

Englefield Parish News

December 2019 - January 2020



From St Mark's House

Dear friends

Grace and Truth: two qualities that seem sadly lacking in the manner and content of much political debate; two qualities that were incarnated in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose coming into the world we celebrate at this Christmas season. In their open letter this week (quoted and adapted below) the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have reminded us that “as we approach this General Election, we also herald the season of Advent, the birth of Jesus Christ and the reminder of his return as our judge. In Christ’s birth God chooses to come and live among us, intervening in our imperfect world, and offering the hope of life reordered and restored. At his return he promises the setting right of all things. It is time to set aside apathy and cynicism and to be people of hope.”

While it is our democratic privilege and responsibility to vote, the issues confronting us are complex and confusing; helpful non-partisan information can be found at www.engaGE19.org.uk. Each of us is called to honour the truth, to seek it faithfully and speak it accurately, separating facts from opinion and, without antagonism, challenging and correcting falsehoods when we hear them. Each of us is called to relate with grace, showing mutual respect, notably on social media, praying for debates that seek to unite rather than divide, to bring us together and to rebuild trust in each other, in our institutions, and in our politics.

“We should be thankful for those who put themselves forward for public service, facing huge responsibilities and challenges, and ask that they will seek the common good, because the outcome of the Election will affect us all. We call on all those standing for election to reject the language of prejudice and not to stoke stigma or hatred towards people on the grounds of their religion, culture, origin, identity or belief.” Through his birth in poverty, his actions and words and warning of judgement for those who seek only their own wellbeing, Jesus taught us that we need God’s grace to transform us, motivating our care for the poor, inspiring our love for our neighbours, and seeking that common good that truly benefits us all. Let us seek the wisdom and guidance of God, the source of all wisdom, who enables us as we wrestle to address the questions and challenges of our time and is authority and judge over all in our world, our nation and our politics. Above all, at this critical time, let us pray.

Looking forward to seeing you at St Mark’s: Polling Station to vote; Church to worship! May His truth be the foundation on which we build our lives; his grace the power by which we live in hope throughout the year – and years ahead - whatever the outcome of the Election.

Happy Christmas and a hope-filled New Year

Nick and Harriet

Diary: December - January

Sunday 1 st December	First Sunday of Advent Holy Communion, 10.30 at St Mark's
Tuesday 3 rd December	The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust Bradfield carol service, Bradfield College chapel, 7.30pm Christmas Shopping Event at Flowers Farm Interiors in Theale, 3-7pm, see page 13 for details
Sunday 8 th December	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Friday 13 th December	Englefield School Christmas Fayre , 3.30-5.30 A Taste of Christmas event, 7.30-9pm at Theale Village Hall, see page 5 for details
Sunday 15 th December	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Monday 16 th December	St Mark's Christmas Tea Party , see opposite for more details
Saturday 21 st December	Carol singing outside the Coop in Theale, 11am
Sunday 22 nd December	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's Carols by Candlelight at St Mark's, 6.30pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies
Tuesday 24 th December	Christingle Service , 5pm at St Mark's, a short service for young families, see page 9 for details of all Christmas services Midnight communion service , 11.15pm at Holy Trinity, Theale (the choir will be singing carols round the tree from 10.45pm)
Weds 25 th December	CHRISTMAS DAY Family communion with carols at St Mark's, 10.30
Sunday 29 th December	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Sunday 5 th January	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Sunday 12 th January	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Wednesday 15 th January	Parish Council meeting , see below for details
Sunday 19 th January	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Sunday 26 th January	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Monday 27 th January	PCC meeting , 6.30 at St Mark's
Sunday 2 nd February	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's

Mondays 2nd and 16th December and 6th and 20th January

Time to Pray in the Englefield Chapel - an opportunity to meet for half an hour for quiet reflection and prayer - from 6pm till 6.30pm, usually on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of every month. All welcome.

St Mark's PCC meetings for 2020 will be held on 27th January, 23rd March, 22nd June, with the APCM on 20th April 2020.

The next Englefield Parish Council meeting is on Wednesday 15th January at 6.30pm at the Estate Office - all parishioners are welcome to attend.

Congratulations

To Ann Stone on her 90th birthday on Wednesday 2nd October.

To Will and Monica Haig on the birth of Robyn Lyra on Wednesday 2nd October in Cambridge, a granddaughter for Peter and Catherine and a first great-grandchild for Elizabeth Benyon.

To Oli and Honor Stanley on the birth of Thomas on 14th November, a brother for Orla and grandson for Dudley and Victoria Fishburn.

St Mark's Christmas Tea Party

This is taking place on Monday 16th December in the church at 3pm. Do come and join us for carols, cakes and Christmas treats. For more information and to let us know you are coming please telephone 01635 269157.

Melanie Townsend

Calling carol singers!

Please put Saturday 21st December in your diary and come along to join the congregations of Holy Trinity Church and St Luke's Church to sing carols outside the Co-op in Theale, starting at 11am. It would be really lovely to see as many friends from St Mark's as possible so please do come and bring friends and family!

Kate Morgan

Christmas Fayre

Englefield Primary School's Christmas Fayre, organised by the PTA to raise funds for the school, is on Friday 13th December from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Everyone is very welcome.





New archdeacon for Berkshire

The Diocese of Oxford has just announced that the Revd Canon Stephen Pullin from Reading Minster is to become the new Archdeacon of Berkshire. Stephen joined the Diocese as Priest-in-Charge of St Mary the Virgin (Reading Minster) in 2014. He has been the Area Dean of Reading and became Acting Archdeacon in September. He will be installed as the Archdeacon of Berkshire at a licensing and collation service in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on Saturday 29th February, with a welcome service in the Berkshire Archdeaconry at a date to be confirmed.

Contactless giving

As announced in the last issue, St Mark's is intending to follow in the footsteps of many other churches and offer the option of contactless giving for visitors and the congregation. A Goodbox Gbx contactless device is now in position at the back of the church. It is set at a nominal £5 donation but you can scroll up or down as you wish from £1 to £30. Thanks are due to Peter Hollands and Charlotte Hollands for their help in setting it up.

Ron Marillier

RIP

John Brown who died on Friday 1st November and whose funeral was held at St Mark's on Tuesday 26th November. Our thoughts are with Nancy and the family.

Christmas services

Details of Christmas services at St Mark's can be seen on page 9. As in previous years, the Christmas offertories will go to three charities, one local, one national and one international. Confirmation of the three selected will be on the pew sheets nearer the time.

Please also note that there will not be a midnight communion service at St Mark's on Christmas Eve. However, there is a service at Holy Trinity, Theale, and all are warmly invited to join the congregation there at 11.15pm - with the choir singing carols round the tree from 10.45pm onwards.



Celebrating at 90!

The congregation at St Mark's was delighted to join in celebrating Ann Stone's 90th birthday with drinks and nibbles after the service on Sunday 13th October. Congratulations and many happy returns from us all!

Baptism

Caroline Emilia Tolley, daughter of Rowena and Mark and granddaughter of Linda and Roger Price, baptised at St Mark's on Sunday 17th November.

Save the date

The next **Deanery lecture** will be given by Keith Ward, emeritus Regius Professor of Divinity at Christ Church Oxford, who will talk on *Love is his Meaning: understanding the Teaching of Jesus*. It will take place on **Tuesday 25th February** at 7.30pm in the music school at Bradfield College. He is one of the leading Christian thinkers in the Anglican Church today and it is hoped as many people as possible will be able to attend.

Holy Trinity Church

A Taste of Christmas

Join us for an evening of fun food tasting at Theale Village Hall as we put four big supermarket names to the Christmas taste test



Friday 13th December, 7.30-9pm
Theale Village Hall



£5 for adults, £2.50 for under 16s

includes glass of wine or juice in arrival and food tasting

Tickets available from Marjorie on 07930 948713

or email office@holytrinitytheale.org.uk





Englefield Primary School

It's been a busy term so far with a lot taking place both within school and outside the classrooms on various trips and visits.

We were delighted to welcome Bassistry Arts back to school for their annual visit. Marcel and Philippe put on music workshops for each class, then we finished with an assembly at which parents were invited to watch their children perform and to play 'Name that tune'. This is one of the many enrichment activities throughout the school year which are generously funded by the PTA.



Miss Lock from Berkshire Maestros comes in to teach our Year 3/4 children the fife. They have a free lesson each week and will be performing in the end of term music concert. Our pupils sang songs and read prayers and poems for our Harvest Festival which was held in St Mark's at the end of September. Parents

donated gifts of food which were taken to PACT in Reading to help families who have fallen on hard times. Some of our pupils also sang at the church's festival.

The NSPCC have visited us this term to give the children workshops on how to keep safe. As part of our work with them we went on a whole-school sponsored scavenger hunt in the Englefield deer park. All money raised was sent off to the NSPCC to help them to continue the great work they do to help children.

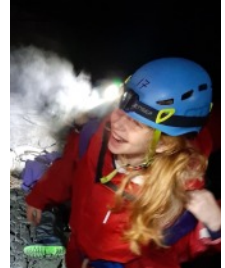
Six of our Year 4 pupils are attending regular literacy enrichment sessions at Theale Green School led by a member of staff and supported by Year 8 pupils. The children are working on the text *Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo. "We had lots of fun when we did a challenge to identify the different genres" (Jennifer). We are delighted that our pupils' artwork is on display in Theale library. The library kindly hosted an event where parents could go and look at the artwork whilst chatting over a coffee and a biscuit.

Our Year 6 pupils recently completed their Bikeability training which is aimed at ensuring they are safe cyclists. This is really important for this group as many of them will start cycling to school next year when they move on to secondary school.

We have had a super start to the football season! Our Englefield team played a friendly training match against Bradfield. Good determination, team spirit and excellent use of football skills secured a 2-0 victory. A special mention must go to Isabella who represented Girls Football! All classes also had a great deal of fun at our skipping workshops and we now have various skipping activities going on at break times.



The children in Year 5/6 have just come back from having ‘an amazing time’ in Rhos y Gwaliau, North Wales. Highlights included canoeing, gorge-walking, mountain walks, climbing and visiting a slate mine with an underground lake on which they rowed a boat. Each day was action-packed and the evenings were filled with problem-solving activities in the dark, a night walk and a really successful talent show. The food was good and they slept brilliantly...the first time we have had to wake everyone up!! Mrs Watts has already seen better quality writing as a result of the trip. Having exciting and enriching experiences gives pupils something tangible and stimulating to write about. However the benefit of these trips goes beyond the learning that is no doubt involved. Confidence-building, teamwork, self-worth and the enjoyment and appreciation of the wonders of the world around them are just some of the added extras.



On November 5th, Years 5 and 6 visited the Houses of Parliament. They had a tour, listened to a debate and had a workshop in which they met up with John Redwood and our very own Richard Benyon on his last day. The children always love this trip and it gives them great ideas for their writing once they return to school.

The parents of our youngest children recently enjoyed their first ‘Stay and Play’ session. The classroom was full of people and many, many poppies were coloured, painted and cut out! Four of our Year 4 children spent the morning at Pangbourne College for a special Design Technology session. They worked in the D’T workshop and made bug hotels which we are going to hang up in our playground.

Our pupils have just finished packing 24 boxes full of gifts for Operation Christmas Child. We took part in the scheme as part of our links with St Mark’s church.

In amongst all the activities for this term, we had a visit from Ofsted. The pupils did us proud and the report is full of really positive comments about the education we provide. I am delighted to say that in Ofsted terms we remain a ‘good’ school. The link to our inspection report is available on our website.

Our choir are looking forward to participating in the Junior Music Festival at The Hexagon at the end of November. They are performing *All the King’s Men* and we are delighted that three of our pupils have been chosen to perform solo parts.

Finally, an update on Pebbles...he has started his hibernation in Mrs Latimer’s fridge and will stay there until the end of February.

Hilary Latimer, Headteacher

Englefield hosts North Wessex Downs forum

Whilst there are no signs to proclaim it, the village of Englefield lies just inside the eastern boundary of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As you leave the village and cross the Pangbourne road or head south across the A4 you will have left the AONB.

What is an AONB you might ask? It was to explore just that question that on Friday 15th November Englefield hosted the North Wessex Downs Annual Forum. An AONB is a landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are recognised as so outstanding that it is protected for the nation. The North Wessex Downs was designated in 1972 and makes up the third largest of Britain's 46 AONBs. The area lies at the heart of the chalk band that stretches across southern England and was once under a warm sea. The geology is based on tiny creatures that lived in the sea around 65 million years ago and are the source of today's soft rock. The rolling chalk hills with thin, well-drained soils, provide the ideal conditions for chalk grassland with chalk-loving flowers, insects and rare butterflies. They are also home to internationally rare chalk streams, such as the River Pang, which support some of the UK's most threatened and fragile plants and animals.

The landscape of the North Wessex Downs is very diverse. As well as the chalk habitats, there is a rich mosaic of woodland, pasture and heath and many man made features such as the Kennet & Avon Canal. The name Wessex was revived by Thomas Hardy in his novels and based on an earlier region of Saxon Britain. The word 'downs' is from Anglo-Saxon 'dun' meaning hill.

Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs is the responsibility of nine local authorities in Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. They came together at Englefield with community, farming, tourism, conservation and heritage representatives to discuss the future of the North Wessex Downs and to launch a new Management Plan. Speakers included Richard Benyon and Lord Cameron of Dillington, a member of the government's National Designated Landscapes Review, and the house hosted a range of masterclasses too, which covered topics such as supporting communities through tourism and increasing wildlife through managing flower-rich grassland.

In the afternoon, the Estate team led a tour around Englefield and discussed the workings of a rural estate including farming, forestry, conservation and the Five A Day garden, where Wendy Tobitt generously gave up her time too. Throughout the day delegates were full of questions and suggestions and the event underlined the importance of AONB designated landscapes to our local area. To find out more visit www.northwessexdowns.org.uk.

Edward Crookes, Estates Director



Christmas Services

at

St Mark's Englefield

SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER

Carols by Candlelight at 6.30pm
followed by mulled wine & mince pies

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christingle Service at 5.00pm
for young families

CHRISTMAS DAY

Family Communion with Carols at 10.30am

**For more information and contact details please see
www.stmarksenglefield.org.uk**



Christmas at the Garden Centre

Well Christmas is here once again, the years seem to get quicker and quicker. By the time you get to read this, the poinsettias will be here, yet again we have British poinsettias in a fantastic array of colours to choose from. Our Christmas trees will also be on sale. The staff team will be frantically working away hand-making all the wreaths that we sell, also making up houseplant foliage bowls and hyacinth bowls, the perfect gift for someone who loves plants. We also have a fabulous selection of gifts too. Don't forget that in January we will still have lots of home-grown primroses and mini cyclamen if you're looking to brighten up a spot by the front door.

Why not pop in and say hi, the team here would like to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Austin Crabbe, Garden Centre Manager



New faces

Since the last edition the Estate has welcomed three new members of staff. Shane Sewell joined the Estate Yard team in October from Sovereign Housing bringing with him carpentry and general maintenance skills. Also in October, Keyron Hylton joined the finance team as a Finance Assistant based at the Estate Office. Keyron is ACCA part qualified and most recently worked for the medical device manufacturer Acumed Ltd. Philippa Pearson (Pip) joined the Forestry team in September on a one year "Forestry Roots" work placement in partnership with the Royal Forestry Society. Pip is working with Rich Edwards and Rob Allen, developing her knowledge and experience of forestry, adding to her extensive experience in the conservation and wildlife sector.

Edward Crookes, Estates Director

Christmas at Cobbs

Father Christmas is calling in on Sunday 8th December. There is a wreath-making workshop and late night shopping until 8pm on Thursday 12th December with a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie while you browse. And the last date for placing meat orders is December 14th with award-winning turkeys available from Peach Croft Farm in Oxfordshire. See the Cobbs at Englefield website for more details.

News from Rushall Farm



A few years ago, I was at a sheep meeting organised by a national livestock feed company. After very long deliberations about the benefits of their brand *Enebol*, a token farmer was there as a speaker to reinforce their message. He stood up and said four words, "You've gotta like sheep". He was right! And those words sustained me over 40 years of shepherding 800 ewes. You have got to like sheep because you think about them most of the time and have to look after and care for them every day. Sheep need a shepherd, whether that is to help them lamb, roll them over when they get stuck on their backs, deal with their lame feet, shear them or find them when they get out.

The problems of keeping sheep have not changed from the time of Jesus. Of course, then there were no fences and the sheep had to be protected from attack by wild animals. Shepherds lived with their sheep and each would have about 12 ewes in their care. It was highly likely that if your dad looked after sheep you would do the same. He wouldn't be able to read or write so neither would you. Others in Jewish society looked down on you; you had a reputation for being dishonest, and were not allowed to testify in a court of law. So why did Luke, a doctor and meticulous writer about Jesus in the Bible, rely so heavily on the evidence of the shepherds in his account of Jesus' birth? Maybe they were the only ones out on the hills above Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks while everyone else was caught up with the noise and bustle of the town. Maybe they were simple men and boys who took the angel's message at face value, "a Saviour has been born. He is the Messiah, the Lord." Maybe it was the skies ringing with a great company of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to those on whom his favour rests". Maybe it was that they never stopped talking about that night when they found the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger just as the angel had told them. And Luke heard it from some of them 60 years later.



Maybe the whole purpose of that night was for Mary, a young teenage girl in disgrace. In the eyes of others, she had become pregnant out of wedlock. The message of the shepherds must have been so crucial in sustaining her belief over the years ahead that this child Jesus was the "Messiah, the Lord overall", a message which is true for us today.

John Bishop



News from Five a Day

The Englefield Estate encourages children to learn about where food comes from, and we do our bit at Five a Day Market Garden. In October we celebrated a decade of working with Ella's Kitchen, the children's food company, by welcoming Allen Sinclair from BBC South Today who filmed the visit of children from Park Lane School, Tilehurst. It's amazing to think that 10,000 children have visited Five a Day during the ten years of Ella's Explorers programme! Every child has fantastic memories of tasting food grown in the garden, digging for worms, and spotting frogs and tadpoles in the wildlife pond. They learn how seeds grow into vegetables and then get stuck in with sowing to take home their own pots of beans and peas.



Over the first two weekends of December (6th to 8th and 13th to 15th) we're hosting the popular festive **wreath-making workshops**. If you'd like to come along, please email wendy@fiveaday.org.uk. Look out for bundles of our colourful willow stems on sale in the Garden Centre to make your own decorations.

Butternut squash and Jerusalem artichokes are the last of this year's produce on sale in the Garden Centre; enjoy them while stocks last! All of the produce is grown by volunteers who look after the Five a Day garden. We welcome people who don't know much about gardening as well as experienced gardeners keen to pass on their knowledge. Email us if you would like more information.

Our gardening volunteers were joined this autumn by employees from Bayer plc based in Green Park who enjoyed being away from their emails and meetings to wield forks and spades for a day. As you see from the photos they had a great time digging and spreading manure to make a new asparagus bed! Thank you everyone from Bayer, and also Berkshire Community Foundation who introduced Bayer to us. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.

Wendy Tobitt on behalf of the Five a Day Market Garden Committee



Englefield to Newbury by bus

A scheduled bus service now operates every Friday from Englefield to Newbury. It departs around 9.15am and returns at lunchtime. West Berkshire bus passes are valid, or the fare is £4.80 return. The Route 75 service is provided through the Carebus Volunteer Group (CVG). Their minibus has a wheelchair lift making the service fully accessible. Pre-booking is essential as the exact pick-up route can vary according to demand. Please telephone 0118 930 4837 before 6pm Thursday.



CVG is based in Englefield and provides minibus and accessible-car transport for elderly, disabled, isolated and vulnerable people in Beenham and surrounding areas of West Berkshire. If you would like to know more about CVG, Route 75 or other services, or can offer any help as a volunteer driver, please call 0118 930 4837 or visit www.carebuscommunitytransport.org or email carebusct@btconnect.com.

flowers farm
INTERIORS

Christmas Shopping Event

Tuesday 3rd December
15:00 – 19:00

Pop in for festive drinks and nibbles,
and a spot of Christmas shopping.

We'll also be holding a raffle, which
will be drawn the same evening!

Visit us:
9 High Street, Theale, Reading, RG7 5AH

Thoughts for the week

These reflections are just some of the short commentaries that are compiled by Aldo Guiducci each week on the readings in church. They are all available, week by week, on the pew sheets and on the church website.

For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. (Luke 12 v 30-31)

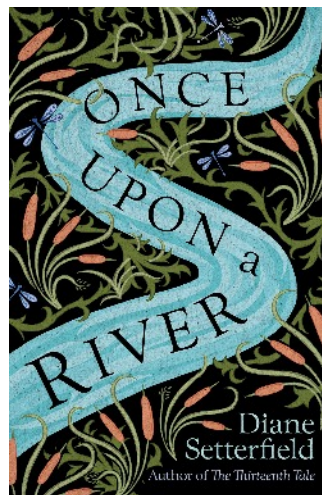
It has been said that a good definition of idolatry is when we make a good thing into a God thing. Clothes, food and drink are all good things, and we are right to appreciate them and enjoy them. But when we elevate them from being good things to being God things – things which dominate our thinking and our affections, and which crowd out the place of God at the centre of our lives – we find they become soured, and often a source of stress and worry. We see this all around us in society today, as people’s desire for material possessions crowds out their need for God. Jesus’ warning to us not to go down this road also contains encouragement – when we seek God’s kingdom as a first priority, we find that God also provides what we need. It isn’t that we are to neglect our work and duties; rather, we are to regard them as much less important than pursuing God.

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23 v 42-43)

This passage deals religion a fatal blow, killing it dead. By religion, I am talking about the idea many people have that the way to heaven involves us earning it by our activities. This idea is commonplace, and leads people to either become proud and look down on those who don’t do as many good works as they do, or become despairing and worry they haven’t done enough to earn their salvation. In this passage, we see a convicted criminal under sentence of death approaching the end of his life. That he is guilty of a capital crime is certain (he confesses his guilt, v41), and he is in no position to make amends. In the short time he has left he can’t do any “good” activities to try and offset his wickedness. Viewed through the lens of religion, his case is a hopeless one. Yet, as he confesses his wrongdoing and recognises Jesus for who he is – the King – the most amazing thing happens. Jesus’ response to the criminal’s petition is to assure him that he has been saved. His trust in Jesus is sufficient, without the need for any ceremonies, religious activities or good deeds. When we understand this, it should give us pause to check that the good deeds we do are being done for the right reasons – as a response to the salvation we have been freely given by Christ the King, and not as an attempt to earn it.

Book review

Once Upon a River is the latest novel by Diane Setterfield who has a long connection with Englefield – her grandfather Ambrose Setterfield lived at No 25 The Street and was a keen gardener. He was renowned in the village: winning the Bridges cup at the Englefield Flower Show numerous times and for appearing in the Guinness Book of Records for his rhubarb. His granddaughter went to Theale Green School and became an author. Her first book, *The Thirteenth Tale*, was a big success and was made into a film starring Olivia Colman and Vanessa Redgrave. It was loosely set in a village like Englefield and Diane even used the name Angelfield for the setting of the book.



Diane's latest book is a magical tale set 100 years ago in the Oxfordshire countryside along the River Thames. It tells the tale of a four-year old girl who arrives one night in the arms of an injured man at a riverside inn. She looks as if she is dead. Those locals who are in the pub that night: rivermen, gravel workers, farmworkers, marvel at the miracle as the child revives. The word spreads and competing people arrive to claim the child as their own. Who is she and how did she appear to be dead and then live? The great flow of the river runs through the whole story as we meet the people who live simple lives alongside it on farms and in hamlets and up the river to the university town of Oxford and to its source beyond. The characters are beautifully drawn and live in the mind after finishing the book. It is a tale of magic and myth with a satisfactory if partly mysterious ending. Just as the River Thames meanders through many tributaries and bends to the sea, this excellent story takes the reader on a similar journey. I very much recommend it.

Victoria Fishburn



Volunteering in 2020

If you are looking for a new challenge for 2020, go along to the next V365 event at the Corn Exchange in Newbury on Saturday 11th January. Hosted by the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire and open from 10am to 3pm, it is an opportunity to meet and chat with around 60 local voluntary organisations to find out more about what they do and how you might be able to help.

Date	Sidesmen	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
December 1st Advent Sunday BCP	Paula Fenwick Linda Price		Penny Savage Romans 13:11-end	Peter Haig Matthew 24:36-44
December 8th 2nd Sunday of Advent	Liz Marillier Gloria Sleep	Aldo Guiducci Isaiah 11:1-10	Ronan O'Sullivan Romans 15:4-13	Paula Fenwick Matthew 3:1-12
December 15th 3rd Sunday of Advent	Peter and Denny Hollands	Catherine Haig Isaiah 35:1-10	Ron Marillier James 5:7-10	Carol Boulter Matthew 11:2-11
December 22nd 4th Sunday of Advent	Peter and Catherine Haig	Mike Kimber Isaiah 7:10-16	Miles Edgar Romans 1:1-7	Gill Barton Matthew 1:18-25
December 25th CHRISTMAS DA	David and Stephanie Gibbons	Torquil MJ Isaiah 52:7-10	Carol Boulter Hebrews 1:1-4	Richard Benyon John 1:1-14
December 29th 1st Sunday of Christmas	Elizabeth Benyon Melanie Townsend	Anne Edgar Isaiah 63:7-9	Peter Hollands Hebrews 2:10-18	Liz Marillier Matthew 2:13-23
January 5th 2nd Sunday of Christmas BCP	Paula Fenwick Linda Price		Torquil MJ Ephesians 3:1-12	Stephanie Gibbons Matthew 2:1-12
January 12th Epiphany	Liz Marillier Gloria Sleep	Dee Boddy Isaiah 42:1-9	Saffy O'Sullivan Acts 10:34-43	Melanie Townsend Matthew 3:13-end
January 19th 2nd Sunday of Epiphany	Peter and Denny Hollands	Dianne Graham Isaiah 49:1-7	Dinah Perkins 1 Corinthians 1:1-9	Aldo Guiducci John 1:29-42
January 26th 3rd Sunday of Epiphany	Peter and Catherine Haig	Hugh Boulter Isaiah 9:1-14	Harriet Wynne-Jones 1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Torquil MJ Matthew 4:12-23
February 2nd Presentation of Christ BCP	Elizabeth Benyon Melanie Townsend		Paula Fenwick Hebrews 2:14-end	Peter Haig Luke 2:22-40
February 9th 3rd Sunday before Lent	Paula Fenwick Linda Price	Linda Price Isaiah 58:1-9a	Penny Savage 1 Corinthians 2: 1-12	Gloria Sleep Matthew 5:13-20

If you are unavailable for any duty on the rota, please try to find a swap, or otherwise contact Saffy O'Sullivan or Torquil Montague-Johnstone. For diary planning for future Sundays, an up-to-date rota can always be found on the rota sheet if you have any notices for the pew sheet or announcements to be made in church. For prayer requests, please contact Saffy O'Sullivan.

Intercessions	Sacristan	Administrators	Sunday Club	Cleaners
BCP	Sue Smith	Carol Boulter Melanie Townsend	Susannah McBain Saffy O'Sullivan	Elizabeth Benyon Melanie Townsend
Hugh Boulter	Dinah Perkins	Saffy O'Sullivan Dudley Fishburn	Liz McKean Catherine Haig	Liz McKean Dinah Perkins
Harriet Wynne-Jones	Dee Boddy	Carol Boulter Penny Savage	Carolyn Ahanchian Alice Johnson	Paula Fenwick Linda Price
Melanie Townsend	Catherine Haig	Peter Haig Torquil MJ	NO S NDA CL B	Gill Barton Dianne Graham
Nick Wynne-Jones	Penny Norris	Gill Barton Carol Boulter Saffy O'Sullivan	NO S NDA CL B	ALL HELP PLEASE Flowers and cleaning church on 24 th Dec
Ron Marillier	Dinah Perkins	Denny Hollands Dudley Fishburn	NO S NDA CL B	Elizabeth Benyon Melanie Townsend
BCP	Dee Boddy	Peter Haig Melanie Townsend	Andrea Kean Sara Guiducci	Liz McKean Dinah Perkins
Saffy O'Sullivan	Sue Smith	Torquil MJ Penny Savage	Zoe Benyon Saffy O'Sullivan	Saffy O'Sullivan Elisabeth Shelley
Carol Boulter	Catherine Haig	Carol Boulter Peter Haig	Melissa Bennett Liz Reeves	Paula Fenwick Linda Price
Stephanie Gibbons	Penny Norris	Peter Haig Saffy O'Sullivan	Susannah McBain Denny Hollands	Gill Barton Dianne Graham
BCP	Sue Smith	Gill Barton Melanie Townsend	Liz McKean Catherine Haig	Carole and Pete Ford
Hugh Boulter	Dinah Perkins	Denny Hollands Torquil MJ	Carolyn Ahanchian Alice Johnson	Elizabeth Benyon Melanie Townsend

van on 01491 825996 or 07799 060949. All changes, please, must be made known to Saffy, to Carol Boulter or d on the website, www.stmarksenglefield.org.uk/rota, or in the church porch. Please let Nick Wynne-Jones know ease contact Dinah Perkins on 0118 9302731 and the intercessor will include your request on the following Sunday.

A loyalty scheme for Reading

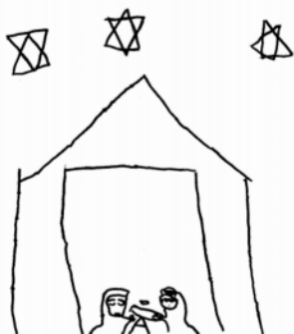
LoLo - short for Local Loyalty - is a new app that rewards shoppers for buying and eating from their local retailers and restaurants and has recently been launched in Reading. When you download the app you immediately receive £20 of 'loyalty tokens' that you can then use to access discounts at local participating businesses. The app benefits both customers and businesses, encouraging local loyalty and investment in your local high street. It specifically supports businesses which employ local people and pay local taxes.

You can become members of the LoLo local loyalty scheme and receive discounts in businesses in Reading by visiting <https://www.mylolo.com/>. LoLo is also inviting businesses to sign up and has a dedicated Local Loyalty Leader in the area who is available to help with this easy and free process.

The beauty of LoLo is the more local businesses and customers that join the free loyalty platform, the more they will all benefit. Each time a customer makes a purchase with a local business using their loyalty tokens, they receive more tokens back, that they can then spend again at the same business or redeem at another participating shop, mechanic, butcher or restaurant. LoLo is the gift that just keeps giving. If we want vibrant local communities then we must support the local businesses which employ local people and pay local business taxes. When we spend money with international online giants we send the money away from our community and add to the local decline. Supporting local businesses helps to keep the money circulating in our local community.

Lolo has started in Reading and Orpington and is set to launch in High Wycombe and Wakefield in the near future, before being launched nationally.

Ian Jones, Co-founder and CEO



GWR timetable changes

Anyone using the train from Theale should be aware that from December 15th the timetable is changing. GWR says this is the biggest alteration since 1976 and will offer more trains, more seats and more choice. However, there are also changes to the timings of peak and off peak trains, especially affecting trains back from London in the afternoons. Information is available from the ticket office at Theale station or at GWR.com/timetable2019.

Remembering Sgt Graham Fisher

This year in the run of wartime anniversaries we have commemorated 75 years since both the D-Day landings in June and the somewhat less successful expedition to Arnhem in September. In this season of Remembrance before we close this year prior to celebrating the 75th anniversaries of VE Day and VJ Day in 2020 it is fitting that we recognise the 75th anniversary of the death of the only man named on the Englefield war memorial from the Second World War.

Frederick Graham Fisher was born (according to the 1939 Register) on 22nd November 1923, although the birth was not officially registered until early 1924. He was the son of Frederick Charles and Margaret Kathleen Fisher. In 1908 Frederick Charles (then living at No 16 The Street with his parents) had been one of the first volunteers to join the newly created Territorial Force and was apparently a good shot. With the other Territorials he was embodied in August 1914 and served throughout the War, being promoted to Corporal and wounded.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Graham, his parents and brother John lived at No 20, The Street, just four doors down from where his grandparents were still living. Graham attended the village school and appears in a school photograph from 1933. In 1935 he won a scholarship for a special free place at Newbury Grammar School and was still at the school when war was declared.

After leaving school he enlisted in the RAFVR and volunteered for aircrew duties – all aircrew were volunteers – on bomber aircraft. As a grammar-school boy he qualified for one of the three roles in the aircraft that were usually confined to those with such an education, presumably because of the science and mathematics involved. These were pilot, navigator and bomb aimer and he became a bomb aimer. The specialist training took two years after the completion of initial training and was usually conducted in Canada or South Africa.

On completion of this training he was sent to No 1 Lancaster Finishing School at RAF Hemswell in Lincolnshire where he joined the rest of his crew. Crewing-up was a somewhat haphazard business: all the newly trained aircrew, most of whom had never met before, gathered in one big room and sorted themselves out into crews consisting of pilot, navigator, flight engineer, wireless operator, bomb aimer, mid-upper gunner and tail gunner. On 18th November 1944 he and his new crewmates were posted into 103 Squadron RAFVR at Elsham Wolds in north Lincolnshire.

They flew their first operational sortie to Karlsruhe on 4th December 1944 and two nights later on Wednesday 6th December their Avro Lancaster NG276 (code PM-E), delivered brand new in early November and on only its seventh operation, was one of ten from 103 Sqn that took part in an attack on the I G Farben synthetic oil plant near Leipzig in eastern Germany - the most heavily defended target in Europe.

It was exactly two weeks since Graham's 21st birthday.

The squadron took off at 16.45 in poor weather and one aircraft was forced to return early with unserviceable navigation aids. The remainder followed an indirect route that involved a huge loop to the south to avoid the heavily-defended industrial heartland of the Ruhr Valley. From Lincolnshire they flew south, passing over Reading on the way to cross the Channel between Newhaven and the French coast at Etaples. After their loop round the Ruhr they headed north-east to Goslar then back to the south-east, beginning the final approach to the target some four hours after take-off. The target was completely obscured by cloud up to around 6000 feet but the H2S radar enabled the aircraft to drop their bombs from a height of between 17,000 and 20,000 feet.

It was on the final run in, with Sgt Fisher effectively controlling the aircraft, that NG276 received a direct hit from anti-aircraft fire and, with its bomb load still on board, exploded in mid-air over the town of Merseberg, about two or three miles short of the target. The other eight aircraft from the squadron all dropped their bombs and arrived home safely between midnight and one o'clock.

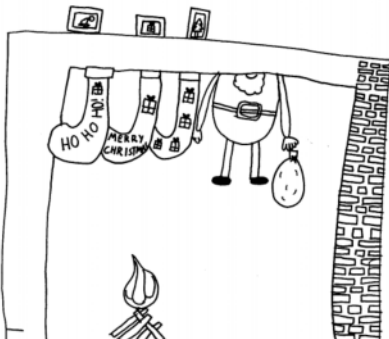
Richard Smith

Bradfield Young Farmers

The Club year closed in great style with the Annual General Meeting which was well attended. Members have also been playing indoor football and dodgeball, having a go at Pony Club gymkhana, going on a Halloween Night Hike with a campfire, carved pumpkins and toasted marshmallows, and a visit to the BCA Zoo where nocturnal animals were seen at night which meant we observed behaviours that we wouldn't otherwise have done. Unsurprisingly though, the meerkats and the small monkeys were the members' favorites. The Bradfield teams stormed the County Quiz competition in both the senior and the junior sections and the success of BYFC members was also celebrated at the County AGM where the dominance of Bradfield members was

apparent. The Club also picked up the Efficiency award and was heralded as the Club that supports BFYFC the most. Well done to all our members who have contributed to the successes – now to get all those cups engraved! Coming up we have over 420 indigenous tree saplings to plant in conjunction with Englefield Estate as part of a National YFC environmental project; #protectyourfuture.

To find out more contact sonia.walters2@btinternet.com or find BYFC on Facebook.





THANK YOU!

*Samaritan's Purse sends
special thanks to*

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for sharing love and joy in the form of a simple shoebox
gift through Operation Christmas Child.

Nick Cole

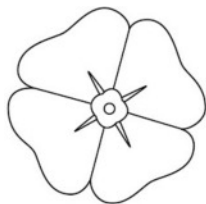
Nick Cole, Director of Operation Christmas Child UK



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Members of St Mark's congregation joined with Englefield CE Primary School to respond to this appeal and together sent a total of 50 shoeboxes to Operation Christmas Child. You can find out more about the work of Samaritan's Purse on <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/>.



'We will remember them'

The talk given by Col Richard Sandy at St Mark's on Remembrance Sunday. He was British Defence Attache in Jordan and then became Middle East Team Leader for Military Ministries International and now serves on the Global Council of the United Bible Societies

Today, on Remembrance Day, we are called to remember those of our armed forces who made the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives in the service of our country, helping to secure the freedom, peace and way of life that we enjoy today. We are making this our Remembrance in the context of an act of Christian worship, which is thoroughly appropriate – but which necessarily challenges us to think about the direction of our lives before Almighty God.

It is often when faced with death or a crisis in our life that we turn for help to God – whether or not we would consider ourselves religious. I believe there is a spiritual part in our individual make-up that can only be met and nurtured by God. It is right in making our act of Remembrance that we consider the place of God both in our world and in our lives.

Certainly for soldiers in war, facing the real prospect of injury or death, they will often seek the help and presence of God. It is said that “there are no atheists in foxholes”. Many military chaplains have reported that in warfare their presence is considered essential, where in barracks their presence is sometimes even questioned. In the First World War there are well-documented reports of the actions of an Army Chaplain, known as Padre William “Fighting Mac” McKenzie. Padre McKenzie was born in Lanarkshire but when he was a young boy his family emigrated to Australia where he came to faith in Jesus Christ through the Salvation Army. When the First World War broke out he volunteered as a Chaplain and was deployed to Gallipoli and then France with the Australian Imperial Force, part of the ANZAC forces. He was a big man in every sense and much loved by his soldiers because he was always with them in danger. During one particularly fierce battle, he came across a badly wounded soldier, who was clearly beyond medical help. When the soldier recognised he was a Chaplain, the soldier cried out in anguish, “Padre, do you have a prayer for me”. “I think I do” replied the Padre with great tenderness, “say these words after me son: ‘God be merciful to me a sinner..I now lay all my sins on Jesus’”. With great difficulty and obviously in pain, the soldier whispered these words as Padre McKenzie held his hand. And with a clear sense of the Peace of God evident on his face the young soldier passed away.

No-one needs to wait until their deathbed in order to find God and the peace that he brings. By his death and resurrection from the dead Jesus Christ has opened up the way for us to enjoy a relationship with God and the prospect of eternal life with

him in heaven. John 3 v 16
“For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only
son that whoever believes in
him shall not perish but have
eternal life”. I believe that
young soldier on his deathbed
received God’s forgiveness and
peace and entered eternal life.
This incident mirrors that of
one of the thieves crucified on
a cross next to Jesus, when the
one thief effectively recognised
Jesus as the Son of God when
he said to Jesus, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”, and
Jesus said in reply, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” If
God can be present at death He can be present all the time.



Regrettably as a society we seem to be turning away from God and seeking other ways of finding meaning, happiness and satisfaction in life. I came across an article in *The Times* on the 10th September by Melanie Phillips which was headed “Rejection of Christianity has served only to undermine western values of freedom and tolerance.” In her article she says, “the secular world has introduced ideologies such as moral and cultural relativism, multiculturalism, scientific materialism, feminism, environmentalism and others which call into question many of the values, traditions and virtues which are a part of our heritage.” She then goes on to say, “The only way this can be remedied is by acknowledging that the concepts we in Britain value so deeply aren’t universal. Virtues such as belief in the innate dignity of every human being, putting the interests of others above our own or doing what is right and just, all originated in the Bible.”

The Old Testament reading from Ecclesiastes 3 v 1 – 8 we had read earlier might seem a strange choice of reading for today but I believe speaks into this issue. The book is thought by tradition to have been written by King Solomon – who you may remember when chosen to be King of Israel asked God to give him only wisdom for the role. He wrote the book about his experiences of life in trying to get to the heart of the big question – “What is the meaning or purpose of life?” In the passage it speaks of “a time to be born and a time to die...a time to weep and a time to laugh...a time for war and a time for peace” and so on. Everything in life, he says, goes round in a circle. All these statements are experiences relevant to each person during their lifetime, but are transient, and yet repeated generation after generation. They do not by themselves provide meaning to life. Trying to find meaning or satisfaction from pleasure, social position, work or materialism (money and possessions), do not give meaning to life and of themselves do not bring

satisfaction. In fact the writer says, all of this is meaningless. – which is not in any way to decry the good works individuals undertake but does make us question our motivation. How often have we heard of a big lottery winner some time after their win saying, “I wish I had never won – my life has been ruined because of my win”. The writer of Ecclesiastes concludes his book by saying that unless we recognise the presence of God in all creation we will not find true meaning nor satisfaction in any area of life. Everything, he says, comes from God and we should be thankful to him for all that we have, large or small, and to enjoy what he has given us. God has planned the world and our life in it and we are to learn to be thankful to him in all circumstances. He also adds that the ability to enjoy all that we have is also a gift from God.

In our second reading from the New Testament, 1 Peter 1 v 3 – 8, Peter neatly summarises what belief and faith in God, through Jesus Christ, means for each person who turns to God. Not only does God provide meaning and satisfaction in all of life but Peter also makes clear that those who believe and trust in God, look forward to eternal life in heaven with Him. This is the living hope of all Christians. Verses 3 and 4 from our reading says, “In his great mercy God has given us new birth into a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for us.”

Today, on Remembrance Day, when we are reminded of the horrors of war and the cost of war in terms of human lives lost or damaged, it should prompt us to consider whether our life has true meaning. Is death really the end? What we think is the meaning of life will shape our values, ideals, beliefs, hopes, dreams and opinions. For the Christian, life’s purpose is to know God and enjoy His presence for ever. That was the conclusion of the writer of Ecclesiastes.

That young soldier on the battlefield turned to God and made his prayer of faith at the last moment and entered into eternal life with God. We miss so much of what God has for each one of us if we don’t seek to find and know him now.

*Many thanks to all
the children from
Englefield Primary
School who kindly
supplied the drawings
for this issue.*

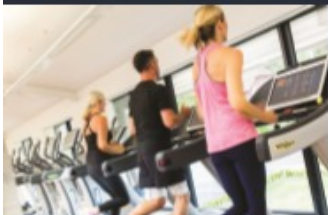


Pick them up, put them on






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What do PPG members do? We suggest ideas for improvements and speak up about how services are organised or managed. We're the voice of all Theale patients, so you can have a say in the way your GP surgery delivers services.

How does the PPG work? Our PPG includes 12 patients/carers, the GP practice manager, senior administrator and a GP (currently Dr Brooke). We meet regularly to talk about current issues.

How does the PPG include my views? If you have any issues or suggestions you'd like to raise, please get in touch: ppg.tmc@nhs.net. Your email will be treated confidentially: we won't tell anyone else your name if it is discussed at a meeting. Please note: we don't deal with clinical issues or individual patient complaints.

Can I become a PPG member? We would very much like some younger members (16 – 40ish), so if you're interested in joining the PPG, please email ppg.tmc@nhs.net.



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