



St Mark's Parish Magazine
December 2020

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Your Views & Contributions

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LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

As I sit here writing this, I can't get that traditional carol "God rest ye merry gentlemen" out of my head. Why? The Church of England's call to prayer for Christmas has the strapline "Comfort and joy". I think the campaign has got it just right – comfort and joy are two blessings we can all bring to the life of the church, but more importantly to each other and our community whether that's a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, or one or two people, we can bless with comfort and joy this Advent.



In the approaching Christmas season, I think we are probably all pretty familiar with the joy part of that, but what about the comfort? For Christians, Advent, is both a new beginning and a time of waiting. A new start because Advent marks the beginning of a new year in the Church's calendar, and a time of waiting to celebrate Jesus' birth. And the waiting this year is heightened by what's happening in the world. As I'm writing this, we're hearing good news of the Covid-19 vaccines which are being trialled around the world.

We know that things will be different this Christmas. So, let's try and make it a positive difference. How are we at comforting? People around us are suffering; we ourselves may be suffering, and we can all do something to comfort others more. In St Paul's letter to the Romans we see what Church should be: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep," and this is the encouragement from the Church of England's campaign. We are invited to pray this Advent. We can all take on this challenge by being open with those we encounter, about how we are doing and feeling, and to pray for comfort for each other and for ourselves. In the short book of James in the New Testament, we read: "Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise." Jesus is the ultimate comforter and as his disciples today, we can be comforters too. But let's not lose sight of joy: "... let nothing you dismay, for Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on Christmas day!"



With my best wishes this Advent and Christmas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin".

Countdown to Christmas

There's something very special about the Advent Sundays leading up to when Jesus was born. Join in with these activities as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas – and as we remember the Comfort and Joy that Jesus brings to us all.



Date	What brings joy today?	Who needs comfort today?
29th Nov, the First Sunday of Advent	<p>Counting down with excitement</p> <p>Look at your Advent Calendar – just 2 days until you can open the first door! Give a jump for joy or fist bump your family at the excitement of looking forward.</p>	<p>Those who are anxious about Christmas</p> <p>Look at the floor. Some people are anxious about Christmas. Ask God to be close to them in the coming days.</p>
6th Dec, the Second Sunday of Advent	<p>Being able to give presents to others</p> <p>Christians sometimes call Jesus 'God's gift to us' – that's why we give gifts to each other at Christmas. Make a list of the people your family will give gifts to this Christmas. Thank God for each person.</p>	<p>Those worried about money</p> <p>Christmas can be expensive. Some people are worried that they do not have enough money for gifts or food. Could your family help by giving a gift to your local foodbank?</p>
13th Dec, the Third Sunday of Advent	<p>Access to water</p> <p>Count the number of taps in your home. Pour yourself a glass of water and give thanks for access to clean water for washing, cooking, drinking, and cleaning.</p>	<p>Children of the world</p> <p>Pour a glass of water. Add a teaspoon of mud to it, stir and place it in your kitchen. In some parts of the world children only have access to water like this. Each time you see your glass today, pray for agencies like Water Aid, trying to bring clean water to children across the world.</p>
20th Dec, the Fourth Sunday of Advent	<p>Health and people who care</p> <p>Draw a rainbow. Around it write the names of your local doctors, hospitals and pharmacies. Colour a heart by each one to show you are thankful for them.</p>	<p>People who are feeling sad</p> <p>Find a sticking plaster. Draw a sad face on it. Stick the plaster onto your bathroom mirror to remind you to pray for people who are sick or sad.</p>
Carol Service	<p>The gift of music</p> <p>What's your favourite Christmas Carol? Record your family singing it and send it to your wider family and friends.</p>	<p>Those who can't get to church</p> <p>Some people will be sad that they can't go to a carol service. Make a poster of your favourite carol to put in the window to cheer everyone up.</p>
Christmas Eve	<p>Everything that makes Christmas exciting</p> <p>Gather round your Christmas tree and look at the decorations. Tell each other which is your favourite and why.</p>	<p>Those who are home alone</p> <p>Do you know someone who will be home alone this Christmas? Surprise them with a phone or video call.</p>
Christmas Day	<p>The gift of God's love in Jesus</p> <p>Today we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Light a candle (safely) and sing Happy Birthday for Jesus before you open your presents. (Remember to blow the candle out!)</p>	<p>People who have no homes</p> <p>Some people don't have their own homes where they can celebrate Christmas. Pray for charities like Crisis who will provide safe space for them to eat and sleep today.</p>

Date	What brings joy today?	Who needs comfort today?
Boxing Day	<p>Those who serve us in shops, cafes, and entertainment</p> <p>Go for a walk with your family. As you pass shops and cafes, thank God for the people who serve us in them. (If there are no shops or cafes near you, think of the ones you last visited.)</p>	<p>Those who have no work to do </p> <p>Some shops and cafes have closed because of the Covid crisis. This means people no longer work there. As you pass closed shops and cafes on your walk, ask God to be close to the people who used to work in them.</p>
27th Dec, 1st Sunday of Christmas	<p>Wider family who love us, grandparents, etc </p> <p>Look at your Christmas cards. Find the ones that came from grandparents, aunts, uncles and godparents. Thank God that they love and care for you and your family.</p>	<p>Families who cannot be together</p> <p>Find a jigsaw puzzle. The pieces need to join together to complete it. Some families cannot be together this Christmas. As you put your puzzle together, ask God to be with families who have been separated during the holidays.</p>
28th Dec	<p>The children in our family </p> <p>Make a chain of paper dolls. On each doll, write the name of a family you know and all the children and adults in it. Put the dolls in a place where you can see them and thank God for the people they represent.</p>	<p>Those who are grieving for loved ones this Christmas</p> <p>Make another chain of dolls. During this year some people died, and their families are sad. As you write the names of people who have died on the dolls, talk about something you remember about each person.</p>
29th Dec	<p>Holiday time to be together</p> <p>Shout out 'Group Hug' and get everyone in your household to either have a household huddle or hug themselves tight. Thank God that you can be together at holiday time.</p>	<p>Those who are hungry </p> <p>Open your fridge or food cupboard and look at what's inside. Some people have very little food and very little money to buy more. Next time you go to the supermarket, buy some extra tins to put in their Food Bank collection.</p>
30th Dec	<p>Remembering all those journeying to find out about faith</p> <p>Some people who visited Jesus followed a star to find their way. Make or draw and decorate a large star. As you hang it on your front door or in a window pray for people who want to know more about Jesus. </p>	<p>People struggling with illness of whatever kind</p> <p>Hospitals don't close over Christmas. They carry on caring for people who are ill. Send a card to your local hospital to thank the staff who were working over the holiday.</p>
31st Dec	<p>For all the good things the past year brought to us</p> <p>Have a family huddle with your favourite hot drinks. As the drinks cool, tell each other the things you have really enjoyed in 2020.</p>	<p>Those who have found this year very difficult</p> <p>Squeeze your hands into fists until it feels uncomfortable. 2020 was uncomfortable for some families. Slowly open your hands and ask God that 2021 would be less difficult for them.</p>
1st Jan	<p>For the good things in store this year</p> <p>Draw around your hand. Inside it write or draw the things you are looking forward to in 2021. </p>	<p>People worried about the future</p> <p>Draw around your other hand. Some people are worried about 2021. Draw hearts inside this hand and ask God to hold the people and their worries.</p>
2nd January to Epiphany	<p>That Jesus is for the whole world</p> <p>How many countries can you and your family name? Jesus came to be God's Good News for all the countries of the world. Jump for joy that Jesus is God's Good News for you too.</p>	<p>Those in the Middle East</p> <p>Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth. He came to bring peace but today there are many conflicts in that part of the world. Find the two towns on a map. Place your fingers on them and pray for the people who live there.</p>

Find more resources like this at: churchofengland.org/ComfortAndJoy

Reality

The Rev Peter Fergusson preached that Sunday on Luke 12 "one's life is not valued by the abundance of possessions". It had gone down quite well though parts of the congregation seemed somewhat subdued. Perhaps they were thinking it through. Now, suitably amended, he had presented the same message to Messy Church.

Peter's parish was in the suburbs of Edinburgh, though in spite of his name he was as English as they come. He was here because some years ago at University he had fallen under the spell of a vivacious Scottish beauty, Rachael, who, to his continuing surprise, had finally consented to matrimony. He had studied theology and was now an ordained priest. She had studied economics and was now something in a merchant bank in Edinburgh.

Having finished his address on wealth and greediness Peter was now "open for questions". A young teenager, Barbara, was on her feet. "Which is worse, miserliness or extravagance?" she asked.

Now Peter was no fool and kept well in touch with his assistants in junior church and also the local school. Once the Scottish system had given up the strap, replacing it with questioning and encouragement, it had become more difficult to teach. These Scottish children revelled in hard questioning as if preparing for the bar, and this young lady, outwardly appearing all milk and honey, was renowned for her chess traps and other devious ploys. What was the trap here?

"Well," said Peter, "we have to remember that Jesus often went out to parties, not always with the top of society," he parried.

"I know that, but I am sure it was for fellowship and not to get stoned", came the somewhat frank response. "My point is that miserliness hurts only the miser, whereas extravagance probably damages the environment. The environment was Peter's topic for next week.

However, he was saved an answer by the interjection from a curly haired, intense young man. Peter knew Roger had just begun economics. "Even so," said Roger, "expenditure generates income whereas savings does nothing except remove funds from circulation for a paltry interest rate."

Not for the first time Peter regretted the absence of his wife, Rachael. Surely she would make light work of this. "Well, you see, both were thinking only of themselves, one hoarding his wealth the other frittering it away on trivia," he managed.

Roger was leaning back in his chair clearly relaxed. "The world of business, and that includes consumers, depends on everyone doing their best for themselves. Economic freedom means they can do as they wish; spend or save. Society could not function otherwise. Everyone knows that."

It wasn't so much the words as the smug certainty which stung Peter. Here he was trying to advance an understanding of spirituality with all its moral complexity only to be hit on the head by *The Daily Mail*. Peter was on the verge of making an unwise impassioned response, when a quiet voice behind him said: "I see you are all having a fine old time whilst I and your mothers swelter in the heat of the kitchen. Both of you are right and wrong."

"On economics I would say that you need to bear in mind that it is an amoral, rational science based on the human desire to increase income and wealth; personal material gain. It says nothing about right and wrong. Certainly we all need to understand the world we have to live in as it really is. To do otherwise is to deceive ourselves. We live in a very imperfect world and we cannot escape it, but you come here to explore the spiritual life which is both simple and complex. Spiritual and moral values give us a glimpse of what life might be when they are put into practice through love, kindness helping others, those kind of things. We are here at Messy Church to nurture our souls and there we need to understand the real values of the spiritual life through the teachings of Jesus. That way we may find Heaven in this life."

She went on. "As we run up to Christmas this is a good time to think on these things. The desire to show our affections promotes the giving of presents. They represent a kind of acknowledgement, a thank you. But this has given rise to a feeding frenzy in the shopping world; seeking personal gain from that motivation of giving. On the other hand it is a time to think of the coming of Christ bringing his gifts of love and hope, concentrated on spirituality and our concern for our fellow man. You may conclude that it is a time when the two value systems come into conflict, or you may see it as a time when they are merged. I leave it to you."

At that moment all Peter could think to say was, "This is my wife, Rachael". She turned to him with a mock curtsey: "Supper is ready when YOU are, father" she said. And the group burst into friendly laughter.

Harry Ingram

Church News

Christmas Services

Details of all our Christmas Services at St Mark's



These services are planned to take place in the Church building

Sunday 20 December

6.00pm Festival of Lessons and Carols for Christmas by candlelight
A Carol Service with Choir and Organ music

Please note: There will be no singing of traditional carols

Please Book in advance as limited seating: office@stmarksreigate.co.uk or 01737 210785 *The collection will go to Renewed Hope Trust*

Thursday 24 December

11.30pm Midnight Mass: The First Communion of Christmas
The collection will go to Reigate Samaritans

Christmas Eve

Friday 25 December

10.00am Family Holy Communion

Christmas Day

This year many of our services will be online and not in Church. The following can be accessed via our website or on YouTube (search for St Mark's Reigate). They will be available from the time stated and be there for a month.

Sunday 20 December

from 6.00pm Festival of Lessons and Carols for Christmas
A traditional Carol Service with the traditional carols to sing along with

Thursday 24 December

from 4.00pm Crib and Christingle Service: *Ideal service for children & families*

Christmas Eve

Friday 25 December

10.00am Family Holy Communion (Live Streamed from the Church)

Christmas Day

Sunday 27 December

from 10.00am Online Christmas Service Only (*NO service in Church*)

Jenny Archer

Jenny was born in Sutton 85 years ago and has lived most of her life in Surrey. The Bridge family lived in New Maldon and Jenny was the youngest of four children having two brothers and a sister. She remembered the war vividly and taking shelter in a refuge under the garage was one of her often told stories until quite recently. She was educated at Sutton High School at first but as the bombing became worse she was moved to Guildford High School, for some of the time as a boarder.

Jenny has been a devoted Christian all her life. Whilst living in New Malden she attended church regularly although the rest of her family were not church goers at that time. In married life she worshipped with me in St Mark's every Sunday for some fifty four years. As a member of the Mothers' Union she arranged their flowers in church each week for a considerable time. She served in St Mark's Choir with Jane and Andrew for some time and she loved Evensong and the Taizé services. For some time she ran a church crèche each week. Towards the end Jenny would happily accompany me on all my visits to take Communion to the sick and housebound until Covid-19 made this impossible.

From an early age she had a vocation to become a nurse. As a teenager she applied to several Hospitals but hoped to train at Barts Hospital. At first she was disappointed by being rejected by them because of her poor feet. Happily, after some treatment, they accepted her for training and she took to it like a duck to water. However during training she felt drawn to Midwifery. After training for this in Edinburgh and passing out top of her class she always corrected people who introduced her as a nurse, saying she was a midwife. This lifetime career was only interrupted when I got in the way, married her and she gave birth to our three lovely children, William, Jane and Andrew.

She had some hesitancy when I asked her to marry me but once she had accepted my proposal we never looked back and were happy and in love with each other for some 60 years. She continued her midwifery, often on night duty usually delivering the babies rather than pre or post-delivery. When asked how many babies she had delivered she said she had given up counting long ago. Jenny also did some night duties as a nurse in care homes.

The last memorable birth Jenny attended was on her birthday, 11th October when our grandson, Theo was born in Bath Hospital eighteen years ago and she "caught him" so was the first to see him, even before Jane. Through her life, one of Jenny's great joys was her grandchildren, seeing them grow, and the partners they are with, brought her great happiness.

Jenny was a wonderful hostess preparing lovely cakes and dishes that many remember her by. She also during her early life became skilful at dressmaking and upholstery.

As you know Jenny has suffered from Alzheimer's disease, for over ten years and until July this year when she had a fall we have had a good life together in everything we did. As is evidenced in so many lovely letters cards, emails and phone calls. Jenny had such a lovely nature with a quirky sense of humour. She loved singing and apart from singing in St Mark's Church Choir she sang for some time in the Buckland and Betchworth village Choir, practising in Buckland church for the Leith Hill Music festival. Later she loved singing in the Taizé Service in St Mark's and we had her singing hymns, pub songs and musical numbers in the Gazebo when visiting her in the care home.

Of course she could not always remember the words so she made her own ones up instead. Before this all happened we used to sing a song in bed with our heads on the pillow before we went to sleep.

Jenny was always happy to meet new friends and old whenever possible always being interested in listening to them, a rare gift. She seemed to like my voice which was a good thing as I talked so much. She was always courteous, hospitable, witty, kind, intelligent, thoughtful, and above all loving. I was truly happy always in her company as she was in mine. Sadly Covid-19 separated us when she had to be looked after in a care home for the last three months but she accepted the situation, never complaining to us. Also being so near to the Beaumont Home I was able to be with her when she closed her eyes on this world for the last time, she holding my hand.

Ian Archer

A poem written by Rhonda Braswell, from Jenny's funeral service which took place on 6 November.

Come with me

The Lord saw you were getting tired
And a cure was not to be,
So he put his arms around you
And whispered, "Come with me."

A golden heart stopped beating,
A beautiful smile at rest,
God broke our hearts to prove
He only takes the best.

It's lonesome here without you
We miss you so each day,
Since our lives can't be the same
Since you sadly went away.

When days are sad and lonely,
And everything goes wrong,
We seem to hear you whisper,
"Cheer up and carry on."

Each time we see your picture,
You seem to smile and say,
"Don't cry, I'm in God's keeping,
We'll meet again someday"

News from the Church of England

We must change to become a 'simpler, humbler, bolder Church' – Archbishops tell Synod

The momentous events of 2020 will have a “profound effect” on the future of the Church of England and our wider society, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have said.

In a joint address to the General Synod, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell said the Church of England must adapt and put its trust in God to become a “simpler, humbler, bolder Church.”

The archbishops’ comments came as they addressed the first online sitting of the General Synod following a legal change to enable it to meet remotely amid the coronavirus restrictions.

They outlined how the coronavirus pandemic and its economic fallout are providing the backdrop to huge social changes – here and around the world.

They also singled out how the Black Lives Matter movement and the publication of the IICSA report on abuse had exposed the Church’s own failings and the need to change.

Archbishop Justin told Synod: “2020 will be a year that registers in memory and in history. It can be compared with 1929, with 1914, with 1989. We are aware that this is a year in which huge changes are happening in our society and consequently in the Church.”

The 98th Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, preaching at York Minster: “For let us be clear there is no possibility of changes in society failing to have a profound effect on the shape, calling and experience of mission in the Church.”

Outlining the dramatic events of 2020, he added: “These crises are not signs of the absence of God but calls to recognise the presence of the kingdom and to act in faith and courage, simplifying our life focusing on Jesus Christ, looking outwards to the needy and renewing in our cells our call to wash feet, to serve our society and to be the Church for England.”

Archbishop Stephen went on to outline the work of groups set up to discern how the Church of England might respond and change in light of the recent challenges. He told Synod: “If we put our trust in God, and if we learn to love one another, then I believe we can become a simpler, humbler, bolder Church, better able to live and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Article taken directly from: <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/we-must-change-become-simpler-humbler-bolder-church-archbishops>

Five Fun Christmas Activities

Christmas 2020 is going to be different from other years for many people, both families and those on their own.

It may be harder to find the joy and Christmas spirit, particularly when families may be far away and budgets may be tighter than usual.

Here are 5 low-cost ideas to help spread a little fun and joy this Yuletide:

1. Create homemade decorations using materials around your home. This can be fun for any age or skill level and great for the environment too. Look around your home for cardboard, old material, wool, plastic lids and get cutting, sticking and painting to create something new for your home this year.
2. Send a story, song or poem. We may not be going to carol services this year (although we will be able to enjoy one online), but with our mobile phones we are just a few buttons from sharing a song, story or a poem with our family and friends. This will be even more special for loved ones we won't get to see this Christmas. Grandparents can read a bedtime story and children can sing Christmas carols or even vice versa.
3. Make Gingerbread biscuits – bonus points if they are in the shape of a Christmas tree. Whilst you may not have worked up to a whole Gingerbread house, making Gingerbread biscuits will fill your home with the beautiful and tasty smell of ginger and cinnamon and decorating them is great fun at all ages and the best bit is the reward for all your hard work at the end.
4. Make a Christmas jumper/ outfit. The 11th December is Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children. If you don't have a Christmas jumper at the ready, why not create one? There are lots of ideas on Google and Pinterest, like this one.
5. Reflect. This year has been harder than most but if we really think about it, there are still plenty of reasons to be grateful. Use the quiet Christmas period to look back on the year and write a letter to yourself, or a journal entry for all those reasons why we can still be grateful and thankful to God for 2020.



Environmental News

An Inconvenient Truth

I have a lot of books. In recent months this has not been a waste of space. Many I am reading for the second time. Searching for a read I came across "An Inconvenient Truth" by Al Gore, a small book with lots of graphs and diagrams to prove its case. It was first published in 2006 so reading it is like a piece of recent history. Yet it reminded me of so many things which I had forgotten and which are still germane today. You may be interested in some of my notes. The italics indicate my comments, the rest is 2006.

Remember this is writing about 2006 and before. Since then man's effect on climate has been on an ever-increasing upward spiral. The thickness of the world's atmosphere is as thin as a skin of varnish on a football.

Much of the report is given over to proving the case for climate change which is still not universally accepted. The United States produced nearly a third of the world's greenhouse gasses whereas Africa only five percent. The figures for CO₂ emissions were: US 30.3%, Europe 27.7% SE Asia 12.2%. So these areas should be the main focus of change. *(Since 2006 China's share will be greatly increased but the consequent consumption takes place significantly in the West. We also have to bear in mind that some industries, e.g. air travel, would be likely to transfer elsewhere (think Tax havens).)* The US emissions exceeded those of South America, Africa, The Middle East, Australia and Asia combined. Much of the book is based on US experience. Yet much of the opposition to the existence of Climate Change came from the US. This was due to lobbying by corporations whose operations were threatened. Of published scientific papers all 1,000 articles accepted climate change. On the other hand 53% of popular press articles were in denial. *Whatever the changes in perception that still seems to be the much the mood in practice.*

Population growth coupled with rising living standards in many parts of the world has given rise to the ever increased burning of carbon. World population at the end of WW2 was about 2 billion. By 2006 it had grown to 6½ billion and was projected to rise to 9 billion by 2050. An indicative graph shows population on a near vertical climb.

The progress of average world temperatures can be deduced from cores taken from glaciers all over the world. *(A bit like the rings in trees).* Average temperatures have been very high above the base line average from *(as late as)* 1961 to 1990. 22 of the

25 hottest years were to be found between the 25 years 1980 to 2005 with the hottest 2005. In 2003 a heat wave in Europe killed 35,000 people.

Similarly the growth of CO₂ emissions over centuries can also be traced from ice cores. Huge increases can be seen over the 30 years to 2006 *(it's really taken off since then)*.

Heat from the sun together with the Earth's rotation determines the paths of winds and sea currents and thereby redistributes heat mainly towards the poles. As the ice at the poles disappears the cooling effects of currents from the north diminishes and finally ceases. If the circular motion of sea currents in the North Atlantic bringing cold water from the north and warm from the south changes, it will transform weather patterns all over the globe.

Warming makes both warm and cold currents warmer BUT less cool currents from the north no longer push warm water north. Warming currents such as the Gulf Stream will cease and land temperatures fall, giving London a climate more like Moscow on the same latitude. Global warming can lead to some colder climates!

Rising temperatures dry out the land, encourage fires and will make it progressively more difficult to grow crops. No part of the world is untouched.

Forests: The Amazon used to occupy 2.5 million miles and was known as the lungs of the Earth. By 2006 almost 30% of carbon release was caused by forest clearance and the loss of trees reducing carbon recapture. *(As we know, burning there has increased rapidly in the following years and also in Australia, North America and elsewhere. These assets with national borders are really worldwide assets which all should take responsibility for.)*

Temperature increases produce dryness which is more susceptible to fire from lightening. A diagram illustrating growth of fires in the Americas in the last 50 years shows tiny amounts in the first 30 years but those for 1990 to 2000 are four times the record levels for 1980 to 1990. *So, some consequences of climate change were very apparent in 2006 and much more so now.*

Warmer climates mean that disease carrying insects such as mosquitoes move to new previously temperate locations spreading tropical diseases.

Warming upsets the regimes of many species so that the insect food necessary to other animals at birth is not there. There is a worldwide general and steep reduction in wildlife. Changes in the seasonal arrival of bugs may devastate crops. For example, milder winters mean that the pine beetle no longer is killed in Canadian winters so that huge areas of trees have died. Such spiralling of the cycles of destruction may become irreversible. *(More recently David Attenborough set out the interdependence of plant, insects, animals and man. This week it was reported that two-fifths of plant species are at risk of extinction owing to habitat destruction and climate change.)*

(Have you seen the notices at Earlswood Lakes warning of poisonous algae? Don't swim. This is probably due to global warming.)

Many parts of the Earth's climate system have been destabilised by warming, from ice sheets and ocean currents to destroyed forests. Scientists believe that one collapse will in the future trigger others as temperature continues to rise. The warning signs are flashing red. The Californian wildfires are made worse by global heating. A study warned that the arctic is undergoing "an abrupt climate change event," that will probably lead to dramatic changes. A huge ice shelf off Greenland recently (2006) tore apart, worn away by warmer waters lapping underneath.

The same day a study of available data revealed growing cracks and crevasses in the ice shelves protecting two of Antarctica's largest glaciers. Ice losses are already following our worst scenarios.

Glaciers have been receding rapidly for many years. Many have gone. Snow and ice on the Himalayas, through seven major rivers, provides drinking water for 40% of the world's population. If the snow and ice there melts the consequences will be dire. It will also give rise to higher sea levels.

Oceans: Warmer water increases moisture in the air which fuels hurricanes and typhoons which have strengthened in North America and appeared in places previously unknown. They cause destruction to buildings but also destructive floods which remove fertile top soil. Katrina in 2005 destroyed New Orleans.

In July 2005 Mumbai had 37 inches of rain in 24 hours, by far the greatest downpour in any Indian city ever, and brought 7ft floods. Elsewhere new high temperatures are already bringing new areas of drought with crop failure and starvation dominantly in Africa but also in South America. Lake Chad has shrunk to one twentieth of its original size.

The Arctic is a sea surrounded by land (*look from the Pole downwards*) and the ice is generally only 10ft thick. It is therefore very susceptible to warming and will melt relatively quickly. White ice reflects the sun but water absorbs its heat. So arctic warming with loss of ice, progressively allows more sun heat to warm the sea and planet and with the ice gone, will no longer have a cooling effect. Similar effects will take place in Antarctica.

How tipping points occur:

"Drunken trees" (*trees with no little root support*) in Alaska evidence the melting of the permafrost areas (frozen for decades or centuries). Seventy billion tons of carbon is locked in areas of permafrost, mainly in Russia and Canada. The amount of CO₂ released will be ten times the amount released annually from man-made sources. The melting of permafrost will also release large amounts of methane gas into the

atmosphere. *(This is a prime cause of the tipping point where the Earth takes over from man to super warm the globe and that will be irreversible).*

Antarctica: this is land surrounded by water. In places the ice is 10,000 feet thick (nearly 2 miles). It is an ice desert with very little precipitation. It has been warming since at least the 1970s. Air temperatures have risen; sea ice is permanently thinning and breaking off the ice shelves. When the shelves break off, the land ice becomes unstable. As it falls into the sea it raises sea levels worldwide at a far greater rate than sea ice. *(I have not spotted by how much but see Greenland).*

Previous projections of melting overlooked that melting leaves water in pools which melts the ice beneath and create holes to the bottom where "warmer" water collects and melts the ice at the bottom *(think lubrication)* thereby creating a slide of ice to the sea.

Greenland: much like Antarctica; land with sea around and ice 5,000ft in depth. As with the Antarctic melted ice collects in pools which "drill" down to the base so that the slippage of land based ice may take place quite suddenly. If Greenland melted it would raise sea levels by 20ft. Miami, Amsterdam and Calcutta for example, would vanish. Many of the world's largest cities are situated on coasts vulnerable to rises in sea level.

Many parts of the Earth's systems are now unstable. Once one falls, it may trigger off a cascade like falling dominoes.

What next? In 1980s it was thought that holes in the ozone layer could not be reversed but the banning of CFCs has proved that to be possible. Dealing with Climate Change is far more difficult. It means we shall have to change the way we live. New ways of generating electric power include wind farms, solar panels and geothermal power stations *(by extract of heat from the below earth's surface).*

You may like to ask yourself whether, notwithstanding international pronouncements, you think that the actions taken since this report have been sensible or fit for the purpose. The need for changes, which may seem unrealistic to us now, are the new reality. Going on as before is lack of realism. Richard Attenborough and more eminent scientists think change must take place now.

The recent announcement that the US is to re-join the PARIS Agreement is very welcome. However, the new President will have many more immediate priorities and progress may also be impeded by contrary views in his country. Nevertheless this is a moment of opportunity which for this country comes with the Glasgow meeting next year.

It remains necessary to get across to everyone that in the end change is inevitable because if nothing positive is done by man, climate changes will force change on us. But that will be too late. Better to act now, and that does not mean tomorrow.

Harry Ingram

National Service in the Royal Navy

I once read in the Navy News an article that said that not many were able to do their National Service in the Royal Navy and of those 7,000 to 8,000 who did, very few who were able to join the Navy ever got to sea. My letter, which was published in the Navy News in the following month, said I had not realised how lucky I was in my National Service in 1955 to 1957. Not only was I one of the few who could join the Navy but in those years I served in eight of Her Majesty's seagoing vessels. I went on to say, and it's still the case that I have yet to meet anyone who enjoyed their National Service more than I did.

So how did I get into the Navy? I had just taken my final exams to become a Chartered Accountant in May 1955 and I was well aware that I would soon be called up for National Service. I had served in the Combined Cadet Force at my school becoming a Lance Corporal in the Army Section (at that time there was no Naval Section there) and on a night exercise I led my group the wrong way, map reading not being my strong point. (Nothing has changed – Jenny would have told you – she was much better at it than me.) Feeling very strongly that the Senior Service was the one for me, I walked down to HMS President, just upstream from Blackfriars Bridge and volunteered to join the RNVR (Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve). I didn't receive a very friendly reception. The recruiting officer said, "You are only wanting to join to get into the Navy for National Service." "Yes" I replied. "But I may have failed my exams and with further deferment you would have me for another year while I retake them, and as I won't get the results till late August I can do the fortnight's training in the summer." He accepted my arguments and I was enrolled in the RNVR which ensured that when I was called up it would be in the Royal Navy.

So what did the RNVR require of me that summer? I had to train on board HMS President and HMS Chrysanthemum, which were moored alongside the Embankment between Temple and Blackfriars Station. This was every Thursday evening for about two hours for New Entry training. I don't remember what I was taught but it probably included drill and seamanship. These two ancient ships dated back to the end of the 1st World War and although they were afloat they had been retired from sea going roles for many years. My two weeks training in the summer was in the aircraft carrier, HMS Theseus. I was given a warrant (forces equivalent of a rail ticket) to travel to Rosyth near the Forth Bridge to join this ship for its voyage down the east coast of England, stopping at Scarborough en-route for Portland. The Captain of that carrier at that time was the famous Captain Myers,



who as a submariner in the War, was awarded the Victoria Cross. He had something of a mad reputation. At a Naval dinner in 2010, shortly after his death, I listened with interest to a speech about him by his biographer.

As an Ordinary Seaman RNVR I first experienced the need to sleep in a hammock, slung from the deck head above. To get into the hammock we had to haul ourselves up hanging on the beam above and lowering ourselves gently into the centre of the hammock. Any other method would result in us falling out the other side. Once in the hammock one was very comfortable and in rough seas those in hammocks would hardly notice the pitching and tossing of the waves. Each morning we had to "Lash up and stow" which meant rolling it up and tying it up in a bundle to go in the racks provided so that the area we had been sleeping in was available as a mess deck in the daytime. Such a procedure no longer exists in the navy as all now sleep in bunks. We were all given chores to do, such as cleaning out the "heads" (toilets), sweeping up, scrubbing the deck or as "cooks of the galley", being responsible for collecting the meals for our mess in large containers from the galley (kitchen).

I was called up for National Service in October 1955 and was sent a warrant to get me by train to Portsmouth to join up at Victoria Barracks, a large old red-brick building. When issued by a cap tally it had on it HMS Victory. These barracks were later demolished but HMS Nelson is the shore establishment which was built in its place, and I have been there in later years as it is the home of Southern Area Sea Cadets.

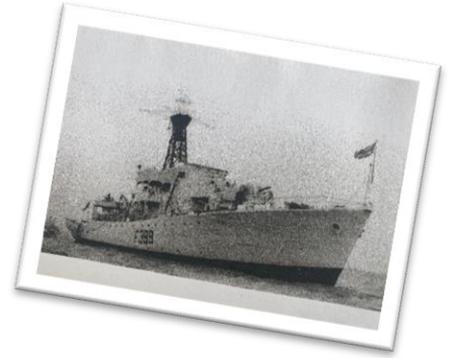
It was in these barracks that I did my initial training and one of the first tasks I was given was to patrol the perimeter of them, armed with a baton and wearing a tin hat looking out for the IRA. Needless to say I did not spot any but I wondered if I would see any Wrens who were also accommodated in that area – no such luck!

I think it was on our first day that we had to queue up with hands on our hips to have vaccinations and injections in both shoulders and one or two of these new recruits keeled over in a faint. We were taught how to look after our uniform and ever since I have been quite happy to iron my shirts and press my suits. We slept in a large dormitory on bunks but these first days were hard and exhausting so we were glad when at last we could go home for a brief leave, departing from "our ship" in our new uniform. I remember one of my fellow new entries who had the famous name of Bonham-Carter going through the gates and saluting his father, who drew up in a car to take him home. He had to, as his father was Captain of the cruiser HMS Glasgow.

Within a few weeks I was selected to be a National Service Upper Yardman, being, they thought, a potential officer. Why? I don't think it was because I had shown them how good or bad I might be but because I had been to a public school. From then on I was dressed as an Ordinary Seaman but with white tape under the cap-tally on my cap and would undergo training in the hope I might qualify for promotion.

I now quote from the "Workbook" or "Journal" I had to keep during my training to become an officer. This was read, criticised by an officer and used later in one's final assessment as to whether I should pass out or not.

"After spending a month at Victoria Barracks I was pleased to be drafted to HMS Tintagel Castle, an active Castle Class Frigate (such as appeared in the film *The Cruel Sea*). Whilst in "Tintagel Castle" we went to sea nearly every day, much of which time we spent on the bridge. This was most interesting as the Upper Yardmen took turns as Second Officer of the Watch. This entailed everything from taking fixes on prominent landmarks and writing up the ship's log, to running messages for the Officer of the Watch.



Another very instructive lesson we had daily in Tintagel Castle was a flashing and semaphore exercise. Although this at first seemed to me very depressing as I could hardly decipher a letter, after a week everything seemed much easier.

Our Divisional Officer arranged lectures for us every day, some of which were very interesting indeed as they were given by ratings on their own particular job in the ship. The periods of seamanship were normally taken by the Chief Boson's Mate, who took great care to prepare our instruction every day.

When the special sea duty men were closed up on leaving or entering harbour we went to the various sea stations with them. By this means we could see what happens in each part of the ship. I learnt a great deal in this way as I believe it is much easier to learn something by seeing it being done and helping to do it than by reading or hearing about it.

Apart from the first day on board when we sailed from Portsmouth to Portland, the time at sea was mostly taken up by exercising with submarines to train Asdic crews from HMS Osprey. This however was abandoned one day as there was not at least three miles visibility. One exercise performed frequently during my 16 days was called Casex 1. In this the submarine stayed at periscope depth with a flag attached to the periscope. The asdic crews could then locate the submarine by their sets, their results being checked by an officer on the bridge.

The "squid" (a forward throwing depth charge armament) was fired several times during the fortnight, but each time it seemed rather an anti-climax to stop engines and fish the hollow cylinders from the water. However we had a bit of excitement on the last day when we had gunnery practice with the four inch gun.

Whilst in this frigate everyone did all they could to help us towards our future course and if it was not for the fact that I was eager to start my Upper Yardman course I would have been very sorry to leave Tintagel Castle. Even though I had been in her for so short a time I had become quite attached to her.

HMS Ocean by its size as an aircraft carrier seemed so much more impersonal than Tintagel Castle, but nevertheless after a day or so, I felt certain that I would enjoy my fifteen weeks training."

One memory of this time was that for much of the time I had to be on watch four hours on and four hours off. This meant that to survive we had to get to sleep as soon as our heads touched the pillows as we were shaken not just four hours later but less than that to get our night vision adjusted. I believe that this short spell of such discipline on going to sleep means that to this day I can usually sleep for short spells wherever and whenever I need to.

Finally at the end of our spell on this frigate we were given a week-end's leave but one or two others and I did not go up the rail line but stayed on board. Our Captain kindly drove us in his car to view some villages in Dorset, the drive including a cream tea. Sadly I don't recall this kind Captain's name.

I was then drafted to HMS Ocean to continue my training. By its size as an aircraft carrier seemed so much more impersonal than Tintagel Castle, but nevertheless after a day or so, I felt certain that I would enjoy my fifteen weeks training that I had expected it to be completed in that ship, which was a sister ship to HMS Theseus that I had sailed in for that brief spell before National Service. Actually my time in Ocean was short, as after a cruise to Vigo on the West coast of Spain we were drafted to HMS Vanguard, the last of our battleships. Vigo was an interesting town and we were given some shore leave there enabling us to also visit Bayona by train. I found that on this west coast of Spain they had bag-pipes, as they do in Brittany, Ireland and Scotland, all of them with Atlantic coasts.

On joining Vanguard our training to become officers began in earnest, supervised for much of the time by a Gunnery Petty Officer by the name of Harris. He was extremely strict, addressing each of us Upper Yardmen as "Sir" but in a derogative way. We hated him whilst under training but were so grateful for the baptism of fire he gave us that when we passed out we took him out for a meal. I remember crossing over from Vanguard to HMS Howe, another much older battleship, which had wooden, not metal decks which were much nicer to sit on whilst studying our books.

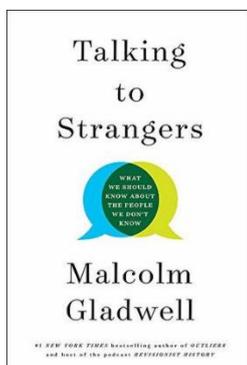
Before our final exam and Board we had to be fitted with uniforms, the order being cancelled if we failed. (Only one of our class failed and we all felt sorry for him at the time.)

I did not do at all well at my final evolution, trying to arrange the crossing of some imaginary chasm – it seemed to end in disaster. Then in my final Board, being interviewed by several senior Officers, I was asked by one of them, "As you are a qualified Chartered Accountant you will want to be an officer in the Pay Branch of the Navy." "Oh, no" I said. "I wish to be in the Executive Branch." I think I was so very fortunate in my being granted my wish. The Navy could easily have wanted to use my accounting skills that I had already acquired but instead gave me the opportunity to prove myself in such different challenges.

Ian Archer

Book Review

This month we review: **Talking to Strangers: What we should know about people we don't know**



Malcolm Gladwell author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Outliers*, offers a powerful examination of our interactions with strangers and why they often go wrong.

How did Fidel Castro fool the CIA for a generation? Why did Neville Chamberlain think he could trust Adolf Hitler? Do television sitcoms teach us something about the way we relate to each other that isn't true?

Something is very wrong, Gladwell argues, with the tools and strategies we use to make sense of people we don't know. And because we don't know how to talk to strangers, we are inviting conflict and misunderstanding in ways that have a profound effect on our lives and our world.

The tale begins with Sandra Bland, the African American woman who in July 2015 was stopped by a traffic cop in a small Texas town. She was just about to begin a job at Prairie View A&M University, when a police car accelerated up behind her. Doing what almost all of us would have done, she moved aside to let the car pass. And just like most of us in that situation, she didn't bother indicating. It was on that technicality that the cop, Brian Encinia, ordered her to pull over.

Agitated and annoyed by Encinia's ploy, Bland lit a cigarette to calm herself down. Encinia demanded that she put it out. When she protested, he instructed her to get out of the car and, after some minor resistance on Bland's part, she was arrested and put in jail. Three days later, while still being held, she killed herself.

As Gladwell notes, it was one of several high-profile incidents in which the aggressive behaviour of police officers led to shocking deaths of African Americans, thus inspiring the Black Lives Matter movement. But why, Gladwell asks, did things go so badly wrong on that Texas highway? What were the misunderstandings that led to such a needless conclusion, and where did they come from?

This book covers this atrocity but also why this is the exception and not the rule. Most of us are programmed to trust strangers and rarely believe it when we see something out of the ordinary.

Reviews taken from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/oct/20/talking-to-strangers-malcolm-gladwell-review> and <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/43848929-talking-to-strangers>

Reader recipes

Eggnog

Ingredients:-

- 6 medium free-range eggs (preferably organic and as fresh as possible), separated
- 150g/5½ oz golden caster sugar
- 500ml/18fl oz whole milk
- 400ml/14fl oz double cream
- 350ml/12fl oz rum, bourbon or a mixture of the two, depending on your preference
- freshly grated nutmeg, to taste



Method:-

1. Whisk the egg yolks in a bowl with 100g/3½ oz of the caster sugar until the mixture is pale yellow and thick (this is best done with an electric handheld mixer).
2. Stir in the milk, double cream, and the rum and/or bourbon. You can add a little grated nutmeg as well, if you like your nog this way.
3. Pour the mixture into two 750ml/1½ pint bottles with stoppers and store in the fridge for up to two weeks. (The alcohol will prevent any spoilage of the eggs or cream.)
4. Place the egg whites in a box and freeze until ready to serve the egg nog.
5. When ready to serve, defrost the egg whites into a clean metal or glass bowl. Using a handheld electric mixer, whisk the egg whites until foamy and opaque. Add the remaining 50g of sugar and whisk the egg whites until soft peaks form when the whisk is removed.
6. Pour the egg nog from the bottles into a large bowl and fold in the egg whites until well combined. Ladle the egg nog into glass tumblers and serve with a little freshly grated nutmeg over the top of each glass.

This recipe was taken from the BBC Good Food website. We would really like to hear from you with your favourite recipes. It really can be anything. Please email them to magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk.

Airy Fairies

Written by and copyright of Helen Starmer

You've heard of Tinkerbell and the tooth fairy and might not believe they're true,
But here is a story about the Airy Fairies, and exist they certainly do.

These beautiful little creatures walk amongst us here on Earth,
They don't look like fairies and you probably don't know their worth.

They don't come at night and use your teeth to make a fairy castle,
The gift they give back to us is greater than any Christmas parcel.

These little darlings work tirelessly to save us from air pollution,
They fighting deforestation to start a revolution.

Their purpose in life is to ensure the air we breathe is clean,
To leave a sustainable world for future generations, they are keen.

They know that fairy dust isn't going to save the day,
To make the changes that we need, there is another way.

Everyday these fairies plant trees to help the world re-wild,
To help give Mother Nature back the places we have defiled.

They are planting sea grasses and tidal marshes to capture CO₂,
But they need to recruit new fairies and so they are calling on you.

Come join these little activists saying no to air pollution and smog,
Let's see what change we can make happen, Airy Fairies are all agog.

The Airy Fairies really have our best intentions in their heart,
Every day they are making changes which are really rather smart.

Let's get informed and act quickly because the future is still ours,
Let's swap smelly factories and dirty cars for bikes, trees and flowers.

Do you have a story to share? Send it into magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk.

Church Mice



Let's Pray

Loving God,
 Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
 That we may share in the song of the angels,
 The gladness of the shepherds and the worship of the wise men.

Puzzles

December Sudoku Puzzle

5		7				3		6
			4	9	6			
						2	1	
2		5		8	9	6		
4	8		2		7		9	5
		1	3	4		7		2
	2	8						
			7	3	8			
3		9				8		7

November Solution

8	7	4	1	3	2	6	5	9
6	3	9	4	5	8	1	2	7
1	5	2	6	9	7	3	4	8
7	6	1	8	4	3	2	9	5
2	8	5	9	7	6	4	3	1
4	9	3	2	1	5	7	8	6
3	4	6	7	8	9	5	1	2
5	2	8	3	6	1	9	7	4
9	1	7	5	2	4	8	6	3

DECEMBER CROSSWORD

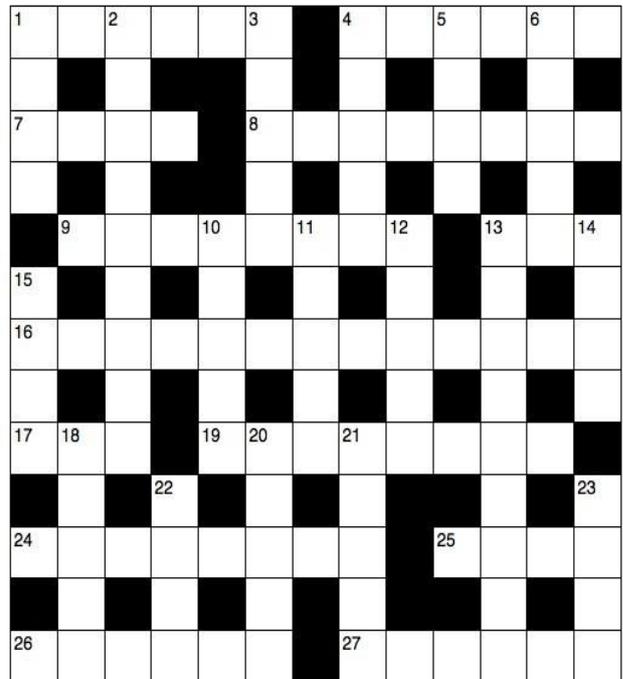
Biblical references are from the New International Version

Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
 4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
 9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
 13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
 16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
 17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
 25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
 26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
 27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

Down

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)
 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
 18 Narnia's Lion (5)
 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)



ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Thanks 4 Banner 8 Esher 9 Azariah 10 Compare 11 Ishma 12 Doorposts
 17 Oaths 19 Galatia 21 Papyrus. 22 Frail 23 Listen 24 Hyssop
 DOWN: 1 Trench 2 Ashamed 3 Karma 5 Ananias 6 Neigh 7 Reheat 9 Areopagus
 13 Observe 14 Satraps 15 Compel 16 Gallop 18 Tapes 20 Lofty

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