authors: Penelope Lively, Offshore by Penelope Fitzgerald and one of which I have written recently: Hotel du Lac by Anita Brookner. Shuggie Bain, a debut by Douglas Stuart was another but I didn't finish it. I could sense it was brilliant but it was also too grim, sad and totally shocking for me to keep turning the pages.

Thank you for talking books with me; happy 2025 to you all … and thank you for getting in touch.

Susan Brice

January Recipe

By the time you are reading this it will be January and I always see this as a cold difficult month. Most people have eaten and drunk too much, lots of people head to the gym with their new year's resolutions and it is a long way until spring!

I will admit I haven't yet made this recipe but it is in a reliable magazine. Mince pies taste so wonderful when we start eating them in December but then by the time they are left over in January, they are not very inviting. So when I saw this recipe I thought it was such a good idea.

Good luck and I hope the recipe works OK!

Julia Grant

Mince Pie Cookies

INGREDIENTS

Makes 14 cookies

110g butter, softened

100g caster sugar

60g light brown muscovado sugar

1 egg

190g plain flour

½ tsp vanilla extract

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

¼ tsp salt

3 mince pies

METHOD

1. *Use an electric hand mixer to beat together 110g butter, 100g caster sugar and 60g light brown muscovado sugar for 3-4 minutes until pale and fluffy.*
2. *Add the egg and vanilla extract, beat until combined. And 190g plain flour, the salt and bicarb and bring the dough together with a wooden spoon.*
3. *Crumble 3 mince pies (150- 160g) into the dough and fold through. Cover and chill for at least an hour.*
4. *Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6. Line 2 baking trays with baking parchment. Then roll 2 heaped tsp (around 40g) into a ball and put on the baking tray. Repeat with all the dough and then flatten slightly. Bake for 10 – 12 minutes until the edges are turning golden. Leave on the trays to cool.*

Bell **Ringing is fun** and ...

*Could it be **your** perfect activity?*

- for **young people** (10 yrs +) and **adults** of all ages – individuals, couples, families or groups it's for all faiths & none (and you don't need to be musical, mathematical or strong)
- **enjoyable** & **satisfying** – experience new achievements
- a gentle **workout** – physical exercise with mental stimulation – burns calories, tones muscles and relieves stress
- an easy way to **make friends** – enjoy social activities and be part of a team and community
- a great activity **at university** – or anywhere (mostly UK)
- **inexpensive** – and be paid ringing for weddings!

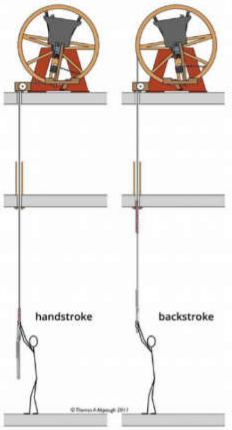
- boosts soft **skills**: teamwork, leadership, co-ordination, concentration, listening and analytical
- an **all-weather**, year-round activity which fits in with your other commitments
- full of **variety** – a centuries-old skill using new technology – with endless choices & places to visit
- makes your **community's soundscape**: Sunday services, weddings & special events
- produces a **fabulous emotion-stirring sound** for people to enjoy
- *it's the ultimate **Heavy Metal***: Church bells are the **loudest*** (unamplified) and **heaviest** musical instruments in the world . . . and they're metal!

* ringing chambers are usually sound-proofed for **safe noise levels**

How Bells are Rung

There are about 40,000 ringers in over 6,000 towers!

Bells are rung **full-circle** from the 'UP' position (upside-down) with a rope round a wheel
This allows ringers to vary ringing speed to change the order in which the bells ring

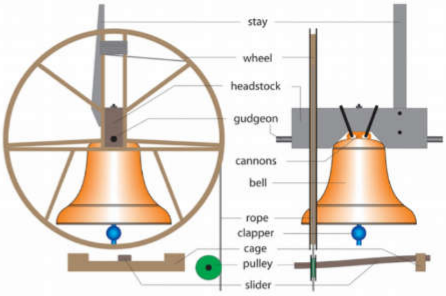


Learn at your own pace in stages:

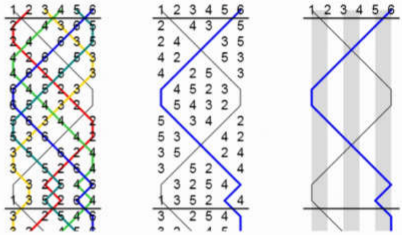
1. Bell handling
(pulling the rope)

2. Rounds (ringing in time with others)

3. Change ringing (methods)



A BELL IN THE "DOWN" POSITION



Discover more about Ringing ...

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

At **bellringing.org** and **cccbr.org.uk**

for more information and great videos of what ringing is about, with **contacts** for **learning to ring** near to where you live

And at **universityringing.org** if you're at uni

Would YOU like to give it a try?

An experienced ringer will be happy to teach you and there's no obligation to continue if it's not for you

*Most towers **welcome new ringers of all ages** and many have young people who enjoy ringing*

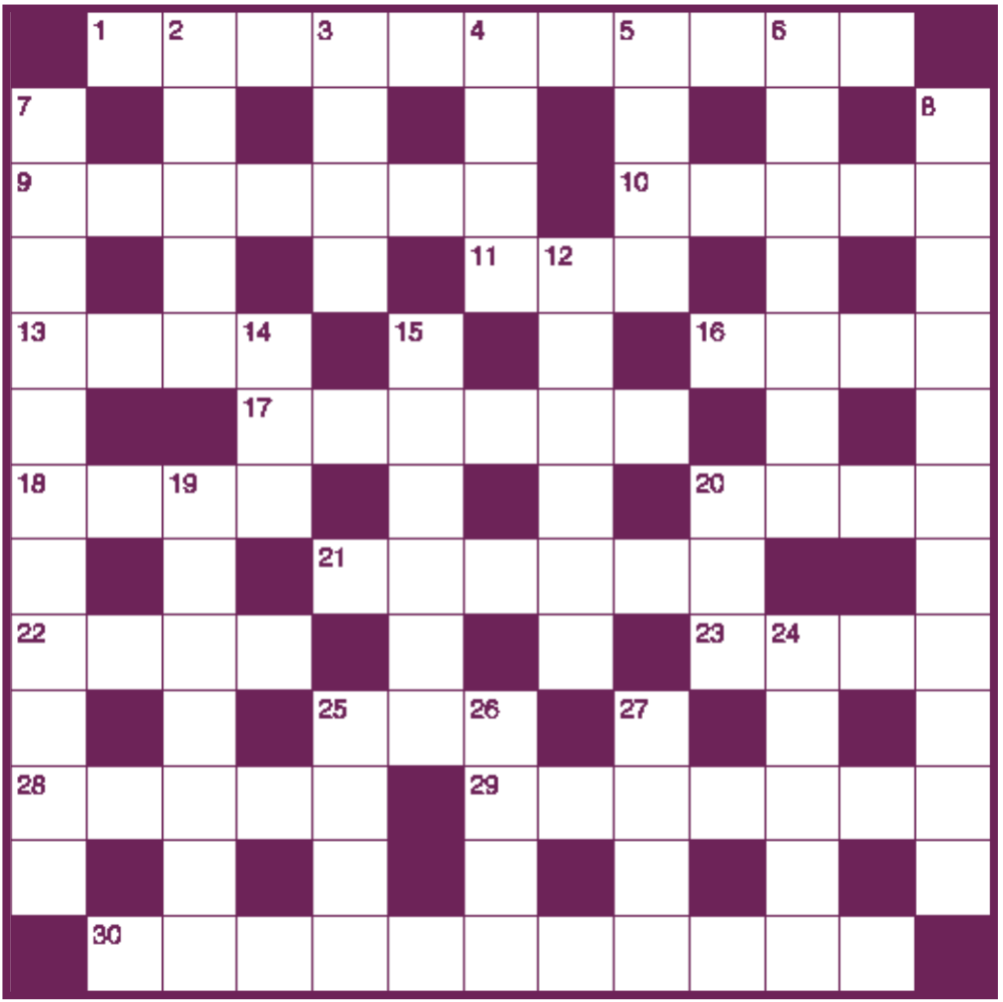
Bell Ringing

Contacts for further information and where you can learn to ring

For more information phone Verity Nicholls
Hughenden Bell Tower, St Michael & All Angels
07952 850760
NB: We need to train the next generation of ringers so in particular welcome interest from younger people

Author: Susan G Hall Licence: Creative Commons Non-Commercial Share-Alike See: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/

Crossword



Answers on page 26.

Across

1 Paul said the wrath of God 'is being revealed from heaven' against this (Romans 1:18) (11)

9 Go smite (anag.) (7) 10 'But — I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee'(Matthew 26:32) (5)

11 'Take and —; this is my body' (Matthew 26:26) (3) 13Type (2 Thessalonians 2:10) (4)

16 'Woe to those who — iniquity' (Micah 2:1) (4)

17 'How shall we — if we ignore such a great salvation?' (Hebrews 2:3) (6)

18 Opposite of evens (4)

20 Previously cited (Latin) (4)

21 'There is surely — — of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife' (Genesis 20:11) (2,4)

22 The Thessalonians were warned to keep away from every brother who was this (2 Thessalonians 3:6) (4)

23 Beat (anag.) (4)

25 To trouble or afflict (Job 16:3) (3)

28 Part of a roof (1 Kings 7:9) (5)

29 Attain (Job 5:12) (7)

30 Insect noted for its gymnastic ability (Psalm 78:46) (11)

Down

2 Smell (John 11:39) (5)

3 Lion's home (Jeremiah 25:38) (4)

4 'Jesus Christ is the — yesterday and today and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8) (4)

5 Tidy (4)

6 Made their home (Genesis 47:27) (7)

7 Their task was to carry the curtains of the tabernacle (Numbers 4:25–26) (11)

8 Timothy's was called Lois (2 Timothy 1:5) (11)

12 The Lover likened the fragrance of the Beloved's breath to these (Song of Songs 7:8) (6)

14 Times Educational Supplement (1,1,1)

15 Eight-tentacled sea creatures (6)

19 'And lead us not into temptation, but — us from the evil one'(Matthew 6:13) (7)

20 D.L. Moody's legendary song leader, — D. Sankey (3)

24 Rarely used musical note (5)

25 'Your will be done on earth — it — in heaven' (Matthew 6:10) (2,2)

26 and 27 'The Lord Almighty will — them with a — , as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb' (Isaiah 10:26) (4,4)

27 See 26 Down

Floodlighting

In loving memory of John and Shirley Babb.
Always close to our hearts.

Sheila, Rachel and Raymond.

If you have special occasions or memories to mark why don't you dedicate the floodlighting. Please send any dedications to office@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Godlessness. 9, Egotism. 10, After. 11, Eat. 13, Sort. 16, Plan. 17, Escape. 18, Odds. 20, Idem. 21, No fear. 22, Idle. 23, Abet. 25, Ail. 28, Eaves. 29, Achieve. 30, Grasshopper.

DOWN: 2, Odour. 3, Lair. 4, Same. 5, Neat. 6, Settled. 7, Gershonites. 8, Grandmother. 12, Apples. 14, TES. 15, Octopi. 19, Deliver. 20, Ira. 24, Breve. 25, As is. 26, Lash. 27, Whip.

Asking for your 'support'!

There will be further collection of old, unwanted or unused bras on the first two Sundays of January - 5th and 12th.

I will put a box at the back of church on those two Sundays only. Please don't leave anything outside of these dates.

Lin Smit

What's On at St Michael & All Angels

January

4 8.30 am Men's Breakfast: Church House

10 2.00 pm Memorial Service & Interment of Ashes of Edna Chamberlain: Church

25 11.00 am Marriage Preparation: Church House

February

4 2.00 pm Mothers' Union AGM: Church House

5 7.00 pm Alpha Course Start: 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

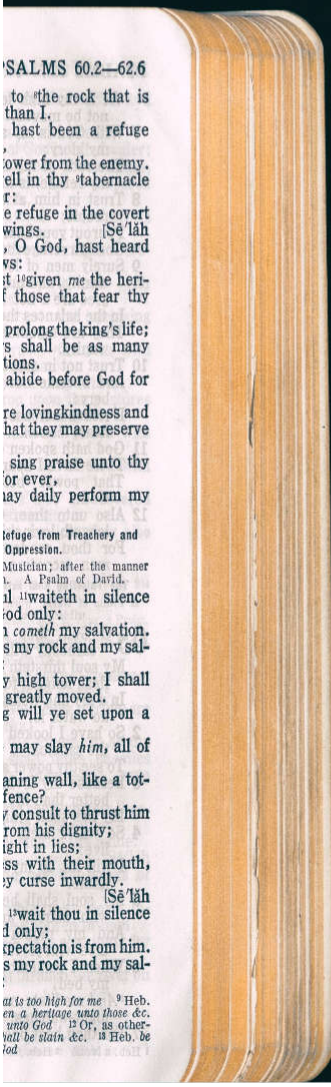
Friendship Morning

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 Helen Peters on **01494 716772.**

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



5st: The Epiphany

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Ephesians 3: 1-12

Matthew 2: 1-12

Evensong: Psalm 98

Isaiah 60: 1-9

John 2: 1-11

12th: The Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 43: 1-7

Acts 8: 14-17

Luke 3: 15-17 & 21-22

Psalm at 9.00 am: 29

Evensong: Psalms 46 & 47

Isaiah 55: 1-11

Romans 6: 1-11

19th: Second Sunday of Epiphany

Isaiah 62: 1-5

1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

John 2: 1-11

Evensong: Psalm 96

1 Samuel 3: 1-20

Ephesians 4: 1-16

26th: Third Sunday of Epiphany

Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6 & 8-10

1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a

Luke 4: 14-21

Psalm at 9.00 am: 19

Evensong: Psalm 33: 1-12

Numbers 9: 15-end

1 Corinthians 7: 17-24

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: Ben Brice

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

07928 536543
office@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Licensed Lay Minister	David Tester	563354	Safeguarding Officer	Roger Grant	07909 960938
Churchwardens	Frank Hawkins	565050	Captain of Bellringers	Verity Nicholls	07952 850760
	Andrew Cole	305020	Church Flowers	Sylvia Clark	07570 876530
PCC Secretary	Susan Brice	445899	Crèche Rota	Agnes Dodwell	07958 568538
PCC Treasurer	Brian Morley	528633	Social & Outreach	Antony Rippon	07747 643270
Organist & Choirmaster	Neil Brice	445899	Mothers' Union Parish Link	Louise Stallwood	712705
Servers	Andrew Cole	305020	Hughenden Village Hall	–	07815 163269
Friendship Morning	Helen Peters	716772			

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.

www.hughendenparishchurch.org.uk