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

# outLook

The magazine for the people of Hughenden Parish | **MAY 2026** | FREE

**INSIDE:** *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* | **Christian Aid Week** | **Nature Note**

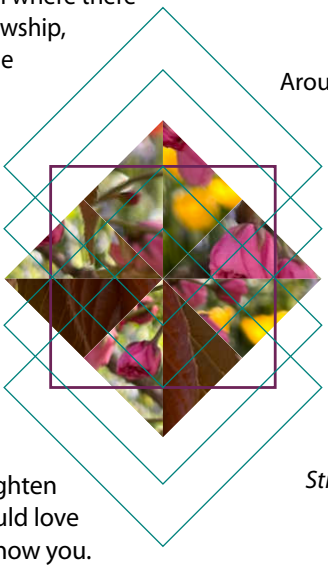
# Welcome to **Your Church**

**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

**As I write we are just coming up to St George's Day. St George is, of course, the patron saint of England, but we are not the only country to lay claim to him. Historically the countries of Portugal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Ukraine, Malta, Ethiopia, the regions of Catalonia and Aragon in Spain and the cities of Moscow and Beirut, also claim him as their patron saint. He must have been very busy! Known as a military saint, his feast day is 23rd April and he is widely venerated for representing Christian chivalry.**

Now we are in May. May Day was said to be a day of 'unbridled merriment' when ancient pagans got up to 'all sorts'! I was looking at all the special days of this month, as listed in The Parish Pump, our online resource for parish magazine editors. There are various holy days for saints, some of whom we may never have heard. As well as Philip the Apostle, Julian of Norwich and Dunstan the Abbot, there are names such as Pachomius (patron saint for administrators), Comgall (saint for those in education) and Alcuin of York, (Abbot of Tours in France, died in May 804), who first developed cursive script – or as we know it 'joined up' writing. There seem to be saints for pretty well all events.

Two very important days in the Church's calendar are Ascension Day on 14th May, commemorating Jesus' ascension into Heaven 40 days after he was crucified, and Pentecost on the 24th when we remember the Holy Spirit descending on the disciples. (See the article from The Parish Pump on page 14.) So, all in all, May has lots going on.

Enjoy the beauty of all the new growth around us and have a very happy May.

**Sylvia Clark**
**Editor**

# Not from the Vicarage

**Helen Peters**

Associate Minister

*St Michael & All Angels, Hughenden*

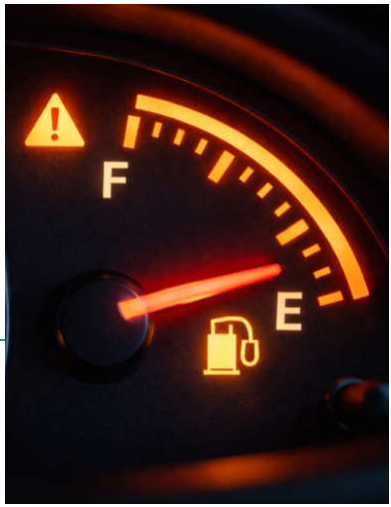
**St Michael & All Angels is enjoying seven joyful weeks of the Easter season, a lovely balance to the six weeks of Lent that led us there! After the astonishment of that first Easter morning, when the tomb was found empty, the risen Jesus appeared to more than 500 people over the course of forty days. Each encounter helped the disciples recognise Him in new ways, preparing them for what would come next.**

On 14th May we celebrate Ascension, the moment Jesus returned to His Father. It can feel like a farewell, but it is also a moment of commissioning and sending out. Before He left, Jesus instructed His friends to wait. They were not to rush ahead under their own strength. God would equip them with everything they needed for the Christian journey. As Jesus returned to heaven, the Father would in turn send the Holy Spirit upon His people.

Then, on 24th May, we reach Pentecost, the joyful celebration of God pouring out His Spirit on the Church. Pentecost is often called the Church's birthday, and for good reason: it is the moment when God gives His people the power, courage, and fuel they need for all He is calling them to do.

Because that is what the Holy Spirit is for us: fuel for the journey.

Those of us who own petrol or diesel cars know the frustration of not being able to find fuel, or the shock of discovering we can no longer afford it. Electric-car drivers know the anxiety of the battery running low. But God's fuel is different. The Holy Spirit is limitless and free, and God is eager to give




generously. So generously, in fact, that His Spirit can overflow in us, equipping us with everything we need to be the people He has created us to be.

As we travel from Easter to Ascension to Pentecost this year, may we come with open hands and open hearts, ready to receive the Spirit's power, God's own life in us, the fuel for our journey of faith.

And if you're looking for a place to be refreshed or to wrestle with ongoing questions of faith, we'd love you to join us. You will always find a warm welcome at St Michael & All Angels. Details of all our services and activities can be found on our church website: hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

# Those Easter Bonnets!

**On Easter morning, the church blooms before the flowers outside, thanks to the ladies of the 9.00 am service and their wonderful bonnets - each a joyful celebration of spring. They arrived in splendour, setting the tone for the day with ribbons that danced, blossoms that framed each brim, and the occasional feathered masterpiece swaying gently with the hymns. No two were alike, yet together they formed a tapestry of warmth, tradition and quiet pride.**

**More than the hats, it was the women beneath them - their laughter, bright greetings, and timeless presence - that made the moment special, linking this Easter to those long past.**

**And it must be said: the 9.00 am ladies have set the standard. So, to our dear 11.00 am congregation - a friendly challenge awaits. Let your bonnets be bolder, brighter, and just a touch more daring. After all, a bonnet that turns heads is a hallelujah all of its own.**

**Kayleigh Welsh**

# The Great Easter Egventure

**The Great Easter Egg Venture was a cracking success this year, bringing together around 80 children and their families for a joyful day full of laughter and community spirit. From creative crafts to lively games, there was something for everyone to enjoy. The highlight, of course, was the egg-citing scavenger hunt, where little explorers hopped around in search of clues before gathering for a cheerful celebration.**

A huge thank you goes to our wonderful volunteers, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the event run so smoothly - you truly are egg-stra special!

We're also incredibly grateful to everyone who came along and made the day so memorable.

And phew - despite the forecasts, the rain stayed away, leaving us free to enjoy every moment.

All in all, it was an egg-ceptional day filled with fun, smiles, and plenty of Easter magic!

**Chris Coyston**
**Children & Families Pastor**

SOPHIE

MAY REFLECTION

# Connection and Belonging: We Are Not Meant to Walk Alone

**By May, spring is in full bloom. Gardens are alive with colour, trees are full of leaves, and the world feels more open and connected again. After the quieter months of winter and early spring, this season gently invites us outward — not just into nature, but toward one another.**

Over the past few months, we have reflected on beginning gently, listening within, trusting the process, and recognising renewal. May brings a simple but powerful reminder: we are not meant to walk this journey alone.

Connection is a deep human need. We are created for relationships — to be seen, to be heard, and to belong. Yet even in busy communities, it is possible to feel disconnected. We may hesitate to reach out, unsure if others feel the same, or we may wait for the "right moment" that never quite comes.

But often, connection begins with something small. A kind word. A shared walk. A moment of genuine listening. These simple acts can open doors to deeper relationships and a stronger sense of belonging.

The Bible reminds us in Ecclesiastes 4:9, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour." This speaks not only of practical support, but of companionship — of walking alongside one another through both joy and challenge.

You might reflect this month:

- Where do I feel a sense of belonging in my life?
- Is there someone I could reach out to or reconnect with?
- How can I offer presence, kindness, or encouragement to others?

Connection does not require perfection. It asks only for openness — a willingness to be present and to meet others where they are. When we share even a small part of our journey, we create space for others to do the same.

As we continue walking forward together, may we notice the beauty of connection all around us. May we have the courage to reach out, and the grace to receive. And may we remember that even the smallest gesture of kindness can remind someone — including ourselves — that we truly belong.

**Bea Glowacki**

# Beyond Reasonable Doubt

*The following is an edited version of a homily given by Christopher Tyrer on 12th April on the theme of doubting Thomas - John 20: 19-31.*

## Introduction: Doubt and Faith

I am not, by nature, a gambling man. You may not be aware of that. However, I would be willing to place a sizable bet that none of you, unless they were attempting to be humorous, would describe me as athletic.

Some years ago, now, I was invited to try a particular sport - bungee jumping.

I was assured it was quite straightforward: your legs are bound, in some kind of rudimentary harness; you jump off a bridge and gravity does the rest. Before reaching the ground, the rope is meant to pull you back up, leaving you dangling. The only thing, so far as I could see, continuing its downward trajectory seemed to be the contents of one's stomach.

This is not the place to repeat my response to the invitation. Suffice it to say, I did not trust the organiser's ability to accurately calculate the ratio between my weight and the distance to the ground, before the rope acted as a crude braking mechanism.

## The Role of Doubt

Doubt is healthy. It stirs and challenges us. Blind faith, without reflection, discernment and judgement, is not.

In court, there are standards of proof. In criminal cases, the jury or Magistrates must be sure of guilt – being satisfied beyond reasonable doubt of guilt - before a conviction. In civil cases, the judge decides on the balance of probabilities: is it more likely than not that the claim is true?

It is a fundamental requirement of judge craft that the decision maker keeps an open mind until all the information is known, all the evidence is tried and tested, all the arguments deployed, before a final decision is made.

While doubt can be healthy, it may become harmful and counterproductive if it dominates our thinking or defeats us. Unresolved, unexamined doubt about our faith is as detrimental as blind acceptance, without a searching for truth.

We are called to be disciples – to examine the evidence, carefully and dispassionately – and come to a decision about our faith. There is no room for sitting on the fence, or wavering. We have to be proactive, judgemental, looking at the evidence.

## The Apostles and Their Doubts

The apostles were ordinary men. Of the twelve, four were fishermen, three are believed to have worked in similar trades, one was a tax collector for the Romans - hardly a popular occupation - and the rest were labourers of various types.

They were far cry from Eton and Oxford, a standard once admired and aspired to, some time ago now. These disciples were people of experience in life. No inherited wealth here, but those homed in the vicissitudes of life.

So, the background of the disciples whom Jesus chose to be His followers and to be the founders of His Church were, broadly, from the fishing industry with skills of fishing with nets, mending nets and transporting fish and, perhaps, trading in fish. There were, primarily, Galilean labourers and are often depicted as uneducated laymen. Yet their influence on humanity is beyond the measure of our minds or words.

Thomas, who seems to have been a carpenter, then a fisherman is remembered now as the Doubter. He was a good man and, as a saint, is remembered for his caution. Research suggests that he was about 29 years of age, married with four children, when he became a disciple. He had not enjoyed a happy upbringing. His twin sister is believed to have died young, aged about nine years: hence Didymus (twin).

His strength was his analytical mind and his personal courage. He had a keen and sure sense of fact. He was a thinker, known to be scrupulously honest and loyal. Once he had made his mind up, he was steadfast and determined, but there seems to have been justification in his description as a man plagued by doubts. His mind traversed all the possibilities and he worked through them before making his decision.

We heard, three weeks ago, of the account of Lazarus' death and the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. In that account, Thomas believed that Lazarus was dead and enjoined his fellow disciples to go to Lazarus' funeral wake. He had decided that Lazarus was dead and, as he saw it, the rest of the debate was pointless.

## Thomas's Caution and Faith

As we heard in the reading this morning from St John's Gospel, Thomas was not willing to accept his friends' claims that Jesus was alive, having been crucified, without evidence.

The evidence before him was that the disciples had locked the doors of the room in which they were meeting out of fear of their neighbours and fellow Jews. He knew that Jesus had been betrayed and suffered a brutal death. He knew the relevant details – nails into hands and spear into side.

To Thomas, the evidence was clear: Jesus was dead and buried, not alive. How could anyone survive that manner of death? If He was alive, why lock the

doors? Why hide away from everyone? Why be afraid?

Once Thomas had seen Jesus and had placed his fingers in the marks of the nails and spears, he recognised that the evidence was irrefutable.

His acceptance and belief were total: "my LORD and my GOD." From then on, he was a devoted and successful disciple. He went to Cyprus, Crete, the North African coast and to Sicily. He was in Malta and was writing the beginnings of a gospel, when the agents of the Roman Empire caught up with him and put him to death.

Fast forward to our second lesson from Acts. We are post Ascension, post Pentecost. The Holy Spirit had come amongst the disciples and filled them with power, knowledge and authority. Their confidence knew no limits and they no longer were hampered by fear or doubt.

Peter is a good example of the change that had come to pass. Having denied Jesus three times after Jesus' arrest and having wept bitterly over his cowardice, he now was a leader.

It was his destiny to become the rock upon which Christ's Church was to be founded and built.

He had also been imbued with knowledge of scripture, since he was able to quote verbatim what David had said about Jesus.

Now Peter was passing on his own enlightenment, as an eyewitness to the crucifixion and death of Jesus and of His resurrection. "God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of the fact." Not only did they no longer doubt or fear – those conditions were history – they were prepared for whatever lay ahead for them.

God had prepared these unlikely people to preach His Gospel and found His earthly church.

Just as their lives were transformed by belief and faith, so they would transform the lives of countless millions since, both directly and down the ages of time. It came at a heavy personal cost to all but one of them. Only John is believed to have died a natural death, from old age.

Even he is said to have survived an attempt to burn him in oil. Peter was crucified in Rome by Nero, James the son of Zebedee was put to death by the sword of King Herod in Jerusalem and so on. Martyrdom was the inheritance of most of the disciples.

That was the price that they paid for our salvation – for the process whereby the Good News was spread across the known world and, ultimately, to us. That is what happens when doubt is satisfied and the knowledge of the truth come about. There is a place for doubt along the pilgrim path – the kind of doubt that encourages the search for the truth. If there was no doubt, then there would be no incentive to seek the truth, no

incentive to have discernment and judgement, no incentive to make up our minds by using the intelligence that we are blessed with.

"Blessed are they, who have not seen, yet believe." is a sentence from scripture with which we can all identify. We are here because we have made that decision – we are believers. We have wrestled with our doubts. Yet we still do have our doubts from time to time and that can be disheartening. Or is it? Is it not the continuing evaluation of the evidence and of the foundations of our faith, which ensures that it is not just a comfortable blanket or coat?

It is a living faith, in which we are striving constantly to improve our knowledge about it and spread it to others; those who remain to be convinced or who have decided to reject the evidence in favour of something else – power, money, possessions, position – or just indifference and laziness in the comfort of plenty.

We have seen, in the three readings for today, the psalmist professing confidence in faith and trust in God, in the value and fulfilment of service and in the promise of eternal life. We have seen the value of doubt, as a stepping stone to the certainty of faith and how confidence in faith can shape destinies and our individual lives.

In John Chapter 8 verse 32, we find Jesus saying these words: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." But free from what?

The commentaries suggest that the freedom is from the bondage of sin, spiritual ignorance and fear. To me, however, the words also mean freedom from the shackles of doubt - doubt that challenges faith and belief, challenges ignorance as we search for the truth and makes us be afraid of losing our place in eternity. The truth – of those who have not seen but do believe – enables us all to live freely in faith.

It should also remind us of those who are persecuted for their beliefs – imprisoned, tortured and killed for their belief in the truth that set them free. We are so fortunate.

A final quote from John Wesley; it serves as a guide for what we do with the faith as have learned and accepted:

> Do all the good you can,
> By all the means you can,
> In all the ways you can,
> In all the places you can,
> At all the times you can,
> To all the people you can,
> And for as long as you can.
> AMEN

**Christopher Tyrer**

# christian aid week

## 10-16 MAY

**Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. Everyone is equal in the eyes of God.**

Christian Aid has been a charity since 1945, launched to raise funds for refugees in Europe following the Second World War. The annual Christian Aid Week was introduced in the UK in 1957 and remains a firm fixture in our fundraising calendar. The charity's key aims are to eradicate poverty and its root causes, to promote justice, and to challenge unfair systems that keep people poor. It works in many countries worldwide providing emergency aid during disasters and supporting long-term development like healthcare, education, and livelihoods. With local partners, it helps communities become self-sufficient. It also campaigns for change on issues like climate change, inequality, and human rights. It is a charity driven by Christian values but helps people of all faiths or none, aiming to create a fairer world where everyone can live free from poverty. The charity does not just call for monetary donations, it also understands the strength of prayer and is committed to encouraging churches to hold poor communities in prayer.

**Christian Aid Week 2026** is focusing particularly on helping mothers in Nairobi, Kenya, who face the harsh reality of urban poverty and the daily struggle to feed their children. Working with and receiving specialist training from their partner Beacon of Hope, funding will go to urban farming projects to help parents tackle food insecurity, cultivate fresh produce in limited urban spaces, and generate an income to sustain their families. We are invited to help mothers like Fridah Moraa and Belinda Kasudi who live in densely populated informal settlements, as they work to shield their children from hunger and build a brighter, more hopeful future. You can read their full stories by going to: caw.christianaid.org.uk/uk/about/what-christian-aid-week/growing-hope-small-city-space

# Growing hope in a small city space

*In Nairobi, Fridah is using urban farming to protect her family from hunger and build a more secure future.*

They make for a humbling read. Fridah has a strong faith, which gets her through difficult days, and strengthens her resolve to persevere and to provide for her children.

***"It's hard, but in God I trust, for the strength to keep going every day."***

**How can you help to make a difference?**

Visit Christian Aid's website (www.christianaid.org.uk) to find out more about the charity and the variety of ways in which you could help. During Christian Aid Week look out for the Christian Aid envelopes for donations in church. We will send these on. You can also donate online by using the QR code below.

**Mission Support Group**

**Share joy**
**Grow hope**
**Fight hunger**

Donate at www.caweek.org

# Pentecost

## Not a Ghost but a Gift

**We used to call it Whitsun – 'White Sunday' because long ago children marched to church in white on that day. There are no processions nowadays, and we've even changed its name. It's now 'Pentecost', which is more accurate but needs explaining.**

Pentecost marks a vital event in Christian history. It is celebrated 50 days after Easter. The year Jesus was crucified (which took place at the Passover), the remnant of His followers, just 120 of them, were together in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were afraid to show their faces in case the authorities arrested them. But on the day of Passover, they had an amazing collective experience.

They described it in terms of wind and fire, a great surge of spiritual energy and confidence. Afraid no longer, they burst out on to the streets where crowds were gathering for the festival, led by Peter they began to tell them about Jesus and His resurrection. As they did so, although many of the people in the crowd were foreigners who spoke other languages, everyone heard them in their own tongue. Peter told them that what they were seeing was the fulfilment of an old prophecy when God would pour out His Spirit on the human race, men and women, young and old.

As a result of His words and the extraordinary spectacle, 3,000 people believed and were baptised in the name of Jesus. They were the nucleus of what in 100 years would be a Church that would turn history upside down. For Christians Pentecost is in effect the birthday of the Church.

Many people find the whole idea of the Holy Spirit mysterious and elusive. It wasn't helped by the earlier title 'Holy Ghost'. The spirit is not spiritually a 'ghost' but a precious gift.

**From the Parish Pump**

# Around the local church cafés

*Our efforts on our readers' behalf know no bounds, so we set off to investigate another church café for you.*

## The Atrium Café at Holy Trinity, Hazlemere

The Atrium Café at Holy Trinity, Hazlemere is, like Kingshill, professionally run with volunteer assistance. It is held in a purpose-built modern extension to Holy Trinity Church on Amersham Road, Hazlemere.

**Opening Hours**
Tuesday - Friday 8.30 am - 2.00 pm.

**Parking**
Large, free car park adjacent to the church.

**Refreshments available**
Large variety of locally baked cakes, supplemented by some provided by volunteers | Some savoury bakes | Usual range of coffees and other drinks.

**Noteworthy**
Fresh flowers on all tables | Range of 'Church' reading material | Toys available | Modern toilets, including children's 'loo seats'! | Outdoor seating for summer days | Cards accepted.

As part of a major refurbishment, the atrium was added to the church in the 2020s and gives access to it, providing additional facilities for the many activities that take place in the church. Originally built in 1845 in the then (apparently: who knew?) fashionable neo-Norman style, the church was substantially extended in 1957, including the addition of the striking tower on the northwest corner. The reorganisation of the buildings provided an opportunity to properly view all the stained glass in the body of the church.

Worth, as a more celebrated guide than ours says, 'a detour'!

**Jane Tyrer and Charlotte Tester**

# Mothers' Union

## March

On 3rd March the Mothers' Union was greatly entertained with a super talk given by Phil Waterton regaling his time as a children's tutor for the film industry. We learnt that the rules for children aged five to sixteen years old being employed by the industry are very strict and always adhered to.

There were humorous anecdotes that came from Phil's time while filming was underway; films mentioned were Robin Hood, The Harry Potter series' Jingle Jangle and many more. He did name drop some famous film stars he had encountered and found them to be very nice, ordinary people who were happy to talk about and share their experiences.

A vote of thanks was given and members enjoyed an insight into Phil the author, when he talked about his book, the journey to writing it and why he took so long to complete it. (Read the book.) Many members supported Phil and purchased his book, 'Paddling our Own Canoe'.

**Chris Gould**

## April

At our meeting in April, we welcomed Richard Chalmers from the Florence Nightingale Hospice. The Hospice runs Butterfly House, in High Wycombe. It is a purpose-built day hospice that cares for hundreds of patients each year. They offer a range of specialist services to day patients who are in an earlier, more stable phase of a life-limiting condition. Richard was able to bring us up to date with the latest news of developments in their work.

We asked him to talk about recycling as this is one of the main sources of income for the charity. It was an eye-opener. It seems that it is possible to recycle almost

Phil Waterton and Julia Grant with Phil's book

anything, with a few notable exceptions! Items can be taken to one of their shops - there is now a new one in the Eden Centre in Wycombe - or if too bulky, they can be collected. The shops rely on a regular supply of items to remain attractive to passers-by. We were encouraged to go home and look through our cupboards!

Florence Nightingale
HOSPICE CHARITY

Note: Butterfly House was formerly run by South Bucks Hospice but this has now merged with the Florence Nightingale Hospice. Their commitment to caring for patients with life-limiting illnesses is at the heart of the merger.

Instead of our usual meeting on 5th May, we will be enjoying our annual lunch at The Limes café at Hildreths Garden Centre, Prestwood. At our 2nd June meeting, our speaker is Susan Brice who will be talking about the history of St Michael & All Angels. This meeting will be held in church at 2.00 pm and as usual, anyone is welcome to join us.

**Ann Gee**

## Ladybirds Awake!

**You will probably have noticed the huge numbers of Harlequin Ladybirds hibernating in what seemed like all available corners of the church windowsills. Well, spring has sprung, with this result!' The picture was taken in the vestry in early April.'**

# God in the Arts

## ‘He gave us eyes to see them’ – Stained Glass windows

**You may know the story of the little girl with her family during a guided tour around a cathedral. As the bright sun streamed through one of the windows, she asked the guide who were the people depicted there. “Those are the saints,” he replied. Later that evening the girl told her mummy, “I know who the saints are.” “Do you, dear? Who are they?” the mother asked. The little girl replied: “They are the people who let the light shine through.”**

When the summer sun rises, its light catches the east window of a church I look after. It shines through the figures and colours of the Annunciation scene to bathe the chancel in a warm glow. Later as the sun sets, it shines once again through the west window showing Christ surrounded by angels, with the same wonderful effect. They are two stained glass windows by the Victorian designer, Kempe. But in St Mary’s Church, Fairford in Gloucestershire, there are an incredible 28 windows of medieval glass that have survived the centuries and continue to astonish the visitor.

As the sun catches this array of windows, the colours take on a new, vibrant life. We see scenes in the life of our Lord and our Lady, Old Testament prophets, New Testament apostles and the communion of saints. The eye moves round and we reach the west window portraying Christ in majesty and the day of judgement. This great work has been attributed to the royal glazier, Barnard Flower, who was influenced by the late medieval illuminated prayer books. The windows are a living witness to his skill and faith.

George Herbert has a poem that calls us to shine out like the church windows. It is easy, he says, to be “brittle crazy glass”, but in God’s good grace we can become like a window where colours and light, belief and life can combine and mingle to radiate out into the world.

**From the Parish Pump**

# Mayfly

Mayfly in the Spring-scented air
your wings are not yet dry.
As sub imago, stupefied,
poised between pupa and perfection
you blink disbelieving at a world unknown,
vaguely sensing that through blossom blown
you soon will rise exultant to the skies.

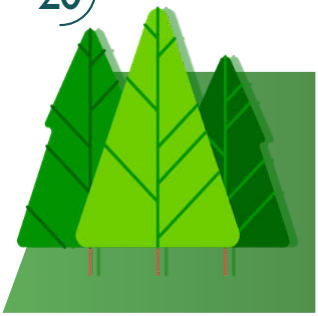
Did you, through those long dim nymphean days
suspect that from your watery haze
you would emerge, transformed?
Or that your drab, diffusive light should come from this fierce fiery sun
by which your frail, transparent glory is now warmed?

Mayfly, couched on the Spring-scented earth,
assuming final birth,
imago, transfigured, perfected;
prepare now for the bliss of sun ascent
and leap incredulous into worlds of cloud.
As borne by an increscent winged power
you rise triumphant in the lark-tuned air.

How could you, in those now forgotten streams
intimate from any nymphean dreams
this ecstasy of flight?
Or guess the fear impelling flight towards the shade
should be sublimed
in this, your bold unbridled climb towards the light?

Mayfly wafted on the evening air
your wings grow tired,
spent, yet splendidly fulfilled.
Prepare now for the bliss of final sleep.
You, and your fleeting day, they say, will die.
But death you know and value as rebirth,
the welcome step of unimagined worth.

**Ron Cretchley**



# Nature Note

***How many are your works, Lord!***
***In wisdom you made them all;***
***the earth is full of your creatures.***
***There is the sea, vast and spacious,***
***teeming with creatures beyond number—***
***living things both large and small.***

*Psalm 104*

**This psalm should be read by everyone who loves our beautiful planet and the life that thrives on it; put this alongside Romans 1.v20 and it's easy to see why God calls to us from His creation.**

We live in an age where we're increasingly aware of our responsibity for our actions on a personal and communal level as far as the state of the natural world is concerned. We have, most of us that is, morphed from the Victorian 'nature lover' who got his gun or poison out to take a closer look at any creature that caught his eye, into a generation that delights in the same but as observers, delighting in nature's profusion. And we've been taking the pulse of nature by observing what's happening to the species around us.

It's been alarming and depressing to see that trends of decline have accelerated within the lifetimes of most of us, since World War II. Thinking of our own islands, we've seen birds like the turtle dove (99% decline in the last 50 years), red backed shrike (once common, now no longer a breeding species), curlew (50% decline in last few decades), plunge into trouble. How many of us still see house sparrows, starlings, house martins, swifts nesting in our gardens or streets?

BUT because of our collective awareness we are seeing reversals, admittedly small and localised at the moment, but we have to start somewhere.

Both red backed shrike and curlew are the subject of possible RSPB help based on habitat creation and management, using contacts who own suitable land. Turtle doves have proved that if the habitat is there, then they will return - the Knepp Estate in Kent has been using 'rewilding' techniques for almost thirty years with

stunning results. Basically, it's a 'hands off' regime.

Large birds of prey are a group of birds that catch our imagination and of course, we've seen the results of the red kite releases and breeding success around us. That followed the osprey scheme (started in the late '60s) and now the white tailed eagle programme. You may have noticed talk of plans for releases of golden eagles in England, I was lucky enough to see a pair in the east of the Lake District before they died, the last English pair, back in the '80s.

Another plan is the reintroduction of the hen harrier, a controversial bird if you like to shoot red grouse, for which large areas of moorland are managed - a perfect habitat and prey for the harriers! Large numbers are shot or poisoned annually; education and understanding needed there methinks!

Then there's our hitherto native fauna that have been exterminated long before our birds hit steep decline. Wolves and bears won't be reintroduced, but there is talk of the lynx, particularly because it's seen as an answer to uncontrollable deer numbers. This would have to be in large scale wooded areas which both deer and lynx prefer. In fact, lynx are shy and won't leave cover unless forced to, perfect for those worried about interference with our own livestock.

Beavers are being licensed for release in an increasing number of sites, as close as Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire to us. There is also a fenced beaver colony in

North London, although there are several wild groups, along the River Otter in Devon and in Tayside, Scotland. (Scotland is reckoned to have over 2,000 wild beavers currently.) The group that oversees beaver releases freed around 100 in England last year. Pine martens are also being considered for release schemes. They are natural predators of squirrels, particularly the greys. Reds are lighter and can use branches and twigs that the martens cannot. The only populations at the moment are in the Lake District and southern Scotland, although a dead one of unknown origin, was found in South London recently; is someone pre-empting proposed releases in Kent?

So, nature 'geeks' are making an impact, there's a lot of discussion and education taking place about where, how and what we should do to try and reverse our sometimes catastrophic impact on the natural world.

We are stewards of this planet and its resources, whether it's in our own gardens or the wider world. Let's make sure that with care and prayer, we look after our God's creation.

**Mike Bevan**

# BOOK-ENDS

## Darkness in Zennor - Helen Dunmore & Daffodil Days - Helen Bain

**DH Lawrence was told to leave Cornwall in 1917 because he had a German wife and the paranoia was such that the locals believed she was sending signals to U boats in the coastal waters. This is historical fact, but then Helen Dunmore has woven a story around it.**

Even without the draining horror of the war that wouldn't seem to end, the war that ate up young men and spat them out broken onto foreign soil, small Cornish communities would always be suspicious of strangers. To some extent that may still be the same over a century later, with many remote villages feeling that you would always be an incomer unless you were born there. An 'emmet' is an archaic dialectical term still used, usually in a pejorative sense, frequently applied to holiday makers or people who don't permanently live there. Further north in Devon and Somerset the word 'grock' or 'grockel' tends to used, very much in the same derogative way.

Zennor, a small settlement, a few miles from St Ives, situated high above the sea was where the writer DH Lawrence hoped he could escape the war-fever that had flooded London. He wanted a simple country life, growing vegetables, writing at a small table that had views of green fields. He invited the writer Katherine Mansfield and her partner to join them, but they didn't stay. Mansfield couldn't cope with the mud, the wind and the lack of heating. Lawrence's wife Frieda had given up every-thing to be with him: a husband and children, a very comfortable, aristo-cratic life and plenty of money. She so wanted to be happy and be liked.

Helen Dunmore introduces a young girl, Clare Coyne into their lives. She is lonely, despite being part of a large extended family and she is a talented artist. Clare is fascinated by these people who arrive and rent a cottage. They are so different and because of that, so exciting. She draws them, they share meals, they walk and talk. And eventually of course they are noticed and their friendship is frowned upon.

Clare is also involved with her cousin John William, who is on leave and suffering from shell-shock. He is surrounded by farming families who are struggling

desperately to avoid their sons being drafted. 'Essential occupation' was much mooted and sometimes serious 'accidents' took place to an arm or a leg. A damaged or disabled son was infinitely preferable to one who was sent to France and would very likely never return. And why was DH Lawrence not in uniform? Actually he was deemed unfit for service due to tuberculosis; unhelpfully this was not a condition that was very visible.

And then there is a pregnancy. Clare is consumed by secrets and half spoken truths and devastated by the tragedy that overtakes John William. And who is the father of her child? The dark tide of gossip will quietly roll on in Zennor and DH Lawrence and Frieda will leave Cornwall, having found no escape or sanctuary but just suspicion and distrust.

Years later, after another war, and heading towards the 1960s, a decade of change and possibility, there is another high profile literary couple: Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath. They too travel west, leaving London and arriving in North Tawton in Devon. Sylvia has in mind a bucolic, country life which really doesn't quite exist, however hard she tries.

This is Helen Bain's first novel and it does not follow the usual linear structure. Instead of being chronologically guided, she takes a series of encounters that Sylvia has in the Devon village and uses these to paint a picture for the reader of this vibrant, young American woman who, all her life, has struggled with prolonged periods of dark, debilitating depression.

The author writes with compassion about this enigmatic pair who have a volatile marriage. Ted Hughes always has women who are attracted to him and Sylvia finds it difficult to accept that her husband's work has a much higher profile than her own.

It made me smile to read the West Country use of pronouns that I remember hearing in West Somerset when I moved there in the early 1960s. 'Where he be to then?' And 'I'll give it to he when he comes in.' Decades later with the huge increase in transport, travel and the whole variety of media, speech has been flattened out to a great degree, which is rather sad.

Inevitably after a matter of months, Ted and Sylvia are back in London but living separately. This is the run up to the shattering event of Sylvia's suicide, that many readers feel has been foretold in her poetry.

There is not a speech mark in sight in this book, but it reads well and easily. I would love to know why Helen Bain chose to do this; obviously it was an artistic decision. There are of course other modern authors, notably Sally Rooney, who write in this way, integrating dialogue within the narrative prose and abandoning all speech punctuation. This blurs the lines between what is spoken and what is thought, giving a stream of consciousness effect I suppose, as in the writing of Virginia Woolf.

So, two novels set in the West Country, both about literary characters and with a strong historical basis. I recommend them both. I found them interesting and satisfying.

Also, for some vicarious travelling to a sun-drenched Provence, do read 'The Artist' by new writer Lucy Steeds. I have written about this in my blog: www.beyondtheairingcupboard.co.uk Do have a look.

Yours bookishly,

**Susan Brice**

# April Recipe

**It's rhubarb time again! Previous generations made the most of the oven heat to pop a cake in with the Sunday roast, but times have changed and not many people have a roast on Sunday now. Interestingly, I was just reading an article about Delia Smith from 1976 where she starts by saying she believes that 'there simply will not be enough food on this planet to feed all of the people who live on it'. It was a brave comment at that time but now, 50 years later seems very apt.**

There was a time when chicken was a real treat and every last bit of it used. Now, if you don't want to eat mass-produced chicken or apparently chicken that is imported from China, it is again a real treat as a chicken from a butcher's is very expensive! Delia encouraged us then to 'eat our left-overs' and believed that food waste was disgraceful. She suggested tips such as 'cider is cheaper than wine', or 'grow your own herbs' and 'use lentils and beans'.

On that note I still always try to cook a few extra things if I have the oven on. Last weekend I made two of these cakes, one for entertaining Saturday and one for Sunday. But I didn't have a roast in it as well! It is an easy dessert cake to make, or teatime treat and delicious served with ice cream or Greek yoghurt (or custard for my husband!).

**Julia Grant**

## Sticky Rhubarb & Ginger Cake

## INGREDIENTS

**Serves 10**

*150g unsalted butter, melted plus extra for greasing*

*125g plain flour*

*110g wholemeal plain flour*

*1½ tsp baking powder*

*2 tsp ground ginger*

*150g light muscovado sugar*

*2 medium eggs, beaten*

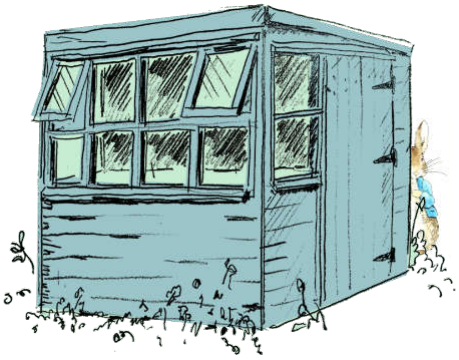
*400g rhubarb, thickly sliced*

*2 pieces of stem ginger, roughly chopped plus 2 tbsp of syrup from the jar*

## METHOD

1. *Preheat the oven to 180°C, gas mark 4. Butter and line a deep 29cm loose-bottomed cake tin. Sift the flours, baking powder and ground ginger into a mixing bowl and stir in the sugar.*
2. *Beat in the melted butter and beaten eggs until smooth.*
3. *Spoon half the batter into the tin and level the surface. Arrange the rhubarb on top of this and then dollop the remaining cake mixture on top. It is quite sticky but doesn't need to be even as will spread out when cooking. Scatter the stem ginger on the cake.*
4. *Cook in the oven for 50-60 mins until well risen and golden brown.*
5. *Remove the cake form the oven and brush with the ginger syrup. Transfer to a plate to serve warm.*

# From the **Potting Shed**



*Dear friends,*

Hope your Easter was lovely dear Friends. Mine was full of church flowers, cake and chocolate and very many cups of tea with friends. Beryl came for Easter Sunday lunch as she's by herself now. She had to cope with the children who were full of chocolate that they'd eaten well before breakfast and were chasing their rather reluctant Gramps around the garden.

When they paused for yet another hot cross bun, Beryl asked little Seth about Sunday School. He looked rather blank and Ruby stepped in to help. 'We call it JC Club,' she offered. 'What does JC stand for?' Beryl queried and Seth confidently told her, 'It's the juice and cookie club!' We did laugh.

So much to enjoy this month. I hope the sun shines on you and yours my dears.

Yours

**Cecily MacGregor**

## Jobs for May

1. Clip evergreen hedges now.
2. If you love cornflowers, as I do, then May is a good time to sow them. They will bloom this year.
3. Several years ago now, my daughter introduced me to a recipe for ratatouille. It is so very tasty. My hubby struggles with remembering the name but enjoys eating it. So, now is the time to plant courgettes. My daughter is adventurous and makes courgette flower fritters but I don't think I'll try that one on MacGregor.
4. If you don't like to share too much of your soft fruit with the birds then erect netting over the bushes. MacGregor invested in a proper fruit cage last year after getting caught up in his netting one too many times!
5. Tie in new shoots of clematis, wisteria and honeysuckle. I have high hopes of a clematis called Princess Diana. Last year something got at it before it could even start growing. Fingers crossed for this summer.
6. If you are keen to pot up hanging baskets, then make sure you listen to the weather forecasts and be ready to protect them from any late frosts.

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

## May

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **9** | 8.30 am | Men's Breakfast: Church House |
| **17** | 3.00 pm | Lighthouse Live: Church & Church House |
| **23** | 1.30 pm | Wedding of Gillian Collins & Alexander Hunt: Church |

## June

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **2** | 2.00 pm | Mothers' Union Meeting: Church House |
| **19** | 7.00 pm | Hughenden Singers Concert: Church |
| **20** | 1.30 pm | Wedding of Bea Glowacki and Attila Kiraly: Church |
| **27** | 2.00 pm | Wedding of Jennifer Stratham & Ben Hamilton: 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

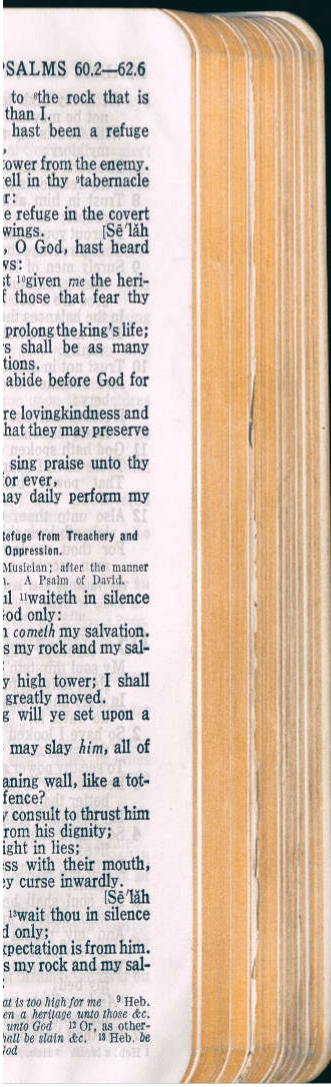
### Friendship Morning

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**

# May Lectionary




**3rd: Fifth Sunday of Easter**
Genesis 8: 1-19
Acts 7: 55-60
John 14: 1-14
*Evensong:* Psalm 147
Zechariah 4: 1-10
Revelation 21: 1-14

**10th: Sixth Sunday of Easter**
Genesis 8:20 - 9:17
Acts 17: 22-31
John 14: 15-21
Psalm at 9.00 am: 66
*Evensong:* Psalms 87 & 36
Zechariah 8: 1-13
Revelation 21:22 – 22:5

**17th: Seventh Sunday of Easter**
Ezekiel 36: 24-28
Acts 1: 6-14
John 17: 1-11
*Evensong:* Psalm 47
2 Samuel 23: 1-5
Ephesians 1: 15-end

**24th: Pentecost**
Numbers 11: 24-30
Acts 2: 1-21
John 7: 37-39
Psalm at 9.00 am: 104: 24-end
*Evensong:* Psalms 67 & 133
Joel 2: 21-end
Acts 2: 14-21

**31st: Trinity Sunday**
Isaiah 40: 12-17 & 27-31
2 Corinthians 13: 11-13
Matthew 28: 16-20
Psalm at 9.00 am: 8
*Evensong:* Psalms 93 & 150
Isaiah 6: 1-8
John 16: 5-15

# Who's Who at St Michael & All Angels

*The post of vicar at Hughenden is currently vacant.*

## Helen Peters

### Associate Minister

Home: 01494 716772
Mobile: 07792 118357

helen.peters@peters-research.com

Day off: Monday

## Chris Coyston

### Children & Families Minister

Mobile: 07855 389998

chris@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

## 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 | Friendship Morning | Helen Peters | 716772 |
| 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 |

*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