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Views expressed in the magazine are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the church leadership or other church members.

## ***Note from the Editors***



Dear Readers,

Welcome to this year's final edition of the magazine. It has been wonderful to hear from so many of you over the last few months and to have such positive feedback. We are pleased that you like the new format, and that, like us, you see it as a magazine to serve the community with the Church at its centre. Please do let us know if you have ideas for future issues or know of community work that could be highlighted. Your feedback indicates that you overwhelmingly want the magazine to stay in printed form and in colour, and have independently suggested paying £1 a copy to cover costs. A few prefer an on-line version and say they will pay. Thank you!

Business over! Now to what we have to offer this month. Christmas is coming, and although there can be no Christmas Fayre (see front cover) there will be Church services (some need booking) and highlights from the wonderful Charingworth Court concerts will be broadcast, so we can still make merry with home-made mince pies! We have articles about the wonderful work of local charities (WAM and the Samaritans), and there are details about how we can help with food hampers for local families this Christmas. All this and much, much more!

We wish you all a Happy Christmas, and, with the good news about vaccines round the corner, a better, and we hope, Healthy New Year!

The Editors



*Jo Rees*

*Lynne Horton*

*Jennie Davies*

*Cathy Wilcock*



The magazine is also available online at St Peter's website

<https://www.winchcombeparish.org.uk/winchcombe-parish/monthly-church-magazine>



## **Foreword**



Despite what you might have heard, Christmas has not been cancelled this year! Whether or not we are able to gather for worship, Christians in Winchcombe and all over the world will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, God with us.

We are in lockdown once again as I write this, although hopefully it will end as intended early in December. But the restrictions do make planning for Christmas quite difficult, for churches as much as for everyone else.

As I begin to think about the next few weeks, the great Advent themes of darkness and light seem especially relevant this year. 2020 has felt particularly dark. Most of us have had moments of anxiety and uncertainty. For some there has been fear and sorrow. Others have experienced illness and loss. All of us have endured unprecedented restrictions, limiting our physical contact with those we love and forcing us to keep our distance from each other.

But despite all this, there have also been moments of light in the darkness. Many of us have been spending more time with our families. We have become more aware of what is really important to us. There has been great humour and forbearance. We have risen to the challenges that have confronted us. As a community, we have been looking out for those in particular need. We have been wearing masks, not for our own benefit, but to keep other people safe.

The great Christmas Gospel tells us that 'the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it' (John 1.5). Jesus comes as the light of the world (John 8.12). In him, the ancient prophecy has been fulfilled: 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined' (Isaiah 9.2; Matthew 4.16).

We do not know the actual date on which Jesus was born. It is just possible that early Christians co-opted the pagan festival of Sol Invictus. It is more likely that they believed – strange though it may seem to us – that Jesus was conceived and died on the same date, which they calculated to be 25 March. But whatever the reason, it is very appropriate that we celebrate Christmas in the middle of winter, when the weather is coldest and the nights are longest.

By a cosmic coincidence, on the longest night of this year, 21 December, there will be a rare 'great conjunction' between Jupiter and Saturn. Viewed from Earth, the two planets will appear very close together: just a tenth of a degree apart, or a fifth of the diameter of the moon. It will be their closest conjunction since 1623. The two heavenly lights will almost converge, becoming a single light shining with exceptional brightness.

Many people think that the 'star' the Magi followed to Bethlehem might have been a planetary conjunction, or else perhaps a comet. Men and women in ancient times studied the night skies and were familiar with its patterns and movements. Abraham, the ancestor of God's chosen people, was promised descendants as many as the stars of heaven (Genesis 15.1-6). The familiar lights in the heavens became for him a sign of hope and trust in God.

When you look up at the night sky on 21 December, the light from Jupiter will have taken about 50 minutes to reach you, and the light from Saturn about 85 minutes. The starlight of Sirius has travelled for over eight years. The three stars of Orion's belt are over 1,200 light years away. The Andromeda galaxy, the furthest object visible with the naked eye, is 2.5 million light years distant.

Celestial distances are mind-boggling. Space is very dark. But the light of the stars still reaches us, bringing hope and joy to those who look up and see it. The light shines in the darkness. We may be socially distanced, but God, 'through whom all

things came into being' (John 1.3) is with us. The American theologian and civil rights leader, Howard Thurman, wrote this poem about lights in the darkness:

*I will light Candles this Christmas,  
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,  
Candles of courage for fears ever present,  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,  
Candles of love to inspire all my living,  
Candles that will burn all year long.*

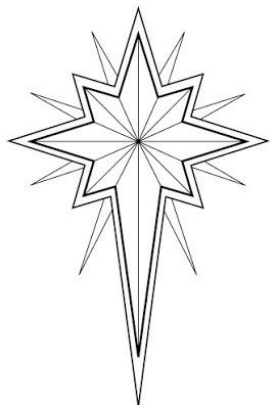
*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others,  
To make music in the heart.*

Details about our planned Christmas services at St Peter's can be found on page 22. Please note that because of restricted numbers, the Carol Service and Midnight Mass will both be happening twice but that **you will need to apply in advance for free tickets.**

Churches Together in Winchcombe are encouraging everyone to put a Christmas crib scene in their front window during December. It doesn't have to be very grand. It could be as simple as a Christmas card, though some of you will want to be more creative! The idea is to witness to God with us even in this difficult time – the light shining in the darkness.

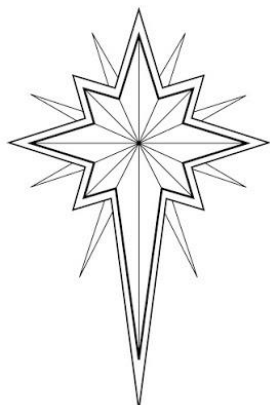
The Revd John Paul Hoskins

## ***Happy Christmas***



You can tell it's Christmas -  
trees bristling with lights,  
Holly would-be angels,  
food branded on the brain  
wardrobe-fillers you can't afford  
everywhere in this seasonal apocalypse.  
And then. The man himself  
in red and white,  
avuncular stimulant of human greed,  
oozing the threat of jolly times  
for children bearing the weight  
of parental smiles.

This is what the fuss is all about  
with life's fears suspended  
and death is for turkeys.  
Meanwhile,  
the Child is fitted out with cribs,  
embraced by bearded royalty and sheep,  
with shepherds standing  
on behalf of all who will sleep  
in alleyways and cold.  
A lot to pay for now.  
And still the bells ring out  
And still the body of a child  
is broken as a man  
delivering hope to a world  
stranded in failure and need.



Take my body to the poor  
before they starve from want of love.  
My blood will wash you in the morning  
of a new life.  
Refresh my world  
with the truth of your failures  
and the promise of hope.  
But do it now,  
before suffocation terminates your journey.  
God's children need  
the attention  
that only love can give,  
syphoned through kindness.

Bishop Peter Firth

## **BC:AD**

*This was the moment when Before  
Turned into After, and the future's  
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.*

*This was the moment when nothing  
Happened. Only dull peace  
Sprawled boringly over the earth.*

*This was the moment when even energetic Romans  
Could find nothing better to do  
Than counting heads in remote provinces.*

*And this was the moment  
When a few farm workers and three  
Members of an obscure Persian sect  
Walked haphazard by starlight straight  
Into the kingdom of heaven.*

From **Christmas Poems**, published by Enitharmon Press,  
[www.enitharmon.co.uk](http://www.enitharmon.co.uk) © Estate of U A Fanthorpe 2018

Some of you may remember that in our online May issue, we  
published **Atlas**, also by U A Fanthorpe.

Jennie Davies

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British poet Ursula Askham Fanthorpe was born and raised in Kent. The daughter of a judge, she gained a BA and MA at Saint Anne's College, Oxford. She taught at the Cheltenham Ladies' College for sixteen years, including eight as head of English. Her poetry comments mainly on social issues.



## ***Music Notes***

December is usually the busiest of months for the choir of St Peter's. As I write we are already in the second Lockdown of 2020. Our Advent Carol Service is now planned for Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup>, taking the form of The Blessing of Light – the *Lucernarium*. It will comprise a pattern of readings, music, brief silence and prayer. If the Lockdown is lifted, we will be permitted to use some members of the choir; if not, as working musicians, Andrew and I will provide what is needed.



Both Lockdowns have presented musical and pastoral challenges. Who should sing? What music to choose? Andrew and I have had to make some difficult decisions. Our priorities are that the service of the liturgy and quality of the repertoire and delivery remain sacrosanct.

Sacrosanct – a principle, place, or routine regarded as too important or valuable to be interfered with. This word has been on my mind in relation to the value of keeping the music at St Peter's going in the current climate. Yes, our choir is vulnerable at the moment, but the beating heart of it remains strong. The pastoral ties are intact. Choral music is quite simply in the DNA of St Peter's, and we will need it more than ever when we emerge from this current crisis! Andrew and I are extremely grateful for the ongoing support we have received from the clergy and the leadership team.

If we have not been overtaken by events, I am hopeful that in addition to our Sunday by Sunday obligation, we will deliver two Carol Services on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December. This will be followed by our contemplative Blue Christmas service on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December.



It is our determined intention to deliver services with music for Midnight Mass and Christmas Day!!

## **CHRISTMAS AT ST PETER'S IS NOT CANCELLED!!**

As I write I am in a contemplative mood, and on this grey day, I am choosing to turn my face to the light, the light that Advent will bring. Below is a link to three items from the St Peter's 2019 Advent Carol Service. They include the suitably Marian 'Ave Maria' by Elgar, 'Let All Mortal Flesh' arranged by Cleobury, and a St Peter's Choir favourite, 'O thou the central Orb' by Wood.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fk2q7gzdjghtruu/AADBua7pC2hwAhWHoQ2Rek5ra?dl=0>

Finally, it wouldn't be Advent without my favourite Advent hymn! Do turn up the volume and sing along for joy to this lovely rendition in the link below, with a rousing Rutter descant which we very much enjoyed singing last year!

*Lo! he comes with clouds descending,  
Once for favoured sinners slain;  
Thousand thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of his train:  
Alleluya! Alleluya! Alleluya!  
God appears, on earth to reign.*

<https://youtu.be/eBAG0TXu2AE>

The choir of St Peter's, Andrew and I wish you all a hopeful and restorative Advent, and lashings of comfort and joy this Christmas!

Shelley Everall Hoban, Joint Director of Music

## ***Remembering Joan Holgate***

When I arrived in Winchcombe as vicar in 2003, there were many good things about the church that encouraged me. One of these was that well-oiled machine at the heart of parish life – the parish office in St Peter's Centre. And at the heart of this, alongside the redoubtable Margaret Jarvis, was the quiet, hardworking, always friendly, Joan Holgate. What a blessing it was to have such a presence in the parish: as a point of first contact for many, and a regular support and encouragement to those of us more involved in parish life, Joan reigned supreme (and so benignly) in St Peter's Centre throughout my twelve years as vicar.

Joan combined so many virtues. First, her sheer competence - she brought such great skills to bear on the often complex management of parish and team (in those days, seventeen churches were co-ordinated from St Peter's Centre). Self-effacing, she rarely talked of her past professional life, or her academic achievements. And her endless patience and kindness - somehow it always seemed to be on Friday mornings, as we raced to print the weekly news sheet, that lonely or troubled parishioners seemed to arrive wanting a coffee and a chat ... and were never disappointed. Then her commitment and hard work - so often as I walked home from church, at all times of the day or week, I would see Joan coming the other way "just to finish a little job" in the office. And then her creative flair - that elegant set of worship booklets for example, growing to a dozen or more as we extended to cover all the church seasons and the differing needs of formal worship and family Communions, etc, was Joan's creation.

And finally, her spirituality. All the above qualities reflected her quiet Christian commitment, not shown in ostentatious enthusiasm but in quiet service – a service that undergirded the life of our church for many years, and touched many lives for good, not least my own.

John Partington

Joan was a wonderful colleague, and I look back on those very good years with enormous pleasure.

Margaret Jarvis

I knew Joan for not enough time; she was a lovely, splendid, modest, and good person, and a brilliant needlewoman. If you would like to admire them, she made most – if not all – of the small squares in the community chasuble, as her last effort before she retired and left Winchcombe. It was a privilege to have known her.

Penny Kain



### ***From the Registers***

#### **Funerals**

Walter Kenneth Quarm

Brenda Cowan

## ***The Front Cover***

We thank Alastair Robinson for the wonderful photograph on the front cover of last year's Winchcombe Christmas Market.

If you would like to have your photograph on the front of our magazine, please submit it and it may well be chosen, particularly if it's a colourful, seasonal picture of Winchcombe!



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## ***Our Parish Magazine***



We welcome any contributions to our magazine but **please remember to send them to us by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, using Word.** Unfortunately, copy submitted after this date will not be able to be included until the following month.

The Editorial Team would welcome any suggestions, ideas or contributions. Contact us at [magazine@winchcombeparish.org](mailto:magazine@winchcombeparish.org) or speak to one of the team. Their phone numbers are on the inside cover.

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[\*\*www.winchcombeparish.org.uk\*\*](http://www.winchcombeparish.org.uk)

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## ***Silent Night***

Christmas 1914. The strains of *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht* ring out over the wastelands of war. Some British troops stop and can't believe what they are hearing! Their firing ceases, the night is still, and some German soldiers emerge and begin to give gifts. One soldier, Graham Williams, describes the scene as one of the highlights of his life.



Not only was the truce tremendous, driven by the ordinary soldiers, but why was it that *Silent Night, Holy Night* brought troops from opposite sides together? Perhaps it was the ordinariness of the composers and their desire for peace in their time, a century earlier, that made *Stille Nacht* the most perfect, fitting, piece for the ordinary First World War troops.



In 1816, a poor assistant priest called Joseph Mohr composed the six stanzas of *Stille Nacht* that would take the carol into folk history. Joseph Mohr was spellbound by a painting in his local church in Mariapfarr in Austria of

the baby Jesus with the Holy Couple, and was inspired to think of a world that could exist if only the message of hope and peace brought by The Christ would be listened to and adhered to by the world. Austria had been devastated by different rulers, economic destruction caused by the dark winter of the volcanic eruption in Indonesia which spread throughout much of Europe, and of course by the Napoleonic Wars. Ordinary folk were starving and wanted an end to their suffering. Mohr began his words and wished. *Silent Night, Holy Night*.



Two years later when Mohr moved a little distance away to become assistant priest in Oberndorf, Austria, he made friends with the local teacher and organist, Franz Xavier Gruber. Despite being an excellent musician himself, Mohr asked his friend to compose the music to go with his special poem. It is said to have been brought together in a day, and with Mohr playing the guitar, they both sang the first *Stille Nacht* to their congregation after Mass at Christmas. The organ was out of order due to floods in the area, and was not re-built



until two years later. The guitar was not usually played in church - it was more the choice of traditional folk groups - but was, perhaps, why Mohr and Gruber thought it so appropriate for their song for the people.

As you might imagine, the laity loved the carol and it was taken to the Zillertal by folk musicians and became increasingly popular. It reached New York by 1839, and was given its English translation by Rev John Freeman Young in 1859. By then no one knew where it came from, until after a long search, Gruber's son, Felix (who sang at Salzburg Cathedral) heard of the quest, and his father wrote the story down.



*The Silent Night Chapel  
Oberndorf near Salzburg*

Today the tale is commemorated by its own chapel in Oberndorf (built on the site of the original), and both Mohr and Gruber were finally recognised for their musical contributions to one of the favourite carols of all time, and for their desire, for peace for ordinary folk, and a silent night for the whole world. The simple message and music perhaps as poignant today as it ever was.

Cathryn Wilcock



## ***The Samaritans***

Early in the 1950's, a Church of England vicar stood beside the grave into which had been lowered the body of one of his parishioners. The body was that of a teenage girl. She had reached the stage of puberty. She was not just puzzled by what was happening to her, she was deeply distressed. Desperate even. She took her own life. It seemed she had had no one to talk to.

'Such a death should not be', thought the vicar as he looked down at the coffin. His name was Chad Varah. He founded the Samaritans.

He was a visionary, an initiator, a charismatic speaker. As a schoolboy, in the later 1950's, I heard him speak of his organisation, based – initially – on the Church of St. Stephen, Walbrook in central London. Maybe it's because I heard him, those years ago, that I frequently see a picture of the (rather beautiful) church. It hangs in the Cheltenham branch of the Samaritans.

Chad Varah's vision became the vision of others. It was simple. People benefit from speaking of their troubles (not least when suicide is far from their minds). It is breaking no confidences to write a short list of the troubles that callers to the Samaritans are facing. Anyone could write and add to the list that follows, but it includes bereavement, loneliness, the breakdown of relationships, troubled families, the impact of a pandemic, depression, anxiety, physical pain ...



Famously Chad Varah wrote of Samaritans: 'They listen. And they listen. And they listen ...' There are of course two - way conversations, but the callers speak of that which they wish to speak. Sometimes peace comes to troubled minds. Often actually.

Chad Varah was an Anglican priest but the Samaritans are not affiliated to or associated with any church or denomination. Currently there are around 40,000 Samaritan volunteers working in about 140 branches across the United Kingdom. Contact with the branches is mainly by phone. But e-mails can be used (and are increasingly).

In pre-Covid times, callers could also call in person at any branch (during the day). One looks forward to a post-Covid era, not least in the Cheltenham branch in its (marvellously ample) premises in Back Albert Place (off the Pittville roundabout). Even in these troubled times when many could be forgiven for concentrating on their own personal survival, potential recruits are coming to our local branch in unprecedented numbers, to facilitate the work of a national organisation to which there is 24/7 access.

Chad Varah described Samaritans as 'ordinary people', but they come from a very wide age range and from diverse backgrounds. Recruits are trained thoroughly and carefully mentored as they set out on what is (inevitably) very demanding work. Volunteers do not give advice. And they never sit in judgement on their callers. Contacts remain confidential.

I find it difficult not to suppose that, despite faults and failings, the work of the Samaritans is some tiny part of the Kingdom of God. Certainly, for me, a sign of the Kingdom is found in the courage that many (in fact thousands: as calls come in – nationally – every six seconds) show in speaking to total strangers about their deepest troubles.

Samaritans can be contacted by phone on 116 123 (phone calls are free and there is no time limit on conversations); by e-mail at [Jo@samaritans.org](mailto:Jo@samaritans.org)

Google 'Samaritans' to find out much more.

Michael Hand

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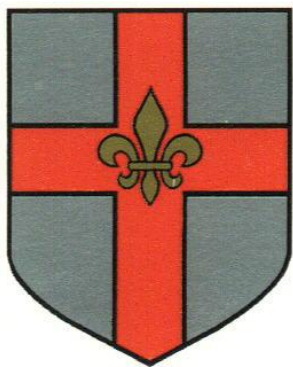
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## ***A Visit to Lincoln***



At the end of September, we spent a few days in the historic city of Lincoln, neither of us having visited it before.

Lincoln was inhabited by the Romans and the north gate of the old city wall forms an archway over one of the main roads into the city - the oldest such still in use in the UK.

Lincoln was named *Lindum Colonia* by the Romans; *Lindum* meaning "place by the pool" and *Colonia* meaning "home for retired soldiers".

William the Conqueror built a fine castle there in 1068 and a huge and magnificent cathedral in 1072. We enjoyed a stroll around the castle grounds and a circuit of the castle walls which gave us a good view of the city and of the surrounding countryside. The castle also contains the old city prison.

We also did a conducted tour of the cathedral followed by an exploration of the interior and exterior of the cathedral at our own pace.

In 1185 the cathedral was damaged by an earthquake. The following year Hugh of Avalon was consecrated Bishop of Lincoln and set about rebuilding and enlarging the cathedral and introducing much of its gothic style and features. Bishop Hugh died in 1200, was canonised in 1220, and is the patron saint of sick people, shoemakers and swans. Apparently, during his time as bishop he was followed everywhere by a white swan and the pair developed a deep and lasting friendship. There is a larger than life model of a swan at the east end of the cathedral alongside St Hugh's tomb.

The central nave is vast, although somewhat austere, but the chancel and east section of the cathedral are sumptuous and warm both in its atmosphere and in the colour of the stonework. The two sections are separated by a magnificent stone choir screen.

Although most of Lincolnshire is relatively flat, the city is built on a substantial hill. The old part of the city is on the flat top of the hill and down the aptly named "Steep Street" whereas the new part is at the bottom of the hill on both sides of the river.



Most of the older buildings are medieval and the whole atmosphere of the city is charming and welcoming. The staff at the hotel and elsewhere in the city were extremely friendly and helpful.

We discovered a splendid pub called "Widow Cullen's Well". It is owned by Samuel Smith's Brewery and has some unusual features: it is strictly cash only – no cards accepted; no mobile phones, cameras or other electronic equipment; no canned music and no swearing! The staff enforced these rules politely but very firmly as Lynn discovered when she took a photo of one of the paintings!

Samuel Smith's Brewery is Yorkshire's oldest brewery, founded in 1758, and is now quite separate from John Smith's Brewery, although the original Samuel and John Smith were both members of the same family. Humphrey Smith, the current owner of Samuel Smith's Brewery is an eccentric billionaire and has applied his very strict rules to all the 300 pubs he owns throughout the UK.

In any event, "Widow Cullen's Well" has been refitted at great expense, with comfortable armchairs and sofas in the two bars on the ground floor, with expensive and pleasing furniture in the restaurants upstairs and having throughout beautiful English oak beams and fittings. The food and Samuel Smith's ale were excellent and surprisingly inexpensive.

Altogether this was a very successful and enjoyable trip. We will certainly return as we have yet to see the city museum and the chapter house, crypt and cloisters in the cathedral.

Martin and Lynn Gorman

***Advent and Christmas Services  
at St Peter's, Winchcombe***

**Sunday 6 December**

**Advent Service of Light                      5.00pm**

A sequence of music and readings on the theme of light in the darkness.

**Saturday 19 December and Sunday 20 December  
Christmas Carol Service                      5.00pm**

The traditional service of nine lessons and carols.

Admission is by free ticket only – see below.

**Monday 21 December**

**Blue Christmas                                      6.00pm**

A candlelit reflective service for those who find Christmas a difficult time.

**Christmas Eve**

**Midnight Mass                                      9.00pm and 11.30pm**

We welcome the birth of Jesus with the shepherds and the angels.

Admission is by free ticket only – see below.

**Christmas Day**

**Family Communion                              10.30am**

A family celebration of the joy of Christmas.

We are planning on the assumption that the lockdown will be lifted and we can hold services based on our Tier 1 status. You will need to wear a face covering, sanitise your hands and remain within a household bubble in church. The services will include lots of music but probably no congregational singing.



To manage the reduced numbers we can seat in St Peter's at the moment, there will be two 'sittings' of both the Carol Service (Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 December at 5.00pm) and Midnight Mass (Christmas Eve at 9.00pm and 11.30pm). **You must let us know in advance if you are planning to come to the Carol Service or Midnight Mass.** Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis. We will need to know the names of those attending, the number of 'bubbles' within your group, your email address or phone number, and which service you want to come to. Please contact Mark Mulley on 01242 602067 or at [parishadministrator@winchcombeparish.org.uk](mailto:parishadministrator@winchcombeparish.org.uk).

All our Christmas services, including those in Gretton and Stanley Pontlarge and any last-minute changes of plan, will be advertised at [winchcombeparish.org.uk](http://winchcombeparish.org.uk) and at [facebook.com/ParishofWinchcombe](https://facebook.com/ParishofWinchcombe). Other church services in the town are at [facebook.com/CTWinchcombe](https://facebook.com/CTWinchcombe).



## **St Peter's Maintenance Day ... Scuppered Again!**

Thank you to the healthy numbers who volunteered for the planned 14 November Covid-19 friendly St Peter's maintenance day. Having just completed the plan, Mr Johnson came along and scuppered it!

**However** ... if you feel like you might like to do some private work, then any ivy you see on a wall, gravestone or building can happily be cut at the base to let it die for removal during the next excursion planned for 24 April 2021! Just a thought.

Simon Andrews

## **Secateurs**

A pair of secateurs was found recently in the churchyard – probably lost sometime ago. They have been cleaned and can be claimed from Martin Gorman.



# CHRISTMAS HAMPERS



At Christmas, St Peter's provides hampers to about 10 local families, and any donations you feel able to make to help supplement their Christmas cheer would be very much appreciated. There is a list of suggestions below, but if you would prefer to give money we will use this to buy perishable items. Please bring food items to St Peter's Church (place in the box at the back by font) by **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December.** Donations of cash should be put in a sealed envelope clearly marked "Pastoral Team Hampers" and left at St Peter's Centre. If you would prefer to pay by bank transfer (BACS), the sort code is 30 91 87, account number 69199668; please reference "Christmas Hampers".

Christmas cake  
Chocolates (Quality Street/Roses/Celebrations etc)  
Nice biscuits, including biscuits for cheese  
Mince pies  
Tinned fruit  
Trifle sponges  
Jelly  
Tinned custard  
Cartons of fruit juice  
Jars of pickles such as Branston, or pickled onions etc  
Bread sauce packet mix  
Cranberry sauce  
Nice soft drinks for a Christmas lunch  
Crisps or savoury snacks  
Christmas Crackers



**Friends of St Peter's Church Winchcombe**

**Registered Charity 1046434**

***Tower Illumination Request***

Date(s) requested .....

Occasion(s): .....

Name: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

Email: ..... Telephone: .....

*Donation (£5 minimum per evening) £.....cash or cheque to "Friends of St Peter's Church Winchcombe". Please read below and sign and return this slip with your remittance to St Peter's Centre, Gloucester Street, Winchcombe, GL54 5LU, at least two weeks before the requested date.*

*Please tick as appropriate*

☐ *I would like this to be an annual occurrence*

*Please contact me to arrange.*

☐ *I am a UK taxpayer and assent to the Gift Aid declaration below*

*I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of income Tax/or Capital Gains Tax for each year (6 April – 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT or Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.*

Signed:..... Date: .....

**Notes:**

- In exceptional circumstances the Friends' Committee reserve the right to decline a request.*
- Dates are not exclusive and in the event of more than one request for a particular date the later applicant will, where practicable, be informed and may be offered an alternative.*

I wonder if you have heard of WAM? Or heard of it, but were unsure what the letters stood for? WAM stands for **We All Matter** and is a local charity based in Winchcombe. It works primarily with children and young people through providing youth groups, mentoring, outdoor education and wellbeing services. WAM started as a small community organisation in 2013/4 and has grown to become a well-respected registered charity that is recognised throughout the county. Despite the obvious impact of the current pandemic on our usual methods of delivering services, in the 2019/20 academic year we worked with over 75 local children and young people through our groups and holiday activity days, 25 young people through mentoring and 1:1 outdoor education, and delivered relationships and sex education to over 350 students at Winchcombe School.

Our core value is that “We All Matter” and our overall aim is to help children and young people “to build resilience for life.” We put this into practice through the priority we place on the relationships our staff and volunteers build with the young people we support – intentional relationships that offer time, space and safety. We give value and worth to young people, many of whom may not be feeling valued in today’s unpredictable and complex world. As one parent said, “[my child] feels safe and listened to in all activities at WAM which has a positive ripple effect to family life. Massive thank you to an incredible organisation.” And a teacher recently commented about an outdoor education student, “WAM really does support complex young pupils to see life through a different lens”.





In the Winchcombe Community, our youth groups are now back to meeting online rather than in person, but we still value having fun and connection. Before the second lockdown we managed to provide three full days of autumn holiday club activities over October half-term in Encounter Church and in our Woodland.



We also ran a socially distanced Positive Pumpkin Trail for All Hallows' Eve & All Saints' Day for the wider community where our youth groups made some fantastic pumpkins. We also have plans for a Covid-safe Community Activity for Christmas – so watch this space!

We have seen a tangible increase this year in the support from our local community and for that we are truly grateful - especially in light of our Woodland recently being broken into and vandalised. It is our desire that WAM continues to become even more embedded locally so that it can best help local children and young people “to build resilience for life”.

As a charity, we remain dependent on our incredible volunteers; if you would like to find out more about WAM's work or get involved, please get in touch with us either by email [info@wamyouth.org.uk](mailto:info@wamyouth.org.uk) or via our social media @WAMYouth (Twitter and Facebook) or wam.youth (Instagram). We are particularly keen to consult with local community members as we seek to future proof our community youth service beyond the pandemic.

Gemma Madle - WAM Director

## ***Notes from the September 2020 PCC Meeting***

The PCC met online via Zoom. Simon Andrews updated the meeting on the latest Parish activity with regards to the coronavirus. He emphasised the amount of pastoral work going on behind the scenes by clergy, and also thanked Margaret Batterbury and the Pastoral team for their continuing work. JP also asked us to recognise all who work behind the scenes – Churchwardens, Deputy Churchwardens, the PCC etc. The Winchcombe Community Coronavirus Action Group (WCCAG) is an ongoing group and is still meeting, and volunteers are also still involved.

The PCC were informed that Gerry Gilpin, a coach/facilitator, has been working with a small group to develop strategies and plans on how to include families, children and young people. JP has suggested drawing a small group together to see what needs to be added to or changed in the 2015 and 2016 Parish plans. These discussions are likely to run into the new year.

Geof Adlington updated the PCC on the 2020 accounts to date, and the 2021 Parish Share – he explained that at a recent Deanery Review meeting, it was underlined that Parishes need to accept that the Parish Share is vital. Geof proposed that we pay £78,900, the same as last year. The PCC agreed. They also agreed to adopt a new Financial and Control Procedures document, and to pay an annual contribution of £50 to the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust – an organisation which (amongst other things) can help find grants.

Rob Stone informed the PCC that a small part of the ceiling at Christ Church has fallen, possibly due to aging. It needs repairing and will require the hiring of scaffolding. The work will cost £468 + VAT, but cannot be done at the present time because, during the organ service, asbestos was found in the blower box. The box is essential for the organ to work and needs to be removed professionally. Swabs are being taken throughout the church to find out if there is asbestos elsewhere. A plan will be put together when the test results come back. Christ Church is currently closed to everyone.

Rachel Murray informed the PCC that the new Parish website is slowly progressing; it is hoped that the new website will be short, clear and easy to understand. The PCC will be shown the website once enough progress has been made; the launch date will hopefully be 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

Finally, Abbie Andrews informed the PCC that the ECO Group have been enhancing the Remembrance area in the Churchyard, and thanked the Holloways for all their work in that area. The wildflower area has been marked out in order to be able to get the ground ready for planting the wildflowers, and the crocus bulbs have been planted.

PCC Meetings: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021.  
2021 APCM: Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April.

Sara Collins - PCC Secretary

[PCCSecretary@winchcombeparish.org.uk](mailto:PCCSecretary@winchcombeparish.org.uk)

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## **Churches Together on Radio Winchcombe**

We had intended to broadcast a ten part series of Julian of Norwich's "Revelation of Divine Love" in Advent.

Unfortunately, due to lockdown restrictions, we have decided to delay this until Lent next year. We hope to advertise dates in the February edition of the parish magazine.

## **Hope Beyond Covid-19 in and around Winchcombe**

Help Beyond Covid-19 is a new voluntary group which is being set up by Churches Together to signpost local sources of help.

Not everyone is aware of what assistance is available especially if they are not on the internet or Facebook. We aim to provide a parish helpline to advise those who may be in need, lonely, anxious or depressed.

If you can spare a few hours each week to staff a virtual helpline (not your number) please contact Rob Stone on 01242 602384.



## ***Mediaeval Farming in Winchcombe***

Winchcombe is famed for its walks and many visitors come especially to enjoy just such an activity. For those of a less active inclination, a shorter and easier experience is to be found at the bottom of Castle Street, turning left onto a lane signposted the Winchcombe Way, between the houses and onto the path which runs alongside the River Isbourne. To the left the river bubbles pleasantly along and to the right are fields and open countryside. It's quite idyllic and a very pleasant stroll.



Almost immediately on the right is a large field, usually full of lovely Cotswold sheep safely grazing. But what is unusual to see is the fact that the grassy field which slopes down towards the river is not flat. It undulates. This is unusual in England today and only exists in a few places. We are among the lucky ones, at least in the opinion of those interested in our history, for this field is the remnant of a very ancient system of mediaeval farming dating from the immediate post Roman period, called the open field system.

The fields around Winchcombe would have been owned by the Lord of the Manor, or maybe in this case the Abbey, and farmed in strips by local farming families, each working the

same strip every year. In return, they would work for the land owner. The ridge and furrow method they used is the result of continued ploughing up and down the strips with oxen. The military had all the horses. The plough was a large, heavy, wooden contraption which was pulled by teams of up to eight



oxen arranged in pairs. The action of ploughing would pile up the soil on one side then both oxen and plough had to be turned by hand to plough

back down the other side, throwing more soil onto the ridge. The lay of the land meant that furrows drained down towards a ditch, or in this case I guess, the Isbourne. Planting occurred on the sides and base of the furrow with careful consideration as some crops required more moisture than others.

When in use the ridges would have been 6 feet tall and curved at the top. The strips themselves would have been 220 yards long, a furlong or “furrow-long” and 5 to 22 yards wide, a chain, giving an area of 1 acre. Eventually, when the land was given over to pasture for sheep, the ridges and furrows survived until they were eventually ploughed over in most cases. Even so, this system of farming persisted until the 16<sup>th</sup> century by which time several outbreaks of the Black Death, or bubonic plague, had depleted the rural population to such an extent that farm labour was scarce and it became easier to graze sheep for wool. The Cotswolds embraced this trend wholeheartedly and to its profit.

I love the idea that we can walk past places which have remained little changed over centuries, just as of course, much of Winchcombe has. In writing this piece I have learnt something of the field near my home which has always fascinated me. Now I would like to know who the people were who worked this land. Where did they live? What were their names? Almost certainly, we will never know. All that remains is their field.

Lynne Horton

## ***Snowdrops***

On Easter Sunday 1874, a young naturalist, Henry Elwes, wrote to his wife of 'a most beautiful snowdrop' that he had found near Smyrna. *Galanthus elwesii*, a giant of a snowdrop, the size of a tulip, was to form the basis of the outstanding collection at Colesbourne Park, between Cheltenham and Cirencester. This collection has been much enhanced since the 1960s by Henry's great-grandson and namesake, with his wife, Carolyn. She split a clump of the honey-scented *Galanthus* 'S.



Arnott', and got bitten by the snowdrop bug. Now the landscape garden, (normally) open for six consecutive weekends from late January, is home to some 350 cultivars.

In recent years, galanthophilia has become an obsession. People such as the Elweses or Debby Puxley at Welford Park near Newbury (location for *The Great British Bake Off*) are forever seeking out new varieties, crossing existing cultivars, or even buying rare snowdrops at prices that would have stunned 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch tulip dealers. Debby Puxley believes that Norman monks brought snowdrops to Britain, pointing out that several top British snowdrop gardens – Walsingham in Norfolk, Anglesey Abbey in Cambridgeshire, Hodsock near Worksop, and Welford itself – were all Norman monasteries. In all these gardens, hundreds of thousands of snowdrops run through woodlands like a blanket covering of snow.

What intrigues galanthophiles is the sheer variety of snowdrops. The single *Galanthus nivalis* is the one we're all most likely to grow, but then there is the double version, *Galanthus nivalis* 'Flore Pleno', or rarer ones with detailed markings and layers of petals, such as the Irish cultivar, *G.* 'Hill Poë', to be seen at Colesbourne. Another rarity is



*Galanthus plicatus* 'Wendy's Gold', which has inner petals marked with yellow and a golden ovary, grown in the formal garden at Welford Park.

After December, the quietest month in the garden, it is wonderful on a January morning to see the first green tips nudging up through the ground, heralding a new gardening year. Snowdrops need little attention, disappearing quietly once their show is over. Bulbs do best planted in February or March 'in the green' – that is, with their leaves still on – rather than as dried bulbs in the autumn. Divide your clumps every other year or so, and you'll soon create a fine display.



*Snowdrops and hellebores at Trench Hill, Sheepscombe*

Other good places to see snowdrops locally are the Painswick Rococo Gardens and Batsford Arboretum. Home Farm at Huntley will be open on 31 January and 14 February, and Trench Hill at Sheepscombe (which also has a magnificent collection of hellebores and cornus) on 7 and 14 February, both in aid of the National Garden Scheme. Should further lockdowns close these gardens, you can always take a February walk along the snowdrop-covered banks of the Isbourne below the town.

Vanessa Berridge

During the pandemic and especially during lockdowns, Radio Winchcombe has increased its live output to keep listeners updated with the latest local information. Many listeners have said how much they appreciated this and hearing local familiar voices.

December programmes include the Children's Society Christmas Evening: excerpts from previous years together with studio guests, will be broadcast on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December at 7 pm repeated at 12 noon on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December.

A repeat of the 2019 Advent Carol Service will be at 3 pm 6<sup>th</sup> December and last year's Service of Readings and Carols on Christmas Day at 2 pm. We will continue broadcasting the Sunday morning Communion service at 1 pm.

Barbara Herod has decided to step down from 'Focus', our local affairs programme. If you would like to help keep this programme on air please let me know. This is an opportunity to interview guests from the community. At Radio Winchcombe we are always looking for additional help either in front of the microphone, or behind the scenes looking after the technical equipment, helping with paperwork or fundraising. If you would like to help keep Radio Winchcombe on air, or just see what's involved please let me know. Part of our remit to Ofcom is that we train people to make radio shows. We are able to offer full free training.

Philip Arkell Tel 603003

## ***St Michael's, Stanley Pontlarge***

A huge thank you to everyone who was able to help at our annual churchyard tidy-up/maintenance day. We met on a dry October Saturday morning, and, following all the social distancing rules, had a very successful day. We cleared the churchyard, cleaned out the gutters and scraped the moss from the base of the church – all very important jobs to be done regularly on an ancient building. But it was also an opportunity to get to know other parishioners better and appreciate the beauty of the church and its setting.

Thanks to Anne Dean for providing the picnic lunch and Mike Dean for burning the two huge bonfires!

Hopefully next year we'll do this again without any of the Covid-19 constraints!

Gill Badger



The church of St Michael's in Stanley Pontlarge dates back 800 years but it has never seen a service like this! A week after the locals did such a great job of tidying and cleaning, we had the first service since lockdown, with sanitiser, masks and social distancing. John Paul presided and, although there was no singing and the normal capacity of 52 was reduced to 17, we had a full house. It was great to be back!

Stanley Pontlarge may be bit of a backwater but many people who drop in once find their way back. We look forward to more socially-distanced worship!

John Clare



*The Children's Society  
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*present*

*"Highlights from previous Christmas Events  
at Charingworth Court"*

*Local people offering a blend of readings, songs, poetry, stories and Barber Shop, coupled with some audience participation, provides for an enjoyable programme.*



*To be broadcast on  
Friday 4 December 2020, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
And repeated on  
Wednesday 9 December from 12 Noon to 2 p.m.*



*If you missed the original events, this is an opportunity to catch up.*

*This is our major fundraising event. If you enjoy the programme, you are invited to make a donation towards the Children's Society work among young vulnerable people. Cheques can be sent to the treasurer at  
3 Rathmore Close, Winchcombe GL54 5YX  
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## ***Hailes Church***

Many people visit the romantic ruins of Hailes Abbey, just outside Winchcombe, but do all of them take a second look at the little church across the road?

Situated on the edge of open farmland, with a minuscule graveyard, the church has no tower. Construction began around 1135, by the Norman lord Sir Ralph de Worcester.



However, the abbot of Winchcombe Abbey claimed ownership, and the dispute continued until 1175, when the Pope decreed that the Abbey had the right to all local churches.

The new Abbey at Hailes was founded in 1246, and the little church continued as an adjunct. The Abbey's possession of "the blood of Christ" made the site a busy and popular destination for mediaeval pilgrims. The Abbey then moved all the villagers from Hailes to the nearby hamlet of Didbrook, so now there is no settlement at Hailes.

The church is very often open to visitors, or a key may be found at the nearby fruit farm. There is no electricity, so best to go in the daylight! The box pews are original, incredibly, and the lead-lined stone font dates from the thirteenth century. There are lovely mediaeval floor tiles, which were brought from the Abbey after the Henrician dissolution.



But the star of the show here is the 13<sup>th</sup> century wall painting: the first image you see on entering is of St Christopher, the patron saint of travellers. And there is much more – a hunting scene, mythical beasts, martyred saints, and many others (which you can find on line). The stained glass came from the Abbey - it had been taken to Toddington Church in 1789, but eventually "came home" to Hailes in the twentieth century.

So do go and visit this fascinating little chapel.

## ***The Winchcombe Harmonium***

Recently I played the harmonium in the Winchcombe Museum; this has been returned to working order by Stephan von Clinkerhoffen and Peter Harris. The instrument came to the Museum in 2008, and is believed to be from the old Workhouse. The serial number on the music desk suggests that the probable year of manufacture is 1894.

The Museum has quite a lot of information about the Workhouse which was built in 1836 following a standard design by Sampson Kempthorne. It lay between Gloucester Street and Back Lane where the Winchcombe Day Care Centre is now. Initially managed by a Board of Guardians under the Poor Law, management passed to the local council in 1930. Renamed Public Assistance Institutions, these were abolished in 1948 with the advent of the NHS, and many of the buildings became hospitals or "old people's homes".



The Museum instrument was made by Mason and Hamlin of Boston, Massachusetts; founded in 1853, the firm's annual production of reed organs grew to several thousand by the end of the century. From America, it was

supplied by a music shop in Cheltenham, Dale, Forty & Co, who had premises on the Promenade opposite the Neptune Fountain, where GAP had a store until recently.

Anne Crow drew my attention to records of visits to the Winchcombe Workhouse by Percy Grainger in 1908 and 1909. Born in Australia, Grainger moved to England and then to America, becoming a highly regarded pianist and composer. He also had an interest in folk music and pioneered recordings of singers using a wax cylinder recording machine. An article in the Folk Music Journal describes Grainger's visits to

Winchcombe; he recorded thirty songs from five singers in 1908, and more when he returned the following year.

The workhouse routine involved daily prayers and Sunday worship. Inmates were not usually allowed out - even a walk to the local church risked a diversion to a nearby tavern - so services were held inside in a chapel or a common room.

When I was asked to play, I wondered what music might have been used in the workhouse. Maybe songs, although in the folk tradition these would often have been unaccompanied. But I found a fellow collector of Grainger's, Cecil Sharp, had arranged some folksongs including a few that Grainger had recorded here in Winchcombe.



The late nineteenth century

Parisian organists also wrote for the harmonium, even if it is unlikely that this would have been workhouse fare.

And, assuming that the harmonium was used to accompany acts of worship, some hymns. So, trying to find a short musical programme, I played a few hymns from a Methodist Hymnal, some folksong arrangements by Cecil Sharp, and a couple of short pieces by César Franck.

Later, reflecting on the condition of the instrument, which seems to be rather well preserved, I began to wonder if the workhouse had acquired it new in 1894. Maybe it began its life in a chapel or private house, and was not given to the workhouse until sometime later. I had had notions of Grainger playing it, but maybe it wasn't in the workhouse at the time? Maybe we will never know. Anyway, I hope all who came to the Museum to hear it enjoyed the experience. I certainly did.

Andrew Horton



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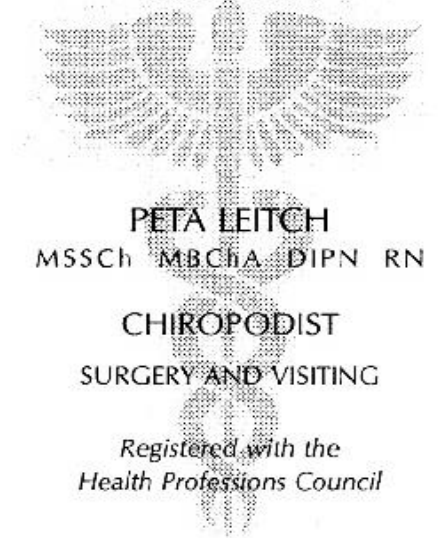


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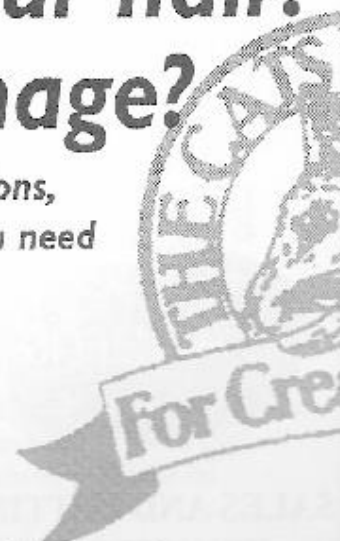
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