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

outLook

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

INSIDE: *New Children & Families Minister* | **The Hidden Monk**

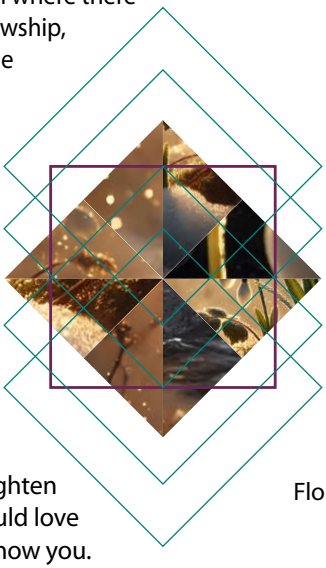
Welcome to **Your Church**

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.



From the Vicarage **2**

Introducing Our New Children & Families Minister **4**

Growing Hope High Wycombe **5**

A Chinese Puzzle **6**

St Valentine **8**

Holy Day in February *Candlemas* **9**

God in the Arts **10**

Oxford's Ancient and Historical Buildings **12**

Alpha Course **13**

Nature Quest **14**

Nature Note **16**

Bookends **18**

A Pea Souper **20**

The Hidden Monk **21**

Florence Nightingale Hospice **22**

February Recipe **24**

What's On at St Michael & All Angels **27**

February Lectionary **28**

Editors *Sylvia Clark*
Christopher and Jane Tyrer
Susan Brice

Design *Ben Brice*

Printing *Andrew Cole*
Brian Clark
Roger Grant

Distribution *Andrew Cole and Team*

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

www.hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Dear Readers

Here we are in 2025, already a quarter of the way through this century. I don't know about you, but I wonder where those years have gone and how quickly they have passed. That special dinner I cooked to share with friends on New Year's Eve 1999, only seems like a couple of years ago.

Not forgetting for one minute all the awful things happening in the world currently – wars, fires, floods, etc – but not wanting to sink into a depression, my thoughts turn to Spring which is only just around the corner. Spring, with new life of every sort – lots of beautiful spring bulbs bursting into flower (there are snowdrops in our garden and also in the churchyard); that tantalizing green haze on the trees just before the new leaves appear; birds busily collecting materials to make their nests; and in my family the promise of two great-grandchildren in the next few months. There is so much for us to be thankful for and to look forward to (see Nature Note).

As I write, I have just heard that a cease-fire has been agreed between Israel and Gaza, so a huge reason to be thankful. Let's hope and pray that this fragile truce will hold and that peace will return so that reconstruction can begin.

Don't forget that 14th February is Valentine's Day. I wonder how many ladies will be given a red rose, or even a bunch of red roses expressing undying love? Or, I wonder, how many ladies will actually send a card to someone they admire? Equal rights and all that! There is a reflection on St Valentine's Day later in this edition of Outlook. Have fun!

Sylvia Clark
Editor

from the Vicarage

Keith Johnson

Vicar

St Michael & All Angels, Hughenden

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

Do you ever find yourself carrying more than you can manage? Literally, or figuratively speaking.

During an early December Christmas present shop in the Eden centre, my arms grew longer and longer as our journey took us from one shop to another. I eventually made base camp in the Muffin Break café with my load, as my indefatigable wife Rachel continued shopping, stopping by from time to time to drop off more gifts.

This episode reminded me that we can only carry so much at once. The same applies to much of life. I never cease to be amazed by just how much we can bear as human beings, created in the image of God. However, that resilience to stress and pressure has limits. We have a responsibility to look after ourselves and each other.

The bible tells us that we should bear one another's burdens. If you have experienced times of challenge, you will probably be aware what a difference a kind word of support and encouragement and offers of practical help from a friend can make.

There are times to keep our heads down and shoulder the load, but there are also times when we would be wise to share that load with others. I have often found that asking for help can be really difficult to do, but can be so empowering when it is well received. Merely sharing a difficulty can help us to feel that we are not alone in our struggles. God puts special people alongside us to share those loads.

The language used in the bible verse at the start of this message is agricultural. I can visualise Jesus speaking to a crowd in a field, pointing to cattle who are yoked to a plough, as the farmer leads them across the field.

Being yoked to Jesus is not as harsh as this. Quite the opposite in fact, being yoked to Christ is liberating.

When you have finished reading this article, why not put the magazine down, close your eyes and turn to God in prayer… hand over to him all the burdens which weigh you down, and invite him to lift their weight from your shoulders.

God bless you

Introducing our new **Children & Families Minister**

Hi, my name is Chris. I'm the new Children and Families Pastor at St Michael & All Angels. Joining me are my wife Sue and two daughters, Kayleigh and Lilly.

Before I felt God call me into ministry, we lived in Deal on the southeast coast. There, I worked on the railway as a signalman for over 25 years. I have also been a fireman, as well as the National Children's Director for the Apostolic Church.

Our passion has always been working with children and youth, especially leading holiday clubs all over England.

After a while of playing Jonah and hiding from God, I embraced His calling and have now been in full-time ministry for seven years. I started in Harrow and then moved to High Wycombe nearly three years ago.

When we came to High Wycombe we got involved with Lighthouse and I am honoured to be the Chair of Lighthouse High Wycombe.

I am a massive Liverpool fan and love being out on my kayak. I also ran the London Marathon in 2013. My other passions are leading worship and my guitars (I have way too many of these). We very much look forward to being involved in every aspect of St. Michael & All Angels.

Two verses have stayed with me since going into ministry. One is Proverbs 3:5 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart…' and the other is Joshua 1:5 'I will never leave you'. With those verses in mind, I am sure that if we trust in God, whatever He has for me and my family as well as the congregation of St Michael & All Angels and beyond, it will be an amazing blessing.

Please do get in touch any time, especially if you would like to get involved with the work that is happening for the church and wider community.

Chris Coyston
chris@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Growing HOPE

High Wycombe

High Wycombe may not seem to have any obvious similarity to Kings Cross, Brockley, Maidstone and Redbridge but something significant it does have in common with them is a Growing Hope clinic based in a local church. A number of other towns are expected to have clinics opening soon and Growing Hope's vision is to have 20 clinics across the country by 2030.

The clinics provide free therapy by fully qualified therapists for local children with additional needs. 16.6% of children in the UK have additional needs and NHS waiting lists for therapy are long. Growing Hope is a national charity which aims to bridge the gap between need and provision, supporting children, young people and their families in partnership with local churches. They aim to provide hope for children, hope for families and hope in Jesus.

The High Wycombe clinic is based at St James' Church in Downley and is managed by Rosalyn Baskett, a speech and language therapist. The clinic also offers occupational therapy, music therapy and art therapy. They support families by running courses for parents to help them adjust to and process having a child with additional needs, as well as groups for siblings to share their feelings and experiences. Their services are available to people of all faiths and none.

Parents, carers or professionals make a referral and families then come to the clinic for an assessment. If Growing Hope can provide support, the family will join a short waiting list for a block of therapy sessions. During the weekly sessions, children work towards individualised goals, with parents and carers encouraged to attend so they can learn strategies to continue at home. Further support is available later if needed.

On 23rd February we shall be welcoming a speaker from Growing Hope High Wycombe to our morning services at St Michael & All Angels, when we shall be able to hear more about the charity's work and ask any questions.

To find out more in the meantime, or to make a referral, have a look at the display on the notice board at the back of church and visit Growing Hope's excellent website: growinghope.org.uk

Mission Support Group

6

A Chinese Puzzle

What connects all three images?

The first, shows the opulent shrine of Li-Hun-Chang in the municipality of Tianjin, China.

Li-Hung-Chang (1823-1901) was a prominent Chinese politician, general and diplomat in the 19th century. He fought rebellions, built arsenals, negotiated with foreign powers and rose to become one of the most powerful and influential officials in the Qing imperial court. An advocate of modernisation and reform, Li set up and supported many projects to develop China's industry, commerce, education, railways, telegraphs, mines and military. He also founded the Beiyang Fleet, the largest and most modern naval force in Asia at the time.

In 1896, seeking first-hand knowledge of Western politics, science and technology, Li toured Europe and America as China's imperial envoy. While in the UK, Queen Victoria received Li and appointed him an Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order. He also met with a number of important people at Westminster, including Lord Salisbury and William Gladstone, respectively the current and former Prime Minister.

However, for all his notable achievements, Li was and remains a controversial figure. Both inside and outside China, writers continue to portray him either as a titanic statesman or, as a traitor who sold out his country for personal gain.

The middle photograph is also the grave of Li-Hung-Chang (1899-1906), eternally at rest in the pet cemetery at Hughenden Manor. This Li, reportedly a wire-haired terrier, I suspect enjoyed a happier and less contentious life than his Chinese namesake, freely exploring his extensive woodland domain. Most likely, the dog belonged to Coningsby Disraeli (Benjamin Disraeli's nephew), who was resident at the Manor during this time. As to the dog's oriental designation I venture to suggest: firstly, as a Conservative member of Parliament in 1896 (the year of Li-

Hung-Chang's visit), and secondly, his consanguineal ties to a recent, if deceased, Prime Minister of the realm, Coningsby had every opportunity to meet with the imperial envoy. As to the emissary's thoughts on Coningsby's grand gesture we have no record but, I suspect like me he would be disappointed to learn that the dog was a terrier and not a Pekinese (had to get that in, sorry).

The relevance of the third picture? My research, such as it was, began with inserting the words 'Disraeli's dogs?' into the search engine and, surprisingly, I chanced upon the very things. They will be familiar to many of our elderly congregants, including myself. My Aunt Jenny kept a pair on her

mantelpiece at the Kinrara Estate near Aviemore, home of Lord Bilston, at that time Governor of the Bank of England. Although produced elsewhere, these porcelain (China!) figurines, matching pairs of fireplace dogs, were manufactured mainly in Staffordshire. Other breeds were produced but the spaniel was especially popular and the Disraeli model, you may have spotted, replicates the iconic black curl over Benjamin's forehead.

Folklore suggests that the figurines had uses beyond the ornamental. In one tale, depending on how the dogs were placed on the windowsill, a passing lover would know if it was safe to visit or not (The Victorians? Surely not!). In another, they are referred to as "comforters"; reputedly because they could be bought outside premises selling alcohol by errant husbands hoping to gain "comfort rather than conflict" on arriving home (The wisdom of carrying large porcelain items when intoxicated needs to be questioned here and, given the circumstances, probably more likely to be placed on a head than the mantlepiece.)

The answer to the question, of course, is Hughenden Manor.

Roger Grant

St Valentine

How did St Valentine become associated with lovers, romantic poems, hearts and arrows, etc? I looked at three articles about him in the Parish Pump, an online resource for parish magazine editors.

Rome and the Romans are mentioned in all three. Historians tell us there were two Valentines, one a priest and the other a bishop, both of whom were martyred so no romance there.

Apparently Pope Gelasius I in 496 AD named 14th February after some Christian martyrs, Valentine of Rome who was martyred in about 269, being one and so the day 'belonged' to him. This was probably the bishop mentioned above.

The Roman Emperor Claudius II, unsuccessfully trying to enlist more men for his armies, decided that marriage was the reason men stayed at home so he banned it. However, a young priest named Valentine felt sorry for the young couples, so secretly he married as many as he could. Unfortunately the Emperor found out and Valentine was condemned to death. While he was awaiting execution, he showed love and compassion to all around him, including his jailer. Valentine prayed for the jailer's daughter who was blind and she was healed. Just before his death on 14th February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine', so the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die and a little girl healed through his prayers.

By Chaucer's time (born 1382) the link was assumed to be because on this saint's day -14th February – the birds are supposed to pair: 'For this was Saint Valentine's Day, when every bird cometh there to choose his mate'. This was a poem written by Chaucer to celebrate King Richard II of England's engagement to Anne of Bohemia. All very romantic.

Or perhaps the custom of seeking a partner on St Valentine's Day is a surviving scrap of the old Roman Lupercalia festival, which took place on 15th February when, as well as participating in all sorts of riotous and unpleasant behaviour, young men would draw the name of a young unmarried woman from a name-box. The two would then be 'sweethearts' during the time of celebrations. When choosing holy days, the Christians were known to place them close to pagan festivals, a painless way to ease Christianity into Roman life and displace the original event. St Valentine's Day was set for the day before Lupercalia and Christian leaders began to downplay the usual raucous debauchery associated with this

festival. Eventually the pagan revelry was banned and only St Valentine's Day remained, but the name-picking stayed.

Today, Valentine's cards and decorations still bear the ancient symbols of love – Roman cupids with their bows and love-arrows. Interestingly, there are no churches in England dedicated to Valentine, a Roman Catholic saint, but since 1835 his relics have been claimed by various churches around the world.

Sylvia Clark and The Parish Pump

Holy Day in February

2nd February - Candlemas, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child, to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

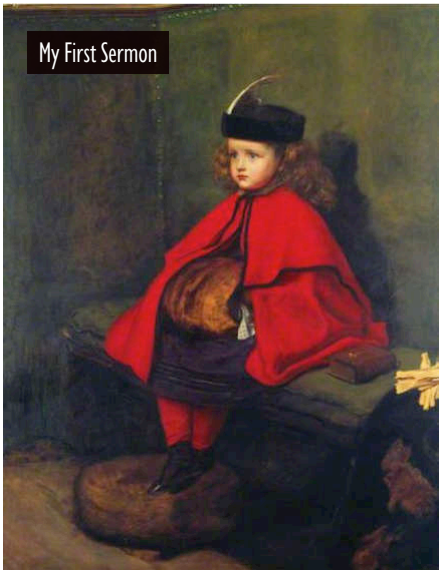
The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

From The Parish Pump

10

God in the Arts

‘My First Sermon’ by John Everett Millais


My First Sermon

My Second Sermon

There is a story of two men talking about their new vicar. One says to the other, “This new one’s not a patch on the old vicar. With the old one preaching I was asleep in five minutes. With the new one it takes all of ten.” Some churches in times past employed ‘sluggard-walkers’ who had long rods and walked down the aisles, ready to wake up the faithful if they had nodded off during the sermon.

Sluggard-walkers are not needed for this month’s painting, My First Sermon by John Everett Millais. It hangs in the Guildhall Art Gallery in London, which houses the art collection of our capital city. The Gallery is built on the site of an amphitheatre and was only completed in 1999, having replaced a building that was destroyed in the blitz of 1941. It has over 4,000 works, many of them from the Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite period. Among them is this painting by Millais which depicts Effie, his 5-year-old daughter sitting in Kingston Church. She is dressed properly and sensibly for the occasion with feathered hat, muff and a cloak of vivid red. Her mother’s prayer book and gloves are by her side. Effie is listening with great concentration.

When the painting was exhibited in 1863, it was a great success. In the following year Millais produced My Second Sermon – a very different occasion, for Effie has now fallen

asleep with her hat by her side. Millais was often criticised for his sentimental portraits of children as in Cherry Ripe and Bubbles. But in 1864 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Longley, praised this second painting for reminding us of 'the evil of lengthy sermons and drowsy discourses.'

As we look at Effie alert one Sunday, asleep the next, we can smile. But we might also ask how we respond to the Word that comes to us through the medium of words in the weekly sermon. The preacher has the daunting task of using this everyday coinage of words to draw us into that mysterious, life-giving realm of the Word, Jesus. The words spoken must make a straight path for the Lord to reach each human heart.

The two paintings of Millais depict the reality and fragility of this endeavour. Sometimes our attention is engaged; at others, drowsiness closes our eyes and even our hearts to the good news of salvation. On occasions the sermon sows seeds, which can bear fruit. At other times, all kinds of factors mitigate against the sermon's success. Let us pray that as listener or as preacher, we may be aware of the dynamic power of the Word, which, as Karl Rahner wrote, calls us 'out of the little house of our homely, close-hugged truths into the strangeness of the mystery of God that is our real home.'

The Rev Michael Burgess
From the Parish Pump

Oxford's Ancient and Historical Buildings

How they survived the war - and its link with Cambridge

Have you ever wondered why Oxford, even though it is relatively close to London, was bombed very little during World War II? A lot of major cities suffered huge bombing raids and many of their buildings were destroyed, including a number which were of historical significance.

The reason, it is thought, was that Hitler had chosen Oxford to be his capital once he had conquered Britain and wanted to retain its beautiful buildings. As we know, he never achieved his ambition. Oxford suffered little war damage but nevertheless faced hardships and sacrifices. There were war factories, notably those of the Morris Works and Pressed Steel Company. The Clarendon Hotel, a famous coaching inn in Cornmarket Street, was taken over by the Americans as a Red Cross centre. Around 18,000 London schoolchildren were evacuated to Oxford and schoolmasters and billeting officers were kept extremely busy seeing that the children were comfortably housed.

As the war went on with London suffering terrible nightly bombing raids, large numbers of evacuees came to Oxford, causing a huge problem to the local authority. The Majestic Cinema in Botley Road was turned into a reception centre and here, large numbers lived for many weeks. Several branches of Government departments were also housed in Oxford which soon became badly overcrowded. When the Americans joined the war Oxford became a favourite place for them on leave and there were large camps in the area.

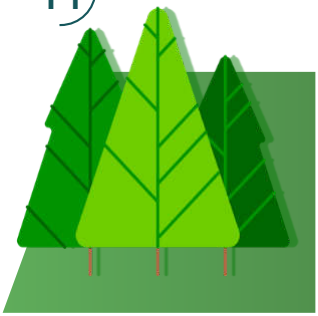
Today Oxford with its famous colleges, library and churches, remains very popular, not only with American visitors, but also with those from around the globe.

Cambridge and its University – a link with Oxford

Apparently in 1209 in Oxford, a student killed a woman which, mixed with growing resentment towards the scholars from the townsfolk, triggered a wave of violent vigilante justice and three of the murderer's fellow students were subsequently hanged. More terrified scholars fled the city, and over the next five years or so, a large number went to live in Cambridge which was a thriving, newly chartered county town and had at least one school of some distinction. They lived in hostels with a Master in charge, but by 1226 they were numerous enough to have set up an organisation, represented by an official called a Chancellor, and seem to have arranged regular courses of study, taught by their own members.

The crime fiction author, Susanna Gregory, has written a short story about the infamous murder which ultimately led to the foundation of the University of Cambridge. She has created her own interpretation of how those dark events might have played out. The result is entitled "Bloody Beginnings". Information can be found at www.cam.ac.uk/news/bloody-beginnings-given-the-crime-fiction-treatment.

Sylvia Clark
(with help from Google and Wikipedia)



Nature Quest

"Cleanliness is next to godliness": a proverb first quoted by John Wesley in 1791. Good for hygiene and for health of spirit as well as body. Babies are cleaned by parents, children are trained to wash themselves, and adults can sort themselves out.

Cleanliness is good for animals as well as humans. Kittens are licked by mother cat and mother cats lick their own fur. Their tongues have evolved roughness to help their personal hygiene. Some creatures have a servant to clean them.

Cleaner fish nibble the dead skin and parasites and infected tissue from larger fish. See photo of a pair of labroides dimidiatus cleaner fish eating inside the mouth and gills of a puffer fish. Note the blue stripes, typical of cleaner fish, giving the warning "Please don't eat me, I'm just doing my job!". This specialized feeding behaviour of cleaner fish has become a valuable resource in salmon farming for prevention of sea lice outbreaks, which benefits the economy and environment by minimizing the use of chemical de-lousers.

See also the white egret on the back of a hippo. This not just a convenient perch. The egret pecks the bugs out of the hippo's skin and keep the hippo healthy. See how white and clean the egret looks: further on we'll discuss how birds look after their feathers. This hippo is in lovely clean water, but in hot dry seasons hippos gather at receding ponds to wallow in the mud (remember Flanders and Swann's song of "Mud, mud, glorious mud…"). I've tried unsuccessfully to find a

picture of egret and hippo together in the mud. Maybe the egret takes its beautiful feathers elsewhere and has a change of diet!

Pigs are renowned for wallowing in mud, but they are also claimed to be very clean animals. Actually both are true. Pigs can neither sweat nor pant to keep cool in hot weather. Splashing in water is good, but mud is even better: it forms a thin layer which stays damp (and cool) whereas water tends to run off. If pigs are kept in reasonably cool conditions (less than say 20°C) they do keep clean and hygienic.

Feathers are vital for birds. See their complex structure in the diagram. Preening enables all the hooks and barbules to be smoothed into position and locked into place, so that wings can flex for aerodynamic efficiency. Preening also spreads oil from the uropygial gland (at base of the tail) for waterproofing, cleaning, and displaying feathers at their finest!

I love the picture of the crocodile having its teeth cleaned by a brave little bird. The bird can share some of the crocodile's last meal and plucks bits out of the nooks and crannies. A crocodile's teeth are its greatest asset and need to be looked after, so the crocodile resists the temptation of a little snack!

Some birds are not so much looking for a snack off the back of a big animal, as looking for nesting material. Sheep that are moulting are useful, but the soft hair out the ear of a stag has taken the fancy of the jackdaw pictured.

A different kind of cleaning is done by rolling in dust or even in an ant nest. The formic acid from the ants is said to deal with mites. In our recent cold weather, I saw a jackdaw rolling around in powdery snow, then preening a little and repeating the snow bath. Difficult to imagine what it achieved. Personally I'd sooner settle for a nice hot shower!

Mike Hill
nature@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Nature Note

"A shoot will come from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit"
Isaiah 11: 1

Can you feel the beat of the seasons?

Can you sense, maybe see, nature sleeping, yes, but slowly, slowly starting to shrug off winter? OK, you can still hear snoring but not from one and all by any means.

Autumn flowering cherries are still in flower, cyclamen have been showing off for months, snowdrops and crocuses following on.

On warm sunny days (yeah, I know, not quite as rare as a blue moon) bees are hunting out those favourite crocuses (insects are temperature controlled so won't hesitate to make the most of such rare days).

Wind pollinated trees are early wakers, they are designed to flower before their leaves emerge so hazel and alder are leading the way, you can spot their catkins heavy with pollen waiting for the slightest puff of wind. Willows, oaks, beech are other examples, in fact any tree with insignificant or green flowers will be wind assisted. Elaborate, flashy, coloured flowers are for insect attraction, a different strategy completely.

Some bird species are nesting now, there may already be young in some crossbills' nests, (occasionally on Stoke Common), ravens also nest before spring (Denner Hill) as do grey herons (Cliveden and Little Marlow). These are the more obvious examples but not the only ones, for instance if you are lucky enough to spot tawny owls setting up home they also nest early in the year.

I've just had my seed potatoes delivered, very exciting, and I'm getting other seeds listed to buy or check over from last year's harvest. By the end of Feb I'll have grow-lights going to start plants that need a long growing season. Chillis, tomatoes, shallots to start with. Why shallots you say, why not plant sets? Well I've picked up from some allotment bloggers that to get large banana shallots growing from seed is almost fail-safe, so here goes, I'll let you know.

Bird song has been building since the winter solstice and will reach a full crescendo around the spring equinox. The urgent business of raising young, producing seeds and fruit will be obvious all around us by then, a great time to visit bird hotspots or top gardens.

I have to stop being busy around then to remember Genesis 8: 22 "As long as the earth endures, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease". Thank you Lord.

Plant growth will be at its strongest and most vigorous at the same time. So "the shoot … from the stump of Jesse" needs spring to launch new growth. Well, that suggests that the life of Jesus our Lord was the height of humanity's spiritual spring, and we are the resultant fruit produced in the summer and autumn!

Bird watchers have been delighted with the re-appearance of the Booted Eagle in Cornwall, thought to be the same bird seen between Marlow and Henley some weeks ago. Another southern European visitor has been a Scops Owl in eastern Kent, a very rare sighting. They are slightly smaller than our Little Owl but eat much the same prey, small animals and large insects.

As a New Year's resolution I've decided to try and connect with a couple of re-introduced animals. Beavers in east Sussex and Pine Martens somewhere in the west country and Wales (they make take some finding; not only are they very shy, but the release sites are a closely guarded secret). Over 100 Martens have been released which is superb news. This attempt to repair the damage done through callous indifference and deliberate extermination of animals seen as obstacles to maximising profits and luxury, is to be applauded and supported methinks.

So as we prepare for the excitement of spring, let's remember our Lord - the Shoot from the stump of Jesse; David's family promised much but fell short as we all do, hence the stump analogy. But from this seeming failure comes salvation and redemption for all mankind.

Look after those shoots!

Mike Bevan

BOOK-ENDS

Looking for something different to read, I walked along my bookshelves and came across these two. They took me back to my teaching days. For several years I ran a lunch time reading group for able readers in year 6, so 10 and 11 year olds. We read a chapter of a book and discussed it and then the children took their own copy home and read a further chapter to talk about the next week. It was enough to keep their interest going but not so much that they complained about the time it took!

The Elizabeth Laird book, 'A little piece of ground' (don't confuse her with Elizabeth Luard who has written mostly cookery books and some volumes of memoir) writes of the experience of a young Palestinian boy living in amongst curfews and restrictions, his school life constrained and his family knowing the reality of constant fear as they hear Israeli tanks rolling through the streets of Ramallah, north of Jerusalem. This book was written in 2003, but no matter, sadly the situation would still be recognised by many today. It skilfully brings to life events that we still, decades later, hear reported daily in the news. The story is exciting and the narrative is propelled forward in such a way that the reader has to keep turning the pages. The publishers aim this book at young adults but maybe with a fully adult perspective the story is even more powerful and affecting.

Lynne Reid Banks, quite a prolific writer, died in her nineties a few months ago. Her fame came with her sequence of children's books about 'The Indian in the Cupboard'; stories that were very important in my house for several years. She married a Jewish sculptor, went to live in Israel and brought up three sons in a kibbutz before they decided life there was just too dangerous. They came to England where she lived for the rest of her life.

So here in 'The Broken Bridge' (1995) is the Jewish perspective. Set in a kibbutz, bordered by the River Jordan, a group of teenagers, siblings and cousins, are growing up. They have to find their way, morally and culturally through the literal and

metaphorical barbed wire and land mines that form the boundaries of their lives, designed to keep the Arab villages cut off from Israel's Settlements, but restrictive to both communities of course. It is difficult to pick out the main characters here as there are a whole group of them. The author seems to use this as a device for putting forward a range of views, political and otherwise. If it seems a little confusing, well, it is isn't it? Nothing simple about the situation at all.

Having reread both books after a gap of maybe 12 years, it was slightly depressing to realise how modern they felt, even though the atrocities of 7th October 2023 and the destruction of Gaza, were then in the distant future. The emotion that comes through very clearly is, sadly, one of hate. I was going to say pure hate but that sounds rather like an oxymoron. The hatred of Israeli for Palestinian and vice versa runs so deep and seems to those on the outside to be beyond comprehension. Both authors try to find ways to navigate the age-old complexities but, as today, it feels impossible to even imagine a way forward to peace.

I've read reviews of the books by Michael Morpurgo and by Michael Rosen and both are of the opinion that these books should be on the school curriculum. I would agree. They deal with difficult issues in an accessible fashion … and are still an excellent read for an interested reader of any age.

Having read up about Lynne Reid Banks, it was intriguing to find that she had written an adult novel that had sold very well, long before her successful foray into children's books.

The book is called: 'The L Shaped Room' and was first published in 1960. It is still in print but I bought my copy for a couple of pounds from Biblio. I wonder if any of you remember the BBC's attempt at modernism when, in the early 1960s they broadcast 'The Wednesday Play.' It scandalised much of the press, offended many and gave Mrs Whitehouse plenty of fodder for her first demonstrations. Well, reading this book seemed like the written version of one of these programmes, quite gritty. It is before 'The Pill' and before the Abortion Act. The word 'illegitimate' is just whispered, and divorce is liable to make you socially unacceptable. I promise you, it took quite a few years for the permissive sixties to actually get going! In the book, Jane Graham finds herself pregnant and not in a useful relationship. She lives with her father until he tells her to leave when she confesses her situation. She takes a scruffy, very unpleasant room in a boarding house in Fulham, finds a job in a West End Hotel and considers how the next year will play out. Thinking that she wants to be alone, it soon turns out that she is wrong and she gradually gets to know the other residents in the house. The positive, affirmative take on the book is to see how one can find friends, kindness and indeed love in the most unexpected places.

Looking further, as I tend to do, Lynne Reid Banks wrote more and made this into a trilogy: 'The Backward Shadow' and 'Two is Lonely.' And, it turns out there is also a film of 'The L Shaped Room.' What riches to explore.

I have wandered rather in this Bookends but I hope you find something of interest to you.

Susan Brice

The Airing Cupboard door is still open. Do visit - www.beyondtheairingcupboard.co.uk

A Pea Souper

Do you know what this is? And, if you do, then do you know who first used the term? Read on reader…

On a lovely London Day just before Christmas we were killing time in Waterstones Piccadilly before going to see a matinee of The Mousetrap. Unusually for me, we found ourselves on the sci-fi and horror floor. Not my natural home but with books it's always good to be open-minded. I was drawn to a small display of 'Tales of the Weird' and was soon in an armchair reading the introduction of 'Into the London Fog.'

London is geographically prone to fog as it sits in a river basin of clay surrounded by hills. Centuries before the industrial revolution, writers were commenting on this miasma of mist and dampness that frequently pervaded the city. Then from the birth of factories and industrial machinery, sulphuric soot was added to the mix creating this dirty yellow haze, perfect of course for hiding, for disappearing quickly and for generally creating an atmosphere of dark mystery, secrecy and somehow always a suggestion of evil and of bad deeds.

I have recently visited the Courtauld Gallery to see Monet's pictures of the Thames, always in a wintry fog. He apparently only liked to visit and paint in London when the weather was poor! I'm not quite sure what effect his cataracts had on this whole strange set up. 'Without fog, London would not be a beautiful city,' Monet maintained. This fascinating introduction told me that it was Henry James who first coined the phrase 'a pea souper' to describe the London fog. I am fond of pea and ham soup which is an inviting bright green but in the last 2 decades of the nineteenth century when James lived in London, pea soup would have been very yellow, being made of split peas. It would have been associated with poverty as it was very cheap to make and thus a staple food of the poor. Charles Dickens of course makes great use of the unhealthy, unpleasant nature of fog in several of his novels.

In the 20th century war time blackouts once again added to the atmosphere of danger and dirt and in itself, fog became a literary trope for degeneration and a city in a very bad way.

The Clean Air Act of 1956 brings the smog (smoke and fog together) into my living memory. As with any parliamentary Act, things did not change immediately. I have clear memories of my father wearing a

mask when he travelled on the commuter train from Sevenoaks in Kent to his office in Savile Row in the centre of London. This would have been in 1958 or 1959, so there was no sudden disappearance of smog.

Then it was time to leave the comfy Waterstones armchair and replace the book into its display. Very fortunately, it appeared once more, wrapped under the Christmas tree and then I read the collection of stories of strange happenings in various parts of London. The authors are many and varied: Elizabeth Bowen, Virginia Woolf, Edith Nesbit and E.F. Benson among others. There is something strangely comfortable about reading weird stories, nothing too, too awful here, in the warmth of one's home on a wintry afternoon. They go well with a glass of ginger wine or a pot of tea, whatever you choose. Weirdly though I think maybe the introduction was the most interesting part!

Susan Brice

The Hidden Monk

I wonder how many members of the congregations or visitors to the church have found the 'Hidden Monk' in St Michael & All Angels. The following is the entry in the Hughenden Church Guide (available from the bookshelves at the back of the church) which sheds some light on this figure:

'In the south-west corner of the North Chapel (now largely hidden from view behind cupboards) is a recumbent figure of a shrouded monk, as the tonsure indicates. He was also a priest, as is seen from the incised consecration crosses, and in the hollow of the breastbone is a minute human figure, symbolising the soul leaving the body. It is evidently ancient having been defaced by the puritans so that we now have no idea whose memorial it is.

It is also interesting as a sculpture – very few nude figures were made so early as this one and yet the detail of the carving on the arms, legs, collar bone, etc are clearly the work of a great sculptor who had made a close study of human anatomy.'

Do have a look at this figure if and when you are next in St Michael & All Angels and also avail yourself of a copy of the Church Guide (£1). It contains lots of interesting information and fascinating facts about the church.

Sylvia Clark

Florence Nightingale HOSPICE CHARITY

Remember a loved one this spring with a Precious Pink Peony

Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity has partnered with the magnificent Waddesdon Manor to launch a very special Forever Flowers event to celebrate and remember loved ones this spring.

A stunning, temporary display of 1,200 bespoke metal pink peonies will be installed in the Rose Garden at Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury in April. Each flower will represent the life, love and memories of a loved one.

The Charity is offering you the opportunity to be a part of this event by dedicating one of these limited Precious Pink Peonies, and an invitation to a private viewing of the display on Monday 28th April whilst the grounds are closed to the public. The installation will then remain on display to the public for three weeks. Once the installation is removed, those who have dedicated a flower will be able to take it home to display as a forever keepsake.

By dedicating a Precious Pink Peony, you will help us to provide compassionate local hospice care and be there for more patients and families across Buckinghamshire and its borders.

To dedicate a Precious Pink Peony visit fnhospice.org.uk/foreverflowers or call 01296 429975 for more information.

Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity

Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity is committed to providing comprehensive and high-quality care for patients with life-limiting illnesses across Buckinghamshire and its borders wherever and whenever they need it. We support their loved ones and carers through the toughest of times. We help families make the most of every day together.

These services include additional nurses for the In-Patient Unit, the only bedded unit in Buckinghamshire, to enable them to deliver dedicated, individual care to patients and loved ones. Also within the Hospice building we commission the Lymphoedema Clinic and Day Hospice service which offers physical, therapeutic and emotional support to people who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, but who are currently able to live independently at home.

For more information visit
fnhospice.org.uk
Facebook – @fnhcofficial
Instagram – @fnhcofficial
Twitter - @fnhcofficial

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

Got Questions?

Alpha

explore life faith meaning

on the

Hughenden Church Alpha Course

Email: keiththevicar@gmail.com

Tel: 01494 257569/07772 642393

hughendenparishchurch.org.uk/Alpha

Starts 5th Feb

February Recipe

A subtle, 'snow-topped' cake for the cold months! We are finished with Christmas now but the mixed spice and ginger preserve are very warming and welcome for the winter. I was also looking for coconut recipes as found I had bought an excessive amount. If you don't like ginger you can use a cherry conserve or marmalade as these also go well with coconut.

Julia Grant

Mixed spice, ginger and coconut loaf cake

INGREDIENTS

225g softened butter

200g caster sugar

3 large eggs

225g self-raising flour

2 tsp baking powder

1 tbsp mixed spice

80g desiccated coconut

To finish:

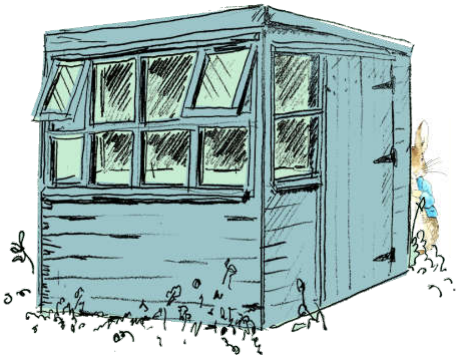
2½ tbsp stem ginger preserve

30g desiccated coconut

METHOD

1. *Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan, gas mark 4. Grease and line a 900g-loaf tin with baking parchment.*
2. *Use a mixer to beat the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.*
3. *Add the eggs one at a time, ensuring each is incorporated before adding the next. Lower the speed and add the flour and the spice before stirring in the coconut until fully combined.*
4. *Transfer the mix to a tin, level the top and bake for 1 hour 10 mins or until a skewer comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 10 mins and then lift onto a wire rack.*
5. *When still warm spread the preserve on top of the cake and then liberally sprinkle with the coconut.*

From the **Potting Shed**



Dear friends,

Here we are again at the beginning of another year. Even if world events are rather trying, my daughter would say I'm the master of understatement, then I hope your garden offers you a feeling of control and of endless colourful possibilities. It's yours and it's up to you isn't it?

One of the delights of February is seeing the daffodils sprouting. I particularly like the little early ones as they are so cheerful and less likely to be flattened by spring storms. Talking about things sprouting, well, children do that too don't they? Our little Seth is not so little anymore, just turned 4 and quite in love with nature. We made bird feeders the other day with some pine cones he had collected. He enjoyed smearing suet all over it and then we stuck pine nuts and bits of apple in the suet. Hanging up on a branch near the kitchen window we were able to sit inside with a cup of tea and some flapjacks and watch a robin enjoy his unexpected treat. Seth was determined to leave some flapjacks for his Grandad to have with his tea. He'll go far!

Next month we will really be able to see spring coming. There's lots to look forward to.

Till then, my dears,

Yours,

Cecily MacGregor

Jobs for February

1. If you fancy being thrifty and taking on a challenge why not try growing some of your veg from seed? With a little protection from the weather, tomatoes, peppers, sprouts and cabbages can all be sown now.
2. Clip, prune and cut off dying foliage, particularly after a cold, frosty spell.
3. When you have enjoyed your snowdrops, divide them and plant them while they are still 'in the green.'
4. Remove faded flowers from winter pansies to stop them setting seed. This will encourage new flowers when the weather warms a little.
5. Now is the time to move any flowering shrubs to a different part of the garden if you wish to.
6. I have been reading some gardening books over the winter and I think Monty Don would be telling you to mulch, mulch, mulch!

What's On at St Michael & All Angels

February

4	2.00 pm	Mothers' Union AGM: Church House
5	7.00 pm	Alpha Course Start: Church House
18	10.00 am	Mothers' Union Coffee Morning: Church House

March

1	8.30 am	Men's Breakfast: Church House
5	7.00 pm	**Ash Wednesday** Holy Communion with Ashing: Church
15	10.00 am	Baptism Preparation: Church House
22	12.00 pm	Wedding of Fiona Murray & Darren Lewis: Church
23	10.00 am	**Combined Holy Communion**: Church
	11.30 am	Annual Vestry Meeting & Annual Parochial Church Meeting: Church

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

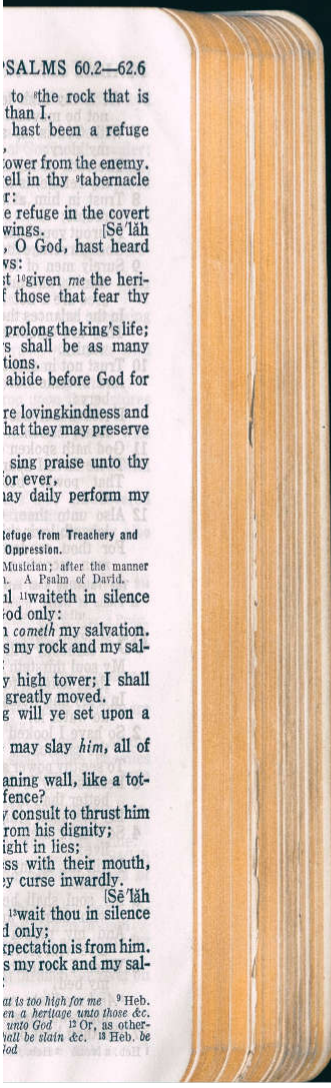
This is a get together in Church House on the third Thursday each month at 10.30 am. Primarily for those who are bereaved, who live on their own or who are lonely. The emphasis is on companionship and the atmosphere is light and cheerful. Contact Helen Peters on **01494 716772.**

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**

28

February Lectionary



2nd: Candlemas

Malachi 3: 1-5

Hebrews 2: 14-18

Luke 2: 22-40

Evensong: Psalm 132

Haggai 2: 1-9

John 2: 18-22

9th: Fourth Sunday before Lent

Isaiah 6: 1-13

1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

Luke 5: 1-11

Psalm at 9.00 am: 138

Evensong: Psalm 2

Hosea 1

Colossians 3: 1-22

16th: Third Sunday before Lent

Jeremiah 17: 5-10

1 Corinthians 15: 12-20

Luke 6: 17-26

Evensong: Psalm 6

Hosea 10: 1-8 & 12

Galatians 4: 8-20

23rd: Second Sunday before Lent

Genesis 2: 4b-9 & 15-25

Revelation 4

Luke 8: 22-25

Psalm at 9.00 am: 65

Evensong: Psalm 147

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

Matthew 6: 25-end

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	Children & Families Minister	Chris Coyston	07855 389998
Churchwardens	Frank Hawkins	565050	Safeguarding Officer	Roger Grant	07909 960938
	Andrew Cole	305020	Captain of Bellringers	Verity Nicholls	07952 850760
PCC Secretary	Susan Brice	445899	Church Flowers	Sylvia Clark	07570 876530
PCC Treasurer	Brian Morley	528633	Crèche Rota	Agnes Dodwell	07958 568538
Organist & Choirmaster	Neil Brice	445899	Social & Outreach	Antony Rippon	07747 643270
Servers	Andrew Cole	305020	Mothers' Union Parish Link	Louise Stallwood	712705
Friendship Morning	Helen Peters	716772	Hughenden Village Hall	–	07815 163269

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