



St Mary's Church Wargrave

With Knowl Hill

Our vision is to be a church
at the heart of our community

Parish Magazine

February 2022



St Peter's Church Knowl Hill

With St Paul's Warren Row

News Page 29

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Who's Who: Parish Directory

Vicar	The Revd. John Cook	johnrmcook@btconnect.com	0118 940 2202
Associate Minister	The Revd. Steve Turville	Stephen.turville@ntlworld.com	0118 901 6720
Curate	The Revd. Richard Eves	Richard.m.s.eves@gmail.com	07746 383046
Lay Minister	Andy Ferguson	andyferguson1@btinternet.com	0118 940 2925
PCC Secretary	Sheila Williams	sheilamarywilliams1952@gmail.com	0118 940 3587
PCC Treasurer	Jane Wills	paulandjanewills@btinternet.com	0118 940 2030

Parish Office

Address	St. Mary's Church, Station Road, Wargrave, Berkshire, RG10 8EU The Parish Office is open from 9.30am to 1.30pm on Tuesday & Wednesday and		
Administration	Lucy Bowley	lucy@wargravechurch.org.uk	0118 940 2300
	Katie Blades	katie@wargravechurch.org.uk	
St Mary's Wargrave Churchwardens	Ian Matthews	matthic@talk21.com	0118 940 2049
	Mark Puddy	markpuddy@btinternet.com	
Director of Music	Peter Dart	peter@familydart.com	0118 940 1068
St Peter's Knowl Hill Churchwarden	Sandra Baker	sbakerdalc@hotmail.co.uk	01628 822402

Parish Registers: Weddings & Funerals

Weddings at St Mary's, Wargrave

18th December Stuart Edward Barker & Lucinda Sophie Fosker

Funerals, Cremations and Ashes at St Mary's, Wargrave

- 3rd November Rodney John Keast, 84, funeral service at St Mary's, Interment of ashes 17th November at St Mary's Churchyard
- 5th November Christine Margery Lowe, 74, interment of ashes at The New Cemetery
- 19th November Adrienne Rance, 81, funeral service at St Mary's
- 29th November Fredrick Philip David Berry, 92, interment of ashes at The New Cemetery
- 29th November Barbara Elizabeth Berry, 93, interment of ashes at The New Cemetery
- 1st December John Philip Smith, 88, Cremation at Reading Crematorium

Cover Photo

Our feature this month looks at the Parish's road ahead for the coming year

Copy Date for the March Magazine

Please submit contributions for the March Magazine by
Wednesday 16th February 2022

Articles of up to 400 words are most welcome for publication in this Magazine and should be sent to the
Editor: bobausten@wargravechurch.org.uk

The decision to publish material is at the Editor's discretion.

Views expressed in articles included in the Magazine are not necessarily
shared by the Editor.

The Parish Magazine cannot accept responsibility for any products or services advertised in this
Magazine.

Sunday Services

St Mary's Wargrave

8.00am Holy Communion: a said service in traditional language
9.15am Family Service: a short informal service with children's activities

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month:

10.30am Holy Communion in modern language with music except 4th July

2nd and 4th Sundays of the month:

10.30am Morning Worship in modern language with music

St Peter's Knowl Hill

1st Sunday of the month

10.30am Holy Communion

3rd Sunday of the month

10.30am Village Praise

St Paul's Warren Row

2nd Sunday of the Month

9.15am Holy Communion in traditional language

Butterflies

1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month

Butterflies is a fortnightly mum' and toddlers' group. Hosted by a team of experienced mothers and grandmothers (all DBS checked) there is a delicious breakfast served with tea & coffee and time to chat with other mothers. All parents or carers of babies under 1 year welcome!

Butterflies is held in the Church Centre
9.30am - 11am

2nd & 16th February

Please bring your own mug for tea & coffee.



For further details and to sign up, please email Camilla Cook. You can also visit and join on Facebook @butterflieswargrave.

Ladies' Breakfast

The next Ladies Breakfast will be on Saturday 5th February at 9.30am in the Church.

Open Church

St Mary's Church is open Monday to Saturday 9am to 3pm.

Welcome Café

The café will be open on Tuesday 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd February
from 2.30 - 4pm in the Hannen Room.

Some Music Dates for your Diary

from Peter Dart

- Sat Feb 12th** 7pm Choir Dinner in the Bull (postponed from Jan 22nd)
- Sat Mar 5th** 6pm Holy Trinity SW1 St John Passion. Royal Choral Society. Let me know if you would like to come with my group leaving Wargrave around 4pm?
- Fri April 15th** RAH Royal Choral Society. Coach leaving Wargrave at Noon. Tickets for coach circa £10. Buy your own ticket for RAH. **peter@familydart.com** if you would like to reserve a coach seat. Only 40 available so first come first served.
- Wed June 1st** 7.30pm Verdi Requiem. Royal Festival Hall. Royal Choral Society. Tribute to Duke of Edinburgh before HM Queen's Platinum Celebrations start. If enough interest I will organise transport - let me know by email. Annette and I are sponsoring the Concert.
- Mon June 13th** 7pm Academy of St Martin in the Fields come to St Mary's. Preceded by Dinner in the Bull for Sponsors (limited to 40 people). Please contact me by email – would appreciate help with the sponsorship as it is a very expensive concert to put on.

Ramblin' with Bob Sunday 27th February

The February ramble takes us further afield than usual to Holyport on meeting at 12.30pm at the War Memorial on Holyport Green.



This 4 mile walk is through the pleasant pastures and arable land between Holyport and Fifield. We shall finish with a Sunday lunch at The George PH which is by Holyport Green.

If you would like to join us on this walk, please contact Bob Austen to book your place and advise whether you wish to stay for lunch.

Email: austenrobert@hotmail.com
Home: 0118 940 3038

Church Spring Cleaning

Saturday 26th March

by Mark Puddy

So here we are, with the crocuses and snowdrops out, the daffs showing promise, our minds turns to Spring. Cue birds and bees? No, something far more enjoyable and satisfying, for we are now contemplating the St Mary's Church Spring Clean. Due to Covid, it is now 3 years since we gave our beloved building a brush and scrub up, and, given uncertainties ahead, we cannot confidently say it is going to return to be an annual event. However, I am delighted to announce that Saturday 26th March is the day when we want as many as possible to join the fun. I have not been involved before, but, as Church Warden, I'm keen to see it all in action, having had a good briefing from Christine Walker and June Knox.

The event is organised with a deep understanding of the Law of Gravity. The key principle is that if things are dislodged, then they will fall to the ground. This is used in a positive way, as the day starts with the high level (Aerial) team arriving at 7.30am (when the dust is still drowsy) to clean with dusters atop ladders to shake the dust down to the floor. Health and Safety means we cannot utilise the law of gravity in a negative way, bringing a cleaner down to earth from their ladder any quicker than they should. Indeed, the Aerial team will all be circulated with Christine's excellent advice about how to avoid falling off ladders. By 10.30am, the dust now underfoot, a second team of terrestrials comes in to clean everything accessible at ground level. All done and dusted by lunchtime, and a good job has been done by all.

We need volunteers for both parts of the event, with an eye on recruiting fit young folk to boost the numbers for the aerial team, as it seems that I am having to give medical exemption forms to many of those who have done this job over years past. New blood would also be very welcome to boost numbers for the 10.30am terrestrials. The more who volunteer, the more fun it will be, and the quicker we will get the job done.

We will be putting up a list in the back of church for volunteers to sign up. You can also email me on markpuddy@btinternet.com if you want to join the 7.30am brigade, or let June Knox know if you want to come to help at 10.30am.

Let the cleaning begin!!

Why Japan?

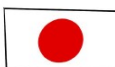
WHY JAPAN?



AFTERNOON TEA
St Mary's Church Centre
Sunday 20th February 3-5pm

Hear from Nicky & Len Biaukula about their upcoming move to Japan to work with Youth with a Mission

There will be a presentation followed by Q&A



Please RSVP to Nicky
nicky_turville@hotmail.co.uk

The Big Quiz Night

by Mike Buckland



The St Mary's Social Group and Wargrave Missions team combined forces on 20th November to host another **Big Quiz Night**. This hugely popular fundraiser has been run by Tearfund annually since 2018 to transform the lives of people living in poverty. Our church has taken part since 2019.

Four teams answered eight rounds of general knowledge questions hosted online by Tearfund.

Ian French added a round of his own by playing snippets of tunes on his tuba between rounds. The teams were invited to identify them and their common theme for bonus points.

At the end of each round, Angie Buckland and Li-Yen French checked the answers and invited the winners to pick a prize. Everyone was asked to bring one, so there was plenty of choice.



At the end of the evening, the winning team was presented not only with the star prize but, as you can see, an eminently collectible cardboard trophy.

Across the UK 8,924 people from 273 churches raised £99,093 – slightly down on previous years, no doubt due the covid restrictions, but still a massive number. It is believed to be the UK's biggest quiz. A quick online search shows participation from other countries too, such as New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

We raised £230, around the national average. Thank you to all who donated! The money goes directly to some of the poorest families in the world, one of whose stories was shown to us by Tearfund on video at the start of the evening.

Our Tearfund rep Mike Buckland organised the evening and was ably supported by Angie Buckland and Ian & Li-Yen French. We look forward to another quiz in November 2022.

Meanwhile do look out for Mark Uniacke, who joined our church this year and works for Tearfund, As does Charlotte Wyatt, whose parents David and Sarah are longstanding members of our church.



Sunday Afternoons with Ramblin' Bob

Sunday 28th November 2021

by Jane Austen

A large group of 17 hardy souls met for our November ramble with Bob on Sunday 28th November. The weather was bright and sunny; a lovely Autumnal day!

After assembling outside The Horns in Crazies Hill we set forth along a very narrow fenced path, passing 'Summerfield House' which alas is all but invisible to walkers. This property was formerly Henley Town Hall, dismantled and reconstructed on this site at the end of the 19th century to make way for a new building in the town to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. We then followed an ancient track called Penny's Lane, to make a steep climb through Hennerton Golf Course; Bob's request for oxygen fell on deaf ears! The photograph shows us opposite the entrance to the Course.



Continuing across the fields we walked through Bottom Boles Wood and past Highfield Farm. Bob recalled years before seeing cows walking across the road to the meadow opposite, a sight unlikely to be seen again. We then took the path back to Crazies Hill with a nod to Rebecca's Well on our way.

Back at The Horns we enjoyed a delicious Sunday roast and all agreed it had been another lovely Ramble with Bob!

POV Housegroup

Thursday 2nd December 2021

by Bob Austen

On Thursday morning, 2nd December, a small party from the Pints of View Housegroup met up at Ruscombe Church for the second POV Ramble, through the rich agricultural land that lies between Twyford and Wargrave.



The weather was fine and bright as we set off, passing the pond in Ruscombe (pictured) and the 16th century restored Northbury Farm House which unfortunately is not easy to see as it has become a gated property. Toffs rule!

We walked across the fields of Ruscombe and over the A4 to the fruit farm, with hundreds of strawberry plants under cover and looking very inviting! At the half way point we passed the Horse and Groom and then across fields to pass Castle End Farm – where was the castle I wonder!

The last leg took us alongside the railway and back to Ruscombe Church, A welcome breath of fresh air and exercise, just right for our young bones!

Mill Green & Churchyard Leaf Clearance

by Bob Austen

On Saturday morning, 4th December, 24 volunteers turned out to help with the leaf clearing on the Mill Green and Churchyard. Despite some early concerns about the weather, we were greeted with a beautiful sunny day and our band of helpers set to with a will.



We shifted a huge amount of leaves and everything looked splendid in time for Christmas. A big thank you to Camilla and Jane for providing the welcome coffee and bacon butties!

Once again, we must pay a special tribute to Neil and his team at Beechwood Tree Care. We were greeted on the Green by the sight of their chaps busily blowing the leaves and

without their wonderful help our task would have taken a lot longer, and nowhere near as professional. Beechwood Tree Care donate their services free and their goodwill and generosity is deeply appreciated. I can heartily recommend them to anyone that is seeking a thoroughly professional and reliable service.

News from the PCC

from Sheila Williams, PCC Secretary

The PCC met on 22nd November, where the following items were discussed:

- Training and updating leaders on Safeguarding – a subject which the PCC takes very seriously and ensures all those in positions of responsibility have proper legal clearance and regular guidance.
- Ensuring the Audio Visual equipment in the Church remains fully operational, and taking advantage of the newly connected facility to increase broadband width and speed for the benefit of the Church Office and other activities.
- Commitment to achieving the best value, whilst ensuring the most environmentally favourable option, when selecting energy providers.
- Moving forward with fundraising plans for the Knowl Hill Church development and ensuring that all opportunities are explored to make the best use of gifts over the years.
- An extended session took place as part of the meeting when the structure and timings of services at St Mary's was explored. At this session all members of the PCC contributed their thoughts on providing services which were as inclusive as possible to all ages – providing a range of options from more lively and innovative styles of worship to quieter and more traditional forms. This discussion was open and exciting as the Committee looked to the future of worship for generations to come; and how to best provide for the spread of God's Word in our community.

**WATCH THIS SPACE FOR NEWS OF WHAT WILL BE
HAPPENING LATER IN 2022.**

Ladies' Breakfast

Saturday 8th January 2022
by Nicky Biaukula

This month I shared at Ladies' breakfast on the topic of "hearing God's voice". During our time in Australia with YWAM this was a topic my husband and I would teach on the Discipleship Training Schools and is something we are passionate about.

For me, learning to recognise God's voice has been transformational in my faith. It took me from a place of knowing about God – to really knowing God for myself.

First I had to learn to remove expectations from my listening, to tune into God, not simply expecting Him to raise his voice over the chatter of my life. In reading Bible stories I learnt of miraculous encounters with angels, dramatic visions, talking donkeys and desired these wild experiences for myself. In doing so I missed the softer, quieter, personal voice of my heavenly Father. By placing expectations on how God would speak to me, I missed why He was speaking; so that I would know Him. As effective as miraculous signs might be, they're not the most personal of communication styles. An infinite, yet personal God was calling me into a relationship with Him and often this calling came as the gentle whisper of a Father to his child.

From the beginning we see God as being in a relationship, even before He created man. The triune God is relational in His very nature. Throughout the Bible, God describes himself as friend, bridegroom, father – very personal pictures of relationship. What sort of friendship has no communication, can a marriage exist without speaking to one another, what good father wouldn't speak to their child? Likewise, our God is speaking to us and inviting us into a relationship with Him. The question I had to ask then – not, are you speaking God? But, am I listening?

The more time we spend getting to know God, the easier it becomes to recognise His voice. In the same way I would recognise the voice of a loved one without seeing them, the more acquainted I became with God the more instantly I knew Him when He spoke. So my challenge is to spend more time pursuing knowing God, giving Him the space to speak and asking without an expectation of "how" the answer will come.

Listening to God, flipped from being focussed first on how He was speaking to me, to why he was speaking and most importantly WHO was talking. When we know who and why – the how becomes less important and the what becomes more simple!



Updating the Electoral Roll for 2022

by Helen Vonka, Electoral Roll Officer

On behalf of the PCC, I am writing to you to encourage you to join the churches' Electoral Roll if you are not currently a member. The current roll was fully renewed in 2019, and so we only need anyone who would like to be added to the list to apply now. You may have recently moved into the Parish or started coming regularly to services. There is a copy of the current list pinned up at the back of the Churches, and application forms are also available there, or by request from me. The Parish has a single Electoral Roll, but it is divided into separate sections for Wargrave and for Knowl Hill/Warren Row.

When you apply to enroll, you identify yourself as a member of the Church at Wargrave and Knowl Hill and show that you are willing to join fully in its life through corporate worship, prayer, giving, service, fellowship and sharing the Gospel, so that the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified. The minimum age for membership of the Electoral Roll is 16, but young people who will reach that age in the next year can apply now and will then become members on their birthday.

Though all are welcome to share in the life and worship of their local Church without necessarily joining the Electoral Roll, we would encourage you to join because this is the nearest thing we have to a "Membership List", and is the basis for many official sets of statistics. Membership of the Electoral Roll is a requirement for parents seeking to send their children to Church Schools outside the Parish e.g. Ranelagh. It is also the list of those who are entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting, being held this year at St. Mary's on Sunday 24th April, to stand for election to the PCC or Deanery Synod, or to be appointed as a Sidesman/Sideswoman.

Please send completed applications by Sunday 3rd April at the latest to

179 Victoria Road, Wargrave, RG10 8AH
0118 940 1139 / hvonka@yahoo.com

Save the Dates

3rd June & 5th June 2022

In 2022, Her Majesty the Queen will become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service.



There will be celebrations throughout the country from Thursday 2nd June to Sunday 5th June. St Mary's Church is organizing two events.

On Friday morning 3rd June the Service from St Paul's Cathedral London will be live streamed at St Mary's Church.

On Sunday 5th June from midday, celebrations will conclude with The Big Jubilee Lunch bringing the church and the Jubilee celebrations into the heart of the community.

Pancake Race

by Christine Walker

REMEMBER WHEN? Pancake Day Races on Mill Green 40 years ago?

Pancake races used to be a super-fun tradition in Wargrave. In this mad-cap activity, people raced each other whilst tossing a pancake in a pan. Even the vicar joined in.

You may not have realised it, but the tradition of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday may go back as much as a thousand years, and certainly was mentioned in the Middle Ages. The name Shrove Tuesday comes from the old word 'shriving', which refers to asking for and receiving forgiveness – something we all need to do occasionally if we are honest! So, on this day, everyone would go to church to make confession, and then go home to have a feast.

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent commemorating the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert and a time of prayerful reflection and fasting before Holy Week. Celebrating with pancakes started because Shrove Tuesday was traditionally the last opportunity to use up eggs and other fats before this period of fasting. Some people like their pancakes with lemon and sugar or golden syrup. I've noticed that some people have them with chocolate sauce, and others with fruit compote and ice cream. But even for people who have little personal faith, the annual consumption of pancakes on Pancake Day or Shrove Tuesday is something not to be missed out.

The date of Shrove Tuesday changes every year, being 47 days before the glorious celebration of Easter Sunday, which itself is a moveable feast. The day is observed in many countries with live bands, colourful street processions and fancy dress creating a carnival atmosphere such as Mardi Gras (French for Fat Tuesday) in New Orleans, USA, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Venice in Italy.

Even our Parliament has a Pancake Day race which takes place between various Members of Parliament. They race across Victoria Tower Gardens, opposite the Houses of Parliament, and flip their pancakes as they go.

So, don't forget Tuesday 1st March this year, get ready to enjoy a pancake or three, and perhaps a little Shriving as well!



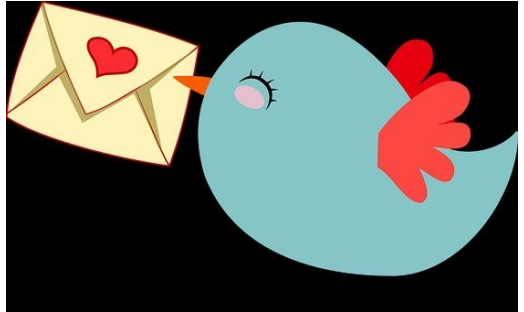
Pancake Day races on Mill Green in 1982 with Canon John Ratings

St Valentine's Day

by Christine Walker

In February we celebrate St Valentine's Day so I did a quick survey of what this means to people.

The first response was that it was a trumped-up waste of money. Is it really just a materialistic commercialized celebration? The advertising focuses on romantic love, friendship or admiration for others and expressing that feeling with cards (often anonymous), chocolates, meals and even holidays, that when you are in love your actions show it. Sometimes we need this day as a great excuse to make our partner feel special and enjoy a nice dinner.



Then it was suggested that this was a day when people made proposals of marriage. I'm not sure it has ever been recognised as a day for this, but ladies take note, 2024 is the next Leap Year and on the 29th February, for one day only, a lady can propose to her loved one instead of waiting for him to make that proposal. Girl power!

Another queried the origins of this celebration. Not quite what I was expecting! The origin of Valentine's Day and its symbols are rooted in the worship of false gods. Although it has no Biblical basis Christians can and do celebrate it.

But Christians do not need one special day to celebrate the love of the one who loves us above all and gives us the greatest gifts - that of our lives, His love and His Son Jesus, His forgiveness and His care.

We are commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love each other as much as ourselves. A short prayer at the start and end of each day 'Thank you God for today, Amen.' will acknowledge Him and say that we love Him too.

Confirmation

by John Cook

We have a Confirmation Service planned currently for June. If there are any teenagers or adults who wish to be confirmed please contact Richard Eves, Steve Turville or John Cook. Confirmation is about saying: 'Yes to Jesus' (for some it will mean re-affirming the promises made by their parents and Godparents on their behalf), 'Yes to serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the whole of your life', and 'Yes to serving the Lord Jesus Christ in our local churches in this parish'.

A Butterflies Update

by Camilla Cook

Since opening up after lockdown we have seen a real surge of new mums and babies joining our Wednesday mothers and toddlers' group, Butterflies. It is such a joy to meet together. The mothers seem to be enjoying making new friends... and the helpers are loving all the baby cuddles!

Someone asked recently, "What is so special about Butterflies?"

Unless you have popped into visit us on a Wednesday morning you won't have seen how the group works. So, what is Butterflies' USP?

Most importantly, we are there to support mothers. There are plenty of mums and toddler groups which provide activities for the children but our aim is to cherish and care for new mums, whilst also looking after the children. Many mothers find the transition from full time paid employment to motherhood a challenge and we want to care for them at this very important time.

On arrival the mothers are met with a delicious home cooked breakfast/brunch and freshly brewed coffee or tea. There is time to chat with each other but also with the team of committed helpers. All our helpers have older children, who are either at school or who have flown the nest, which enables them to be more focussed in supporting the mums.

Half way through, the mothers leave for a parenting discussion time in the Hannen Room. Often this time is used to support someone who has a particular question over sleep/food/ tantrums etc... This term we are discussing Gary Chapman's book 'The Five Love Languages for Children'. This is a very informal, relaxed time. Recently several people mentioned how they just enjoyed the quiet time! Whilst the mothers are in the Hannen Room, the children are cared for by the team of helpers.

Would you like to join us? Either as a new mother or as a helper?

Butterflies works best with a large team of helpers and we need more on our books. You would need to be DBS checked and be prepared to commit to two Wednesday mornings a month during term time. If so, please get in touch. If you don't feel you can help but would like to pray for the group, do please pick up a flier in church with the dates for the term ahead. We really value those who pray for the group as we meet.

The dates for this term are:

February 2nd & 16th
March 2nd, 16th & 30th
April 6th

We also have a very special dinner planned on Wednesday 23rd March at 7.30pm. This is an opportunity for the mothers to come, without children, and sit down for a delicious three course meal (prepared by the Butterflies team). Invitations to follow...



Seeking Wisdom Bible Study Group

by Ruth Howse & Sarah Whiteside

We are thrilled to report that the 'Seeking Wisdom' Bible Study Group will now be meeting together on **Thursday afternoons, from 2.30pm - 4.00pm in the Hannen Room.**

Our programme of study is varied, and includes an afternoon of 'Coffee, Cake and Conversation' on the first Thursday of each month. These sessions also include a short 'fun' bible activity- nothing too taxing, but tasks to give members something to think about and discuss.

During weeks two & three we have 'in-depth' Bible Study sessions.

This term, we are looking at the subject of "Church - Enjoying God's Masterpiece", a topic chosen by the members . We'll be using the Good Book Guide as our framework for these sessions.

The final week each month gives us the opportunity for a more informal look at a Bible passage. We'll have the chance to chat to each other in small groups about the content, meaning and relevance of the passages. There's no pressure to contribute anything to the discussion - all are welcome to just listen and learn if that is preferred. Time will be available for a short feedback from groups should anyone want to share their findings.

An afternoon bible study is a new venture for us and we are excited by the possibility of offering a time for people who may not want to venture out in the evening.

If you are interested in joining the group, you can be assured of a very warm welcome. Why not take the plunge and come along and try us out?

Please contact the group organisers for more details.

Sarah Whiteside - sarahwhiteside@btinternet.com

Ruth Howse - ruth_howse@hotmail.com

The Cost of Your Parish Magazine

by Bob Austen & the Parish Magazine Team

We hope that you are enjoying reading your Parish Magazine every month.

Doing our sums, we realise that we need to increase the cover price of the Magazine due to rising costs of publication. The price has not changed in quite a while and we do need to exercise diligence to ensure that it is not a drain on Church finances.

The cover price has increased to £1.00 and your annual subscription is now £10.00. If you receive your copy by post, the cost is £17.00 annually. We hope you agree that this is still excellent value and is below the cost of many other Parish Magazines, due in the main to our superb group of volunteers that help in editing and distributing to your homes.

Food for Thought

by Andy Ferguson

I was recently asked to conduct the funeral of a gentleman that I had met at the Royal Berkshire Hospital who had subsequently died.

When talking with a family about a funeral I always suggest that the content should reflect the life and spirit of the person. In this particular incidence it turns out that the deceased had written quite a lot of poetry and his daughter wanted this poem to be included in the service.

'A Beggar & His Dog'

by Antoine Berry

He chills out daily on dank sub-way tiles at South-side entrance of Hyde Park Corner underground.

He's centrally positioned, yet, commuters dare not look down to meet his sad hungry eyes, or hear the same plaintive chant: 'any spare change, please?'

They quicken their step; even his foul thread-bare blanket recoils from contact with his sole-less odorous feet; but Pip, his mongrel companion, stands loyally by him and licks him bare as a bone.

Over at Green Park the announcer warns us not to encourage them - (buskers and beggars) for it's against the law.

'Don't give them money,' avers the New Order,

'They can get work, claim benefit.'

How can they, such arthritic bloody broken men, stricken by fear, psychosis, whose survival-kit is but a begging bowl?

The other day I threw him a pound fifty.

It fell short of his cap. His dewy eyes told all.

I washed my hands in Pilate's bowl.

Matthew 27:24 reads

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd.

"I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

Request for Flower Arrangers

by Sheila Williams



DO YOU LIKE THIS PHOTO?

DO YOU LIKE SEEING FLOWERS IN ST MARY'S?

Placing flowers behind the altar table has long been a tradition in Churches. It celebrates the glory of creation by bringing the natural world into the heart of the Church. It also brings life and beauty to give joy in the hearts of the congregation; and a fitting tribute to the house of our Lord God.

Next time you are in Church have a look at which flowers are in the Chancel – they will have been chosen with care and arranged with love by a member of the congregation. Sometimes they will mark an anniversary in the heart of the arranger, at other times they will be gathered from someone's own garden as a very personal gift; or they will have been bought in a supermarket alongside the baked beans and bananas as an addition to that week's shopping list – probably the only item to give the purchaser an inward smile!

Whoever brings the flowers will bring their own personality with them, and having put them in the vases, will have stepped back for a treasured moment of peace and reflection as they look at them flanking the cross. For all those who have brought the beauty of flowers to the Church for all to share during 2021, I would like to give heartfelt thanks.

I hope that in 2022 we can continue to have flowers in Church, but only if we have enough volunteers. Just once a year is something, I am sure, one of you reading this could manage. There is a list on the board at the back of the Church with many, many gaps throughout the year. If you could manage to sign up for just one Sunday your action would be truly appreciated.

The two brass vases live on the shelf behind the altar table and take a small bunch of flowers in each. No need for oasis since the neck of the vase narrows and is supportive, especially with the addition of a little foliage. Water is in the containers under the altar table and the previous week's flowers can be put on the heap behind the West end of the Church. The Church is open all day for you to pop in – you can arrange the flowers any time from the Wednesday before your chosen Sunday. Thank you so much.

Please do contact Sheila if you would like more information - 0118 940 3587



Dear Friends,

Society is faced with significant challenge and change, generation after generation, and Christians have been consistently challenged to adapt to cultural change, whilst adhering to Biblical truth.

One such challenge at the moment is the question of identity, gender and sexuality.

Church leaders are being faced with evermore complex pastoral situations and find themselves struggling to offer leadership in the face of cultural currents that challenge inherited Christian ethical understanding. In the workplace Christians find themselves beleaguered by the apparent distance between Biblical understanding and the views and convictions of colleagues. Moreover, children and young people are growing up without any awareness of what the Bible says about being human and how we flourish in our God given humanity.

It is therefore vitally important for Christians in local churches to engage in a study of the Bible on the matters around identity, gender and sexuality.

To that end we have invited The Reverend Dr Andrew Goddard to join us for a 'Saturday Special' on Saturday 19 February from 9.30 am to 12 noon to consider the 'Living in Love and Faith' resources the House of Bishops have produced. Andrew is Tutor in Ethics at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. He has been a member of Oxford University Theology Department, and been a tutor at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. He teaches also at Westminster Theological Centre and is adjunct Professor of Anglican Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in the United States.

He is going to help us to examine the Scriptures and to apply them. For here are the words of life from our loving Maker, who calls us to trust him, not ourselves:

'Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.'

(Proverbs 3: 5-6)

Do come and make the most of this opportunity. There will be a sign-up sheet in church, which will help ensure we have adequate coffee and croissants.

Yours in Christ,
John Cook

St Peter's Update

by Sandra Baker, Churchwarden

We started our Christmas preparations at St. Peter's by holding our traditional Christmas raffle with tea and cakes at the village hall on 4th December. We were disappointed not to be able to hold the usual Christmas party for the local children because of the Covid situation. Local businesses were approached for raffle prizes and we were delighted at the generous response which enabled us to raise over £750 towards the running costs of St. Peter's which will be used to pay for inspection of the lightning conductor and replacement/servicing of fire extinguishers. We are so grateful to everyone who donated prizes and attended on the day.

Our Carol Service on December 12th was delightful and we were very pleased that parents and children from Knowl Hill School were able to join us and sang beautifully.



Regarding the renovation project we have recently received two grants totalling £13,000 (£3,000 from the Allchurches Trust and £10,000 from the National Lottery Awards for All scheme) bringing the total raised to approximately £57,000. This is hugely encouraging and if we receive grants from other organisations I have applied to it is highly possible that we shall be able to commence the work this Spring.

Our next fundraising event is:

29th January 7 pm St. Peter's Quiz KH Village Hall

Tickets £12 to include fish and chips

Wreathmaking

by Sandra Baker, Churchwarden

On the 9th December, Karen Larkins and I headed for St. Mary's Church for a Christmas wreathmaking demonstration. This was organised by Camilla Cook and given by Sheila Williams who is also a talented flower arranger.

Armed with a glass of bubbles we watched as Sheila gave a masterclass in creating a lovely wreath from a wire frame filled with damp moss which was held together with string. This formed a base to which all manner of winter greenery, berries, fir cones, sticks of cinnamon, slices of dried fruit and other sundry embellishments could be added. The results were most attractive and natural and with the occasional spray of water lasted until well after Christmas Day.

It was a most enjoyable evening and a great way to start the run up to Christmas Day and a lovely birthday present.



Robert Piggott CofE Infant & Junior Federation

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<http://www.robertpiggott.wokingham.sch.uk/staffvacancies/>



SUNDAYS UNTIL 20th MARCH

Every Sunday	08.00	Holy Communion (a said service in traditional language)
Every Sunday	09.15	Family Service
1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays	10.30	Holy Communion
2nd & 4th Sundays	10.30	Morning Worship

SUNDAYS FROM 27th MARCH

Every Sunday	08.00	Holy Communion (a said service in traditional language)
1st Sunday	09.45	Family Service
2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays	09.45	Holy Communion (with young people's groups)
3rd Sunday	09.45	Morning Worship (with young people's groups)

Month	Day	Date	Time	Activity	Location
January	Wednesday	12th	20.00	Hope Explored	Church Centre
	Wednesday	19th	20.00	Hope Explored	Church Centre
	Saturday	22nd	19.00	Music Group Supper	Church Centre
	Wednesday	26th	20.00	Hope Explored	Church Centre
February	Saturday	19th	09.30-12.00	Seminar: Living in Love and Faith	Church Centre
March	Tues–Fri	1st-4th		Bishop Stephen visits the Deanery	
	Wednesday	2nd	19.30	Ash Wednesday Holy Communion	Church
	Fri–Sun	4th-6th		Church Weekend Away	Denham Grove
	Mon–Thurs	From 7th	Various	Lent Course begins in Home Groups	Various
	Saturday	19th	09.30-12.00	Seminar: That's not Fair! Justice according to the Bible	
	Wednesday	23rd	19.30	Butterflies Mum Dinner	Church Centre
	Saturday	26th	09.00	Spring Clean	Church
	Sunday	27th	09.45	Mothering Sunday	Church
April	Sunday	10th	19.00	Palm Sunday Concert	Church
	Thursday	14th	19.30	Maundy Thursday Service	Church Centre
	Friday	15th	10.00	Walk of Witness	Highfield Park
			12.00	The Messiah	Royal Albert Hall
			14.00	An hour at the Cross	Church
	Sunday	17th	05.30	Sunrise Service on Easter Day	Mill Green
	Sunday	24th	10.00	Morning Worship & Annual Meeting	Church Centre
May	Saturday	14th	09.30-12.00	Seminar: Just one Way? Being a Christian in a world of options	Church Centre
	Thursday	26th	11.00	Holy Communion for Ascension Day	Church
June	Friday	3rd	10.30	Broadcast of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Service from St.Paul's	Church
	Sunday	5th	09.45	Pentecost	Church
			12.00	Jubilee Lunch	Mill Green
	Daily	8th-26th	Various	Wargrave Village Festival	Various
	Sunday	26th	10.30	Wargrave Festival Service	Marquee
August	Fri–Sat	5-6th	All Day	Wargrave and Shiplake Regatta	Riverbank

Regular Activities

Butterflies

For parents and carers of young children, a time to be together. 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in school term time.



There are 8 Home Groups that meet in various locations around Wargrave. Each Home Group has its own distinct character and programme... choose the one that suits you.



Welcome Café

Meet for tea, cake and chat. Every Tuesday.



Monthly Prayer Meeting

Prayers for the parish and the wider world. 1st Thursday of each month.

St.Mary's Social Group



A time for adults to meet for food and fun.

Ramble with Bob

Explore the local countryside with our local guide, usually followed by a pub lunch.



Ladies Breakfast

Breakfast with a discussion topic. First Saturday of each month.



Tuesday Group

Young people meet for discussion and fun each week



Music Group

Why not join our music group who rehearse each week for the main Sunday Morning Service



LOOK OUT FOR

Fairtrade Fortnight 21st February—6th March

Thy Kingdom Come-Prayers for the World 27th May 6th June

The Wargrave Festival Programme

The Academy of St.Martin in the Fields in the Wargrave festival on Monday 13th June

Voces8 who hope to visit Wargrave, joining in worship and performing a concert

Cyfa Camp for young people in the summer holidays

Go to www.wargravechurch.org.uk for dates and further information

Please...

- read our Parish Magazine available at the back of church
- register on the website to receive regular communication...

where you will see updates on all of these activities, times, contact names and more.



Eco Church
by Mike Buckland



***And He said to them,
“Go into the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”
(Mark 16:15)***

Some of our readers may remember Dr Martin and Revd Margot Hodson leading a reflection on travel at St Mary's Wargrave at the end of our 2017 Lent course "Reflections on Creation".

Margot is a Vicar in the Diocese of Oxford. Martin is a plant scientist and environmental biologist, and former Principal Lecturer and now Visiting Researcher at Oxford Brookes University. For more about them, go to www.hodsons.org.

Martin has kindly allowed us to print this reflection as we go into the New Year. He wrote it in the run-up to the COP26 conference on climate change in Glasgow, but it is no less relevant to the forthcoming COP15 conference on biodiversity in Kunming, China, in April-May 2022. More immediately for us perhaps, the truths are eternal and may help those who are anxious.



Three Types of Hope

Almost every day we hear on the news that our global environmental crisis is getting worse. Climate change gets most of the attention, and there is no doubt that it is a very serious problem. The carbon dioxide concentration in our atmosphere is increasing year on year, and that is a major factor in driving the increase in global temperature that we are seeing, currently about 1.1°C above the pre-industrial temperature. This is reflected in the weather events we are observing around the world, and it is going to get worse. At the same time, we are losing animal and plant species to extinction at an alarming rate.

As an environmental scientist, I recognise that climate change and biodiversity loss are only two of our problems. I could add soil degradation, nitrogen pollution, ocean acidification, land use change and a host of others that rarely make the news.

The snag for scientists like myself is that we don't just hear about the environmental crisis that is engulfing us, but we live it. We collect the data, we analyse it and we write about it. We speak about it, we teach students and we read their essays and dissertations. We never get away from it.

Not too surprisingly researchers have found that environmental scientists suffer a lot from depression. Imagine charting your way to global catastrophe every day, and doing it for a living.

I am also a Christian and have been involved with the Christian environmental movement for over 30 years. For the last 15 years or so I have given an ever-increasing number of talks on these issues for churches and Christian groups.

In 2008 and 2009 I was the tour scientist for the 'Hope for Planet Earth' climate change tours with The John Ray Initiative, A Rocha UK, Tearfund and Share Jesus International. On those tours, I racked up over 100 talks on the science of climate change. After my talk, the other members of our team spoke about the effects of climate change on the poor, about biodiversity loss, what we could do about the problems, and a little biblical reflection.

As the title of the tours suggests, we had a lot of hope back in those days. We really thought that we could persuade enough people to change their lives, and governments to change their policies. Sadly, a lot of that hope evaporated in late 2009 when the United Nations climate change meeting in Copenhagen (COP15) turned out to be such a disaster. Governments could not agree on the way forward.

Where was hope now?

Not long after the Copenhagen meeting, my wife, Margot, met up with Ruth Valerio at a conference in Cambridge. They were among the people who often came on stage after my climate change presentation to talk about Christian hope. How could they do that now with integrity? They decided to set up a project to look at hope in the light of the environmental crisis. We gathered a number of thought leaders in the area for a small meeting, and then had a much larger meeting which was attended by many of those who routinely spoke on these issues. Finally, we wrote up the conclusions in a special edition of the journal *Anvil* on '**Environment and hope**'.

We identified three types of hope:

1 Proximate ‘

We can solve this problem!

We can all take appropriate actions at the individual, community, national and international levels. But what happens when we start to think the solutions are not happening?

2 Ultimate

‘God will fix it’, ‘It will all be alright in the end’ or ‘Jesus will come again soon’

When Christians are unable to solve a problem themselves they often turn to God, and to what theologians call eschatology. Ultimate hope is a good hope to have, and it has sustained Christians down the ages. But if we put all our hope there, we can get the feeling that we don't have to do anything ourselves, and this can disable action.

3 Robust or resilient

This is a hope that acknowledges that we have a problem, is resourced by ultimate hope, but does not give up on proximate hope. Margot found encouragement from Romans 5:3–4: ‘suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.’

It is the sort of hope that keeps going whatever the circumstances.

Let us move into the future with all three hopes in our hands.

Behind the Advent Window...

by Susan Puddy



It's not a competition!

Once the call for entries from Patricia Vella to create an advent window appears in the Wargrave News, the pressure, entirely self-imposed, starts to rise.

A fortnight to go but the creative juices remain dry. It's the only time of year to legitimately display fairy lights and baubles in the window of what used to be an antique shop on the High Street back in the 60s, but the quality rises every year so must find inspiration and quickly. Unearthed last year's display for salvage but sticky sweet-covered cardboard trees were lying mangled in the attic- the upstairs mice having shredded the gold foil coins, licked off the chocolate but oddly ignored the Cherry Lips.

Decided this year's effort should be more planet-saving. Mindful of Mike Buckland's top eco-tips in previous editions of the Parish mag, awarded self 20 points for using branches from the garden to upcycle in the manner of a tree (and minus 5 for predictability), minus 10 for lights from China and minus 15 for tub of 50 pink glittery baubles costing just £9- good value or very bad? Maybe should use candles for light source. Underestimated badly the time needed to wind microwire fairy lights around corkscrew branches without tangling or swearing (respect to all those lit-up trees in Wargrave gardens). Also effort required to squash reconstituted tree into limited window space as could not possibly open shutters to reveal state of room contents. Envy those who display artful creation in window of tidy room.

All very nice creating pretty display but where's the Christmas message?

Felt guilty for misplaced priorities. After much thought, fashioned twinkling Star of Bethlehem in corner of window to highlight wrongness of glittery homage to consumerism and air miles.

Deservedly smug after Light Up day, arrived home one evening to find pink and silver harmony rudely disturbed by red multifunction floodlights - husband had 'got a bargain' and decided unilaterally to create Wargrave's very own red-light zone. After some choice words the Spirit of Christmas prevailed - and compromised on the blue filter.

And reminded him it's not a competition!

Nativity Service on Mill Green

by Annie Hobden da Silva

Once in Royal David City, well it was actually Royal Berkshire in the village of Wargrave, stood three lowly gazebos. Where a group of children from the village re-enacted the Nativity.

Arabella Perowne was the mother mild and Arabella da Silva her little child – amazingly there were no hiccups with that. The re-enactment got off to a flying start with Austen, as Gabriel, being lifted onto the stage and suitably startling Mary. Rowan the Roman Soldier made the announcement that Mary and Joseph needed to travel to Bethlehem. Although there were no donkeys this year, the field of Shepherds were joined by three wonderfully delightful sheep – played by Lysander, Isla and Rose. The nine shepherds – yes 9 (see names below) – entertained us with sheep and food related banter, which helped create a cheery atmosphere despite it now being a bleak midwinter with the rain falling. Talking of falling, we are pleased to report that this was not the case for our Herald Angel. Although he did not sing “Hark”, he did shout out from the top of the church tower “Do not be afraid” – a highlight of the play for many people. This was followed by chief Angel Alice giving a fuller angelic notice and then a group of parents lifting their smaller angels (Alice, Isabelle, Bethan, Matilda, Lily, Isla, Penelope and Oscar) into the air and declaring an enthusiastic “Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to those with whom God is pleased”. The shepherds



and sheep made their way to the stable (provided by innkeeper Sophia) where Joseph (Leo) encouraged them to “keep the noise down”. We were eloquently guided through the performance by three narrators – James, Florence, and Xavi – and the two Imogens and Sophia helped corral the children through the rehearsals, costume fittings and performance.

A massive thank you to the children for putting on a wonderful performance, their parents for supporting them, those involved with the back-stage arrangements from script writing to costume and set creation to gazebo assembly and hay bale lending. And of-course thank you to everyone who braved the weather to watch the performance.



We look forward to seeing you at the 2022 Nativity – will it be inside or outside? And will there be a donkey?

Thea, Isla, Scarlett, William, Felicity, Beatrice, Hector, Annabel & Finlay

Christmas Music

by Rosie Creedon

In 2020, much to the disappointment of many, the annual Christmas Carol Service was cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. In autumn 2021, whilst the pandemic continued, re-assured by the protection provided by the vaccines, we planned to go ahead with the event, although as a safety measure, repeating the service at 4pm and 6pm in order to allow some distancing for the congregations. There was great enthusiasm amongst the singers, who had particularly missed being able to sing the previous year, and a choir of almost 40 began rehearsing in late November. By the third practice, a pretty good sound was being made and we were enjoying the joyful experience of singing Christmas music together. And then Omicron struck! Infection rates starting rising rapidly, and in the week before the carol service, the decision was made that it would not be safe for choir members and congregations to have almost 40 singers without masks singing their hearts out. With great regret, we decided to continue with the services, but without the choir, omitting the choir-only musical items but retaining the congregational carols, to be sung by the masked congregation. However, a quartet of singers was hastily put together comprising Peter's daughter, Katie and her musical boyfriend, James, Samuel Lloyd and me, a group small enough to be socially distanced and sat at a good distance from the congregation.

On Christmas Eve the Family Carol service, usually at 6pm, had likewise been split into 2 services at 5pm and 6.30pm. We aim to have a more contemporary, lively vibe at this service, so a band was put together with Peter on piano, Ian French and Samuel showing their versatility by playing drums and bass guitar, me strumming my guitar as usual, and Karen Lloyd leading the singing. We repeated the song, "Mary did you know," this time sung by Karen, accompanied by a Powerpoint of images of the themes in the song.

There were also, of course, many other services throughout the Christmas period at which the congregation sang despite the inconvenience of mask-wearing. So, although the music at Christmas 2021 wasn't quite as originally planned, we were still able to make music and to sing our praises to the Lord in gratitude for the gift of his Son, Jesus.

Thanks must go to Peter, who, from the Senior's carol service on Dec 17th through to the 10.30 am communion on Boxing Day (which was a Sunday) played for nine services! His Christmas dinner was well and truly deserved!

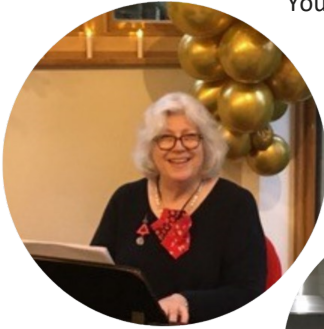
From Christmas to early January we suspended use of the Music Group singers on Sunday mornings because of Covid infection rates, although congregational singing continued. However from mid January the Music Group will sing at all Sunday 10.30 services, subject to Covid Health & Safety. We have missed coming together to sing, and I think the congregation missed the strong and joyful lead they give. For the time being we will gather to rehearse at 9.45, immediately after the 9.15 service, adjusting these arrangement when the service pattern changes at the end of March. Once the weather is warmer we will hold a monthly Saturday morning rehearsal to allow more time for learning new music.

Seniors' Carol Service

by Steve Turville

After a break last year due to the pandemic, it was good to gather again in St Marys for our annual Seniors' Carol Service and Tea on December 17th. Covid was still a concern, and we knew that some people were wary of meeting together, but St Marys Church and Centre are big and airy, and so 35 of us were able to worship and celebrate Christmas together safely, with carols and readings followed by a tasty Christmas tea. Big thanks go to Peter our music director, and to Helen, Pat, Christine, Sue, Salome, Linda, Rosie, Helen, Claire, Cynthia, Lesley, Barbara, Camilla and Sue for making sandwiches, baking cakes, setting up and clearing away the Centre, giving folk lifts and making the service and tea so special and enjoyable.

Young Families Carols



Wreath Making



That Christmas Feeling

by Richard Eves

Christmas time is over, and as we clear away the lights and decorations it is worth taking a moment to reflect on the season that has just passed. Many of us at Christmas time hanker after a particular feeling. Different people find the feeling in different places: the lights, a particular set of decorations, a favourite piece of music. Perhaps it is the feeling at that moment when all the family are gathered together around the dining table, or at the foot of the Christmas tree.

What does this search reveal about our view of life? Many of us these days are products of what has been described as 'the therapeutic age'. In this view of the world, the most important thing in any person's life is their sense of wellbeing. External realities - the circumstances and situations of our lives - are important only inasmuch as they affect that inner sense of wellbeing. Because of this, all of the decisions we make in life become oriented around maximizing that feeling of wellness - having the largest possible number of therapeutic experiences, and the minimum possible number of distressing or uncomfortable ones. Whether or not we would consciously agree with this view of the world, it is often the implicit logic behind much of the way we structure our lives.

As with so many things, the Bible offers a complex critique of the therapeutic age. In the first place, Scripture is clear that God cares very deeply about our emotional state. Psalm 56 tells us that God stores our tears in his bottle, Jesus promised to leave us his peace in John 14, and Paul commands believers to rejoice always in 1 Thessalonians 5, among many many other examples.

However, the Bible also teaches that it is not in relation to us and our feelings that the rest of creation gains its significance. God is the One who creates by speaking in Genesis 1, and He is the One who evaluates the worth of everything He makes - "And God saw that it was good". Whenever we act as if something's significance is primarily found in how it makes us feel, we are implicitly taking on ourselves a part of the authority of God.

In this coming year, perhaps rather than asking the question, "How does this make me feel?" we could ask, "What does this mean to God?". I wonder how that might change the way we see things.

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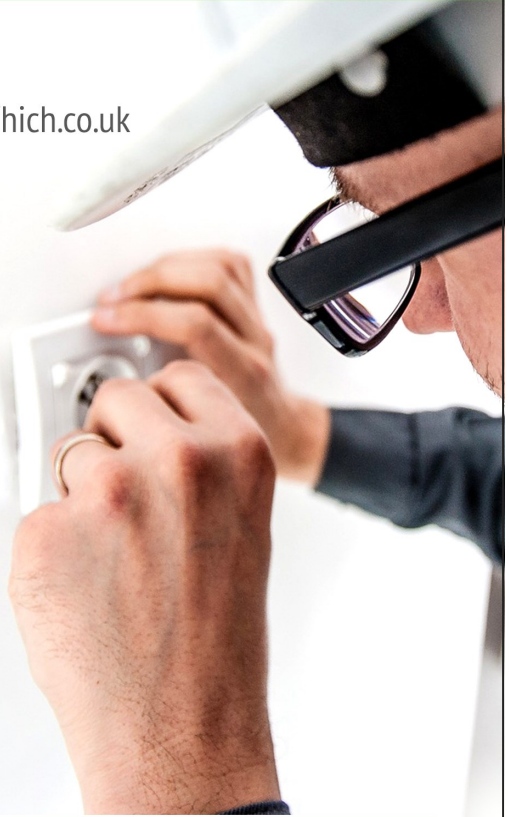
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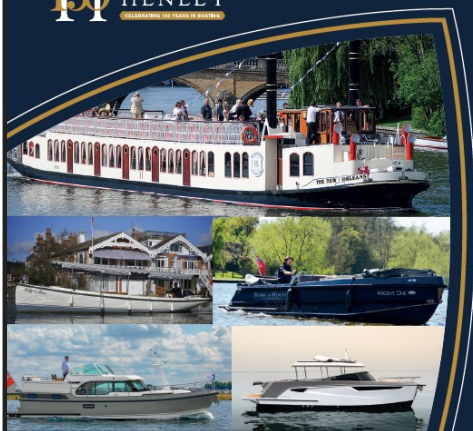
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