



Parish of Wargrave
with Knowl Hill

OUR VISION IS TO BE A CHURCH AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

PARISH

MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2023

CHRISTMAS REVIEW

Just how did the Parish
celebrate Christmas in 2022?

FRUITS OF THE VINE

An update from St Mary's
Serving Sunday and our CoGs

SANDRA BAKER

A tribute to a great
Churchwarden and friend

In other news:
Burns Night
CAMEO Activities
Question Time

From the Editor

First of all, I should like to thank all those that have sent cards and messages to me regarding my award of an MBE in the New Year's Honours List. This was an entirely unexpected gift and it thrilled my family in Canada where I heard the news!

This issue of the Magazine features many of the Christmas events across the Parish, and it is clear that a great deal of effort was made by so many people to make the season so successful. Jane and I spent Christmas and the New Year in Canada with our sons and their families and so we missed many of the events, but we were able to enjoy the Carols by Candlelight in St Mary's on 18th December - a truly magical event!

May I wish a very Happy New Year to all our readers and advertisers and my hopes for a healthy and safe 2023.

Bob

BOB AUSTEN | PARISH MAGAZINE EDITOR



WELCOME

The copy date for submissions for the March Magazine is noon on Wednesday 15th February 2023.

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 edit and 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 publication.

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PARISH REGISTERS : WEDDINGS, BAPTISMS & FUNERALS

Baptisms at St Mary's, Wargrave

4th December Willow Kate Robinson

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

12th November Patricia Mary Bartholomew, Interment of Ashes, St Mary's Churchyard
 17th November Ronald George Page, 87, Interment of Ashes, The New Cemetery
 17th November Patricia Mary Page, 95, Interment of Ashes, The New Cemetery
 30th November Valerie Jean Pringle, 80, Burial, The New Cemetery
 8th December Ilona Lutgard Kaiser, 87, Cremation at Easthampstead Park
 12th December Teresa Bridge Costello, 96, Burial, The New Cemetery
 15th December Annette Helen Greathead, 93, Service & Cremation at Reading Crem
 20th December Philip John Emerton, 87, Service & Cremation at Reading Crem

Funerals, Cremations and Ashes at St Peter's, Knowl Hill

16th December Sandra Baker, 75, Service & Interment in St Peter's Churchyard

If you are interested in holding your wedding, baptising your child or getting baptised yourself, or need to discuss funeral arrangements, please contact Lucy in the Parish Office or alternatively contact our Vicar, John Cook (see page 2).

SUNDAY SERVICES

February



St Mary's Church, Wargrave

8am Holy Communion: a said service in traditional language
 9.45am Service reflective below

1st Sunday of the month: **5th February**

9.45am All Age Family Worship & Baptism

2nd Sunday of the month: **12th February**

9.45am Holy Communion & Baptism

3rd Sunday of the month: **19th February**

9.45am Morning Worship in modern language with music

4th Sunday of the month: **26th February**

9.45am Holy Communion

SPECIAL SERVICE

Wednesday 22nd February - 11am Ash Wednesday Holy Communion

St Peter's Church, Knowl Hill

1st Sunday of the month 10.30am Holy Communion

3rd Sunday of the month 10.30am Village Praise

St Paul's Church, Warren Row

2nd Sunday of the month 9.15am Holy Communion

Our Groups

WELCOME CAFÉ

The Café is open on Tuesdays from 2.30pm - 4pm in the Hannen Room

Next Sessions:
7th, 14th, 21st & 28th February

BUTTERFLIES

We were thrilled to welcome so many new babies to Butterflies in 2022, and are excited as we anticipate many new additions in the first quarter of 2023.

If you know of any mothers that could enjoy a breakfast and chat with others alike in addition to our fantastic supporters, please let them know about us.

Details can be found on our Facebook page @**butterflieswargrave**

Next Sessions:
1st & 15th February

OPEN CHURCH

St Mary's Church is open Monday to Saturday 9am to 4pm.



LADIES' BREAKFAST

Come and join us in the Church Centre at 9am on **Saturday 4th February** for a delicious breakfast and discussion.



This session we will be looking at Bible Inspirations for Women. We hope that you will be able to join us and do invite a friend or neighbour.

Contact Lesley or Linda for more information.

lesley.turville@gmail.com
lindacaradine9@gmail.com



OBITUARY

Sandra Baker



10TH DECEMBER 1946
29 NOVEMBER 2022

TRIBUTE BY JIM HADDEN

IN MEMORIAM

It's hard to know where to start when talking about Sandra. Whether it's with how kind and funny she was or how endlessly giving and charitable she was. So I will just start with a few facts.

Sandra Dawn Baker was born on Tuesday the 10th December 1946 in Henley on Thames. As a girl she attended Henley Trinity C of E Primary School and Henley Grammar School and was a member of the Girl Guides and St. Mary's Choir. She did well at school being a studious, bright pupil with lots of friends, with many of those friendships standing the test of time as witnessed by the full to overflowing St. Peter's church at her funeral.

Sandra's charity and community work was endless - whether on the PTA at Crazies Hill School, doing meals on wheels, as Secretary of the Knowl Hill Steam Rally for many years, being on the Hurley Parish Council, running Knowl Hill Village Hall, contributing to and delivering the Parish Magazine, a Governor at Knowl Hill C of E School, a valued and industrious committee member of Littlewick Show, being the sole Churchwarden at St. Peter's

especially raising money to have the heating repaired in the church and for future projects to improve the kitchen and install a toilet, giving lifts to strangers walking along the A4, donating to countless animal, water and children's charities, sponsoring children through school in Indonesia, knitting school jumpers and teddies for children in Africa, inviting people who lived alone for Christmas lunch to her house, the list goes on and on.

Sandra's faith was incredibly important to her and she found great solace in her religion and the church throughout her life, especially in her final months. Her positive attitude to the inevitable was truly a great inspiration to everyone who met her in her closing days.

Sandra really was a remarkable woman - always up for a laugh, wise, generous of spirit and time, creative, thoughtful, brave and funny. She will be very much missed and our thoughts go out to her family and especially to her husband Bob as he finds ways to adapt to his loss.

MOVING ON FROM YELDALL

Hugh Barne



A big hello to all of you from Cornwall!

We have now been here for over 18 months settling into life at St Kea Church, but still missing the many people we were privileged to get to know over our 4 years in the Parish of Wargrave with Knowl Hill. One such friendship formed in those years is the subject of this article. Some of you may well have met Tony Attwood, a former resident at Yeldall Manor who occasionally pops into St Mary's and has previously been part of a St Mary's home group.



In Tony's former life he had over 15 prison sentences and heard the words "you're never going to change" so many times that he came to believe it himself.

Appearing before the same judge multiple times, his plea to be sent to rehab rather than prison was finally granted and Tony's life was transformed as he came to faith on 27th May 2018 whilst at Yeldall Manor. Tony described Yeldall as "a beautiful place with wonderful people and a love I'd never experienced before. Through fellowship with others, brilliant counselling, the church, and meeting the little boy within myself, the miracle happened - the awakening I had been searching for in every substance and external 'thing' I had tried before."

Having found not only recovery, but a new sense of purpose and direction, Tony's relationships with his son and family were restored. After his time at Yeldall Manor came to an end, Tony was convinced that a much needed resource beyond residential rehabilitation is suitable supported housing.

Tony was bold enough to seek this out not just for himself, but for others too, and through this Hope and Vision Communities was formed. Today he runs that charity with the same judge who'd most recently sent him to prison.

Since its beginning in 2020, Hope and Vision Communities is growing and is currently supporting 8 residents across 4 properties, which is likely to double imminently. You can support Hope & Vision Communities in three ways: in prayer, in giving towards running costs, and by investing. The first two of those are vital, and you can easily find out more via their website hopeandvision.org.uk.

Because it's a little more hidden from view, I'd like to focus on the last of these.

Investing in suitable property which Hope & Vision Communities then lease from the owner and manage really is a 'win win'. It provides vital accommodation for residents whilst also being a very convenient arrangement for owners. Tony and the team manage all the tenancies, maintenance, benefits, utility bills and council tax whilst the owner has a steady and reliable income and knows that the property is being well looked after. I can speak from personal experience that this really works and I'd encourage any potential investor to explore this possibility. There are currently investment opportunities so please do contact the charity for more information. I'd also be happy to share our experiences, so please do get in touch if that would help. hughb@trinitytruro.org.uk

MOVING ON

WARGRAVE'S WONDER-FUL ADVENT WINDOWS

Susan Puddy

Following Wargrave's Advent Windows Trail is turning into a Christmas Day annual pilgrimage for this family. An excess of crumbly Christmas Pudding and brandy butter is followed by a bodily awareness that it's time despite the rain and darkness to get Outdoors to walk it off. Finding the Wargrave News with the list of windows is difficult due to the amount of previous tidying. Working out the shortest circular route is mostly amicable, but risks protracted discussion delaying departure - too late alas to include window 24 in the Church. Purists argue the trail should follow the correct order of opening dates but back down seeing the rain.



Guided by the shimmering Christmas tree lights above the High Street shop fronts (many thanks to Bruce Glasby) we then head up School Lane, meander with several detours along Victoria Road to the heights of Highfield Park and back via Blakes Lane and Purfield Drive. It's always a pleasure to see the variety of creative and imaginative scenes people have designed, not just in their windows; there are backlit stained glass-type silhouetted scenes, wooden stables with nativity figures in front gardens, requests to peer closer through windows at tiny woodland figurines and furry animals. There are suspended Lego Star Wars mission fleet mingling with rebel soldiers and skiers on cotton wool mountains, outdoor scenes of sparkling winter wonderland and the Scouts' wonderful musical display featuring Christmas Spiders. But it's not just the official windows that delight, it's also the gardens throughout the village and even whole cul de sacs festooned with sparkle, icicles, waving snowmen, magical trees and families of silver deer peering from behind trees.

Hurrying home, the official stats showed a total distance walked of 3.9 miles. Maybe next year, starting earlier and with less pudding, we can follow the twinkling stars to the crib in the church, the culmination of the Advent story.

CHRISTMAS 2022



SENIOR CAROLS AT ST MARY'S: 16th December

Steve Turville

It was wonderful to see over 60 people at the Seniors Carol Service and Christmas Tea on 16th December.



Huge thanks go to the following fantastic teams, all who made it possible.

Organist
Readers
Bakers
Sandwich makers
Decorators
Servers
Cleaners

Also, to every one who came along and made it such an enjoyable day.

FAMILY CAROLS AT ST MARY'S: 24th December

Andy Ferguson

Things are returning to normal! With the exception of a few seats in the choir stalls, the church was full for this service even though some people were unable to attend because of colds, flu and Covid.

We were able to sing carols and hear the story of the shepherds and the wise men.

In his talk, Jubi da Silva invited us to find out more about Jesus, just as the shepherds and wise men had done. As a Brazilian, Jubi was able to give us a truly international view of Christmas... temperatures of 70°F (21°C) plus, sea swimming on Christmas Day and very different cuisines. A reminder that following Jesus is a worldwide religion with 2.4 billion Christians globally.

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT AT ST MARY'S: 18th December

Rosie Creedon

Hurray! It actually happened, for the first time since 2019! Due to Covid the annual Christmas Carol service at St Mary's was cancelled in 2020 , then in 2021 it took place but we were restricted to 4 singers rather than a full choir. However, to the great delight of all those who sang, we were able to go ahead in 2022, and 40 very enthusiastic singers enjoyed the thrill of singing together, along with the congregation who joined in with gusto. We were fortunate to have the services of a very capable young organist friend of the Dart family, which allowed Peter to conduct us, Paul Speed joined us as usual with his trumpet, and the regular Music Group singers were augmented by others who love to join in with our carol service. Sophia and Charles Monte's sweet rendering of the first verse of 'Silent Night' was delightful, and Catherine sang the solo in the ever popular, 'O Holy night', which, with its beautiful emotive music and words is a highlight for many. There were, of course, the usual popular congregational carols. Standing in the middle of the choir with the fullness of sound all around me was a joyous experience, and I think the choir, so delighted to be singing again, were on particularly good form this year.

Richard preached, contrasting the 'life story' many in our world hold with the 'Christian story,' and I heard that people had found it very thought provoking. We pray that those who have not yet committed their lives to Christ may continue to ponder what they heard and seek to know more.

As well as the joy the music and reflection on the wonder of Christmas through the readings and song words, the service provides an opportunity for others to join us. A comment from one of our 'extras' this year was, "The entire choir was extremely welcoming. It seems a very special community you have in your church." We are, indeed, blessed with a special community in our church. As we go into 2023, may we as a church family reflect something of God's love and be bearers of Christ's light in the world.

CAR

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT AT ST MARY'S: 18th December

Jane Austen

Sunday 18 December – Carols by Candlelight – one of my most favourite services of the year – an evening of traditional carols and readings telling the Christmas story.

First though had to battle the elements of horrendous rainy weather to get there which may account for some folks not making it. However, to those of us who did – what a fabulous evening – the brilliant extended choir lifting the rafters with wonderful carols with the opportunity for us to join in many of the traditional songs and interspersed with readings relaying the story of Christ's birth. My most favourite carol – O Holy Night was utterly wonderful and the highlight of the evening for me. All topped off with mulled wine and mince pies – so worth getting a soaking for.

Thanks must go to everyone who organised this evening including the Musical Director, Peter Dart, guest instrumentalists and enhanced Music Group for their joyful singing.



CHRISTMAS 2022

OLS

KNOWL HILL CHRISTMAS PARTY & RAFFLE

Karen Larkins

The Knowl Hill Village Association and St Peter's in Knowl Hill once again held the annual Children's Christmas party and Raffle on December 3rd in the Village Hall.

The hall looked beautifully festive and inviting for the families and individuals who came. A generous table of food was prepared, seating areas arranged and Richard Best and Christine Walker brought their 'bag' of games and entertainment for the children who enthusiastically joined in.

A huge thank you to the Haddens, the Buckles, the Pickavances, to those who helped sell tickets and of course to all those who bought tickets. Congratulations to all the winners and best of luck at the next raffle.

After the games, refreshments and the raffle, we were delighted by the arrival of Father Christmas who brought gifts for all the children. Some were a little shy while others were delighted to see Santa had made it to their party!

The day ended with a selection of Christmas carols accompanied by Hilary Buckle on keyboards and a small choir to put us all in the festive spirit .

Many thanks to all who attended and to all who make this annual event happen including Esme Tipping, Laura Kinghorn, Lesley Bell, volunteers from St Peter's and especially to the Village Association. Looking forward to the next Christmas party - too early?



The raffle was a great success due to the amazing contributions of local businesses and generous individuals. Thank you to the Westacott's who every year donate the highly prized Christmas turkey and cash. The Bird in Hand donated a night's accommodation and breakfast for two. Hunts Tools contributed a fabulous head torch and The Royal Oak a bottle of classy red. Caroline, Shirley and the team from Square Deal Cafe gave a great assortment of offerings and the Harpers from Micklems Farm kindly donated a lovely voucher for flowers. Generous individual donations included more cash, champagne, whiskey, chocolates, alcohol, candles and much more helping to raise very needed funds for St Peter's church.



CHRISTMAS 2022

KNOWL HILL CAMEO CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Linda Spinks

On 15th December, Cameo members were treated to a delicious festive lunch with all the trimmings at the village hall.

This was followed by the singing of Christmas Carols accompanied by David Marks on the organ.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and it was a splendid start to the Christmas festivities.



ST PAUL'S CAROL SERVICE

Kay Bruce

11th December saw snow on the ground, white trees and freezing temperatures. However, the warm welcome received at St. Paul's soon warmed the congregation.

This was the start of the carol season and traditional carols rang out across the lovely festive interior of St Paul's and those present raised the rafters.

It was my first visit to the church in Warren Row but it certainly won't be my last.

ST PETER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

Valda Hadden

After a rainy day the weather improved so that the entrance to St Peter's Church was accessible without having to wear wellies, unlike some years. A warm welcome greeted everyone attending, with tea lights lit on the window ledges and screen, the Christmas tree decorated, the manger lit in readiness for the figurines, making a magical atmosphere within. Children from Knowl Hill School filed up the aisle to take their places at the front of the nave.

Susie Buckle sang the first verse of Once in Royal David's City to begin the service and we were all mesmerised by the clarity of her voice.

There were 6 bible readings read by members of the Church, school and village, each one leading into a well-known Carol which resounded around, encouraging everyone in the congregation to sing up loudly, after all everyone knows most of the words to all the common carols.

During the singing of We Three Kings some of the children brought up to the manger the figures they had been given and it really did seem to be the start of Christmas. All too soon the singing, lessons and service were over but there were still mince pies, biscuits, mulled wine and juice waiting to be eaten and drunk before venturing out into the cold dark night.

Oh and one more thing, the space left empty in the manger was filled one week later when baby Jesus was there just in time for our Christmas Day service.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL SUPPORTS LOCAL CHARITIES

Annette Dart

There is a particularly poignant line in A Christmas Carol when the cold-hearted Scrooge's affable nephew Fred declares his love for Christmas saying 'though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say God bless it!'. A very happy consequence of the success of the St Mary's production of A Christmas Carol was raising funds to support local charities doing essential work in our community. The theme of charity runs through the classic story, and the cast and production team want to thank everyone who came to see the show, for buying tickets and supporting the event and helping to raise these much-needed funds.

The proceeds after costs totalled £1,800 and have been shared among the following local organisations. Website or contact details are provided for further information on their work, for referrals of people and families in need, and opportunities to support and volunteer.

CHARITY AT HOME

St Mary's Church

St. Mary's Church provides Christian worship and pastoral support throughout the Parish. The rising costs of heating and maintaining the churches in our Parish are substantial and the donation helped to keep our church warm and welcoming during the many Christmas services. wargravechurch.org.uk



FAITH Christian Group

FAITH works in the Reading area operating a Food Bank for and supporting homeless people with short-term accommodation and help towards permanent housing. St. Mary's is a long-term supporter of FAITH, which has been working with the poor and homeless in Reading for over thirty years. fcg.org.uk



Yeldall Manor

Yeldall Manor is a drug and alcohol treatment centre for men struggling with addiction. Established in 1977 by a Christian family and supporters, the centre aims to help men overcome their addiction and return to society to experience a safe, secure and fulfilling life in recovery. yeldall.org.uk



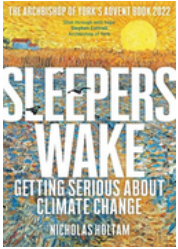
The Wargrave Parish Trust

The Trust was set up in 1976 with aim of helping local families in need. austenrobert@hotmail.com

BOOK REVIEW: SLEEPERS WAKE

The Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2002

Rosie Creedon



The Archbishop of York's 2022 Advent Book takes its title from Bach's Advent chorale, 'Sleepers Wake,' written by Nicholas Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury until 2021 and the Church of England's lead bishop for the environment. Amongst the reviews are the following comments:

Neil MacGregor: *'Like Bach's great "Watchet Auf" chorale, this walk through the weeks of Advent is both a carefully constructed meditation and an unsettling call to action. Poetry and music, painting and personal reflections combine in a new version of the Advent call to change our lives – while we still can.'*

Richard A. Burrige: *'Rooted in both the Bible and the current environmental crisis, Bishop Holtham's meditations help us to face the challenge of the Saviour who will finally come in judgement of what we have done to God's world, while we are preparing to offer all we have to the Babe of Bethlehem.'*

This Advent book is different from many, and with a very direct focus on the environment it throws out many challenges. It draws on Biblical passages and also reflects on some works of art and poetry, and each week's readings conclude with a set of questions to ponder. As we grapple individually, as a church, and as a society with the challenges of climate change and ongoing damage to the environment, this book reminds us of our call, as Christians, to take seriously our role as stewards of God's world. It includes practical suggestions, reminding and encouraging us to put into practice.

**'Sleepers, wake!' the watch-cry peeeth,
While slumber deep each eyelid seaeth:
Awake Jerusalem, awake.**

In this new year of 2023 may we be awake to God's call to care for His precious world.

ROBERT DAVID JOHN AUSTEN: MBE

The New Year's Honours list for 2023 saw one of our own get recognised for services to the community in Wargrave. Robert, or Bob as most of you know him, was awarded a MBE (Members of the Order of the British Empire).

Christine Walker writes: *"I have known Bob since our children were best friends at the Piggott Junior School and have worked with him over the years in his many and varied roles but particularly in his work with the youth in the village, in Scouting, in the church, in the schools and going forward. I feel as if I'm writing an eulogy but no, he's alive and kicking, and still kicking us (not literally) into helping him in his many exploits too numerous to list and I'd surely miss a few if I tried. Let's just recognise that he has his finger in many pies, and has the amazing skill of drawing people in to support him in his ventures. His MBE is so well deserved and I am pleased he has achieved this wider recognition."*



WHAT IS STEWARDING?

Mike Buckland

St Mary's Wargrave is managed through lay ministries that we call CoGs. The idea is that we follow the calls of God in our daily lives and in church life.

For me that means prayer, singing, justice issues and stewarding. I lead the Stewarding CoG, which recognizes that God has entrusted to our care the world He created and the churches we have built, so that they may declare His glory.

Imagine that someone has asked you to look after their lovingly built custom car. Would you not look after it, be fearful of damaging it, and keep it in good condition? So it is with the world we live in. Psalm 24 says that it does not belong to us, but to God.

When a Pharisee tested Jesus with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?", He replied "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind And love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:37).

If we do this, we will want to cherish the world He made and look after everyone's environment and precious natural habitats, for everything is interdependent, especially the poor and weak.

The Bible is clear that God holds us to account for this. It matters how we shop, eat, travel and run our buildings. Renewable energy, wildlife friendly gardens, enjoying the countryside, eating in season, Fairtrade, avoiding single-use plastic and intensively farmed meat, and flying less are some of the ways in which we can help.

As we go into 2023, Lord guide us to live in ways that honour the trust Your Father has invested in us, and bless us on our journey.

ECO CHURCH



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2023: 27th February - 12th March



As a Fairtrade church for 28 years, we always mark the fortnight in some way.

This year our Fairtrade rep Mike Buckland hopes to offer Traidcraft goods and the Real Easter Egg, the only chocolate egg in the UK that explains the Christian Easter story.

Look for this logo when you shop.



LADIES' BREAKFAST: 3rd December

Linda Caradine

Whilst many people braved the cold to clear leaves on the green, we were ensconced in the centre for our last breakfast meeting of the year. We were thoroughly spoilt. Our usual menu is very nice but we had smoked salmon and lots of Chrissmassy extras on this occasion. We came together as women of God to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus in music and praise, ably led by Lis on the keyboard.

As we left the centre later we could see what a wonderful job the leaf clearers had done. A big thank you to you all!



LADIES' BREAKFAST: 7th January

Sheila Williams

For the first meeting of the Ladies Breakfast Group, Sheila Williams led the morning on the theme "Illuminate". Candles were lit around the table and we contemplated the flame as Jane Shaw read from Genesis Chapter 1 on the Creation of Light.

Light through the ages has been vital to the development of human life and throughout the Old Testament the references to light are prolific as being from God and against the "darkness". The Psalms have many examples, which were read and shared. We then moved on to the prophecies of the coming of the "Light of the World".

Illuminate is a word which means "shedding light on". In medieval times Illuminated Manuscripts had pictorial additions to the religious writings and copies of the Bible. These shed more light on the words, enhancing their meaning.

When the "Light of the World" came he brought great Joy. The Ladies were then given the word "Joy" to illuminate – a piece of paper with the word printed large, and asked to fill the "O" with a drawing of something which had brought Joy to them bringing light into their lives. Examples ranged from rainbows to babies with many other thoughts presented which had made us just glow with pure delight.

So what picture would you have drawn in the space? Thanks be to God who brings us Joy



LEAF CLEARING OF ST MARY'S & MILL GREEN

On Saturday morning 4th December, around 24 volunteers turned out to help with the leaf clearing in the Churchyard and Mill Green. The weather was kind to us (as usual) and despite the oak trees steadfastly refusing to drop their leaves, we shifted a huge amount of leaves and everything looked splendid in time for Christmas. A big thank you to Camilla, Jane, Annette, Barbara and John 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 for their gardens.



Bob Austen

GRASSCUTTING HELP

WHEN

One Saturday morning every 5/6 weeks (Apr - Oct)

BENEFITS

Fresh air, exercise, great company!

INTERESTED?

Contact Bob, 0118 940 3038 or austenrobert@hotmail.com



BURNS NIGHT:

14th January

Sue Witney

On the 14th January St Marys held its first Burns Night Supper – and what an evening it was!

An enthusiastic team of people transformed the church centre ready for the evening and then began cooking for the 36 people we had attending. Chris Bookless made lovely table decorations and also corsages for the ladies attending. Having never been to a Burns Supper, we were guided by Joy Potter (who suggested the idea), and Bill Bookless who took over the running of this event and made it into the very special occasion it became.

Whisky was readily available (for those not driving), and our first course of Granny's Soup, a recipe from Bill, was prepared and served by Patsy Roynon. Such was the success of this that many people had seconds and there was none left. After the procession of the haggis around the room piped in wonderfully by Colleen Scott, a main meal of haggis, neeps and tatties was served (vegetarian haggis was an option but a bit frowned on by the Scottish contingency). This was followed by Cranachan, a traditional Scots pudding – cream, raspberries, more whisky, honey and oats – ably made by Steve Witney (the dog was testament to the making of this as he was still covered in whipped cream when we got home after the event!). Cheese and Bannocks (biscuits), Scottish tablet and coffee were then served.

Throughout the evening we were led by Bill in the 'Immortal Memory about the Man', responses were given to the Lassies (Steve Witney) and Laddies (Chris Bookless) and poems were well delivered by David Thomas and Joe Haines. We ended with the singing of Auld Lang Syne, again accompanied by Colleen on the bagpipes.

It was a very special evening where we were joined by a number of church members from St Peter's. This was lovely and definitely something to be repeated. A special thanks goes to Colleen Scott for being willing to play the bagpipes for us, to Christine Walker for her help during the day and at the end of the evening, and also to the celebrating team for all their hard work, in particular Helen Perry, Chris Woods, Joy Potter, Barbara Ratings, Margaret Tumber, Patsy Roynon, Chris Bookless (also with responsibility for keeping Bill calm and in order), and of course Bill himself, without whom we would not have managed to run this event. Bill is desperately trying to plan something to make sure he is 'busy' when I ask him again next year for his expertise!



BURNS NIGHT

FRUITS OF THE VINE: CoGs Update

CELEBRATING

Following Serving Sunday, we had an after-church-service meeting for all those interested in joining the Celebrating Team.



We were thrilled at the healthy turn out of those interested in becoming involved. As a newly-formed team, we discussed possible events we could hold and started to plot these into the calendar for 2023. As a result, we now have a list of events which takes us through to December. Some of these have been visited before (such as the Tearfund Quiz) but others are completely new! As this plan for the year was discussed and agreed together, as a team, we now have a healthy programme going forward. In addition, we found that we have enough good ideas to have a list ready for 2024 as well!

The Celebrating Team is made up of people from a wide range of ages: we have young families and also older members of the congregation involved. It has been really humbling to see so many people keen to contribute and the church is far richer as a result of this. Different people have taken on roles of responsibility and this is really encouraging. This could be seen particularly in the Burns Night event, where people with considerable expertise came forward.

The team have involved themselves fully in the preparation, serving and clearing of the brunches which are happening once a month, helped with the Christmas tree lighting and a number of other events over Christmas.

We are always looking for more people to get involved, so if you would like to join this newly-formed yet dynamic team, please don't hesitate to contact me, Sue Witney.

suewitney8@gmail.com

GATHERING

Following Serving Sunday eight people offered to join, or re-join after a break, the various rotas of serving opportunities for Sunday morning services including reading the Bible passages, administering the chalice, helping with refreshments and bell-ringing. Additionally a new volunteer set up the beautiful Christmas crib, for the Christmas period. Three extra people have been trained up by Doug and joined the AV team. Also, in recent weeks you will have heard the sound of a trumpet added into the Music Group, giving the music a wonderful lift.



If you've not had an opportunity to offer your services and you would like to, it's never too late. We are always delighted to add people to the various Sunday morning teams, including:

- Sunday morning refreshments
- Reading the Bible passage or writing and reading the prayers of intercession
- Helping with the chalice
- Singing or playing in the Music Group
- Helping with the crèche or Sunday Club
- Bell-ringing
- Sidespeople/welcomers
- AV operators
- Supporting the ministry team in leading the service

If you would like to become involved, have a word with Rosie Creedon, any of the clergy, the office or the church wardens and if you wonder whether you are being called to ordained ministry, or licensed lay ministry, do speak to one of the clergy.

rosiecreedon@btinternet.com

FRUITS OF THE VINE: CONT...

REACHING

The Reaching COG is a little different from the others. This COG covers all of the ways in which we as a church family hold out and proclaim the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this doesn't just happen on a Sunday Morning. Neither is it confined to our village. Rather, the instruction from the Lord Jesus is to be His witnesses "To the ends of the Earth", that is, everywhere. In every group, location, and relationship which the Lord places us, He commissions us to be His witnesses. Everywhere we are, we are to be witnessing. And everyone we know, is someone God has commissioned us to witness to.



What all of this adds up to is that our Reaching isn't mostly something we can best do all gathered together. Usually it happens on a much smaller scale. We do run big events, but these are an extra-ordinary type of reaching. The ordinary type of reaching takes the form of one on one chats with friends or relatives, small groups of mums at the school gates, lunchtime meetings in the workplace, and friendly discussions at break time. Like those first believers in the book of Acts, our reaching is something that mostly happens as we are scattered out into the world.

This is frightening. It's something we all need help and encouragement in. Our two upcoming Equipping days on sharing our faith are part of our ongoing goal of encouraging and helping all of us to be more active in this area of our discipleship.

But to really be part of the Reaching ministry of the Church here are three questions to pray through.

- What are the places to which I regularly go?
- What relationships has the Lord given me?
- What could I do to be a witness there or to them?

You're really not alone. We're all in this together, and can support one another in advice, practical help, and prayer. Do get in contact with me if you have ideas -if you see an opportunity to witness where you are, but feel you need help, or advice, or just a bit of warm encouragement. But don't ever imagine that this is something best left to the professionals. Witnessing to the Lord Jesus is a fruit that the Holy Spirit grows in the church, and like any fruit, it grows on all of the branches.

Richard.m.s.eves@gmail.com



FRUITS OF THE VINE: CONT...

COMMUNICATING & SUPPORTING

In the excellent talk Richard gave on Serving Sunday, he said that sometimes it takes a while for the fruit to appear on the vine.



Overall, there has been a very encouraging response, with new volunteers having come forward, and new attendees for the housegroups.

Meanwhile, some others might be like a vine which appears to be just branches and twigs, then bursts into life, with leaves, blossom and then bountiful fruit. However, Richard also warned that if we remain in Jesus, we will be fruitful, but if we do not, then we will bear no fruit and will be picked up and thrown in the fire. My experience so far as a Churchwarden has been that the more you get involved, the more fulfilling it becomes.

Within the Communicating and Supporting CoGs, we have been blessed by the assistance of Sarah Wyatt (nobly aided by David Wyatt) who has provided in our efforts to verify and update the records of the cemetery, while Alex Bailes is taking on the responsibility to review and update our GDPR compliance. We are still looking for assistance for Lesley Turville, who does such a good job ensuring that our safeguarding procedures run smoothly, while we are looking to recruit someone to take over the role of Health and Safety lead, after our lead had to stand down for personal reasons, leaving me covering this on a temporary basis.

Do consider whether this might be your calling and contact Mark Puddy

markpuddy@btinternet.com

CARING

The role of the Caring CoG is to show the love of Christ to others by practical means.



Home Group members receive encouragement, prayer and support from fellow Home Group members, and there are other friendship groups and networks supporting each other.

The clergy are of course, involved in many aspects of Caring for parishioners. But the particular focus of the Caring CoG is to support the older members of our community.

Like many of our CoGs, the Caring Cog isn't a small group of people doing all the Caring things, but a large number of people helping in some areas, and who may also be involved in other CoGs. 24 people from our congregation help 'care' in some way, including running the Welcome Café and the annual Seniors Carol Service, visiting people in their homes for conversation and Holy Communion, delivering paper copies of the Grapevine for those without internet access, and baking cakes for the Carers at the Mount.

Thanks to the Serving Sunday in September, we added 5 new members to the team, offering to visit people, take Home Communion and bake. The plan is to run 'insight' mornings in the Spring, helping our 'carers' to understand the importance of their service, and help them to be aware of some of the practical and safeguarding aspects. These dates will be communicated in due course. Meanwhile, a very big thank you to everyone who helps in anyway, whether as part of the Caring CoG or not. And if you feel called to support our older parishioners, please contact Steve Turville.

stephen.turville@ntlworld.com

FRUITS OF THE VINE: CONT...

STEWARDING

The Stewarding CoG seeks to care for our land, buildings and property in ways that are sustainable and respect God's creation.



It is the natural home in our church for the management of the Eco Church programme, for which St Mary's has a silver award. You can see it in the lych gate. It is important to understand though that the principles of Eco Church apply to all aspects of church life, and to all of our CoGs.

St Peter's and St Paul's have their own arrangements. Anyone able to help there is asked to contact one of their churchwardens.

We had a stand beside the North Door on Serving Sunday, 16th October. We were delighted to see a small but significant number of people offer their services: Elspeth Liddell, Susan Puddy, Ruth Howse and Bill Bookless. Since then, Will Monte and Sheila Williams have taken on roles. Thank you!

We don't believe in anyone working alone. We want every task leader to have an assistant or shadow. Christine Walker would love to hear from anyone willing to shadow her as she cleans St Mary's Church Centre. Peter Mayes needs an assistant for churchyard maintenance, to help him look after our walls, paths and graves.

Some task leaders have teams working in rotas. June Knox has teams cleaning St Mary's. Cynthia Coombes manages the Hannen Room cleaners. Bob Austen organises the grass cutters and lockers-up.

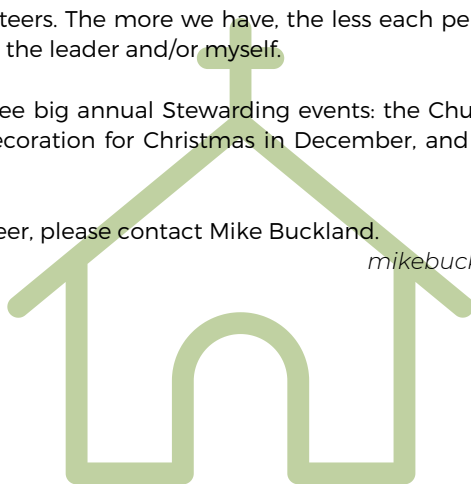
Other leaders draw on help as the need arises. Sheila Williams has a group of helpers for the church flowers. I have a small team for the 'Let it Grow Zone'.

We all want more volunteers. The more we have, the less each person has to do. If you can help, please contact the leader and/or myself.

Finally, St Mary's has three big annual Stewarding events: the Churchyard & Mill Green leaf rake and church decoration for Christmas in December, and the spring clean. All are welcome!

To know more or volunteer, please contact Mike Buckland.

mikebuckland54@gmail.com



FRUITS OF THE VINE: CONT...



NURTURING

Nurturing News: Hip, Hip, H...House Groups!

Our House Group community continues to thrive, with a total of 84 members now attending regularly across the 7 groups we have. We have been thrilled to welcome a total of 9 new members over the last few months, all of whom have remained, enjoying the opportunity of deeper bible study, discussions, prayer times, conversations and the development of their friendships with others in the group.

Each House Group is individual, with the leaders organising their programmes of studies according to the needs and interests of their members. They take place at different times of the day- some in the mornings (the **Ladies' Bible Study** Group and the **Ladies' Breakfast** Group), one in the afternoon (**'Seeking Wisdom'** group) and others in the evenings.

You may be thinking that attending a House Group sounds like a bit too much hard work, well, you couldn't be more wrong! At the end of a term, many house groups celebrate with a social event. At these, friendships are strengthened, members get to know each other better, and, as a result the group dynamics become even stronger.

'Pints of View' enjoyed a Christmas evening meal together and the Ladies' Bible study Group shared a delicious brunch! Both events included 'Secret Santa' events, which added to the fun had by all.

Comments and Highlights from House Group Leaders

"Our varied programme has been enjoyed by members. The mixture of lighter studies based on Old Testament character studies, running alongside deeper studies of parts of the book of Revelation has worked really well and has been popular with our members. Members have also enjoyed the informal bible quizzes and games- but will never admit it!"

Ruth/Sarah

"We have been blessed seeing the same ladies coming consistently month after month and it is a joy that we have 2 new ladies who have now joined our number

Linda

"The reading of well-known bible passages and discovering new details about them has been enlightening, and the book we were studying also provided us with thought-provoking questions from Jesus- intended for us"

Rosie

As Christians, we need to connect with each other. We need to have deep friendships with people in our church, and House Groups are a perfect opportunity to cultivate these relationships, listen to the experiences of others, pray together and to encourage, support and care for those members who may share their problems or concerns.

If you are considering joining one of our House Groups, why not take the plunge? 'Taster' sessions can be organised within the groups and you can be assured that you will receive a very warm welcome! For further details, please contact Sarah Whiteside.

sarahwhiteside@btinternet.com

St Mary's Activities

HOUSE GROUPS

Tuesday	9.30am 7pm 7.45pm	Ladies' Bible Study Tuesday Youth Group Ephesians 1:17 *
Wednesday	11.45am 7.30pm	Monthly Prayer (1st of Month) Pints of View
Thursday	2.30pm 7.30pm	Seeking Wisdom Braybrook Gardens*
Saturday	9.30am	Ladies' Breakfast (1st of Month)

* groups meet biweekly

SOCIAL GROUPS

Every Monday	10am	Pop In Club
Every Tuesday	2.30pm	Welcome Café
1st, 3rd & 5th Wednesday	9.30am	Butterflies

St Peter's Activities

SOCIAL GROUPS

Every 3rd Thursday of Month	2pm/3pm	CAMEO
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QUESTION TIME

Richard Eves

WHAT DID JESUS THINK ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY - PART I

How can I tell if I'm on the right side of history? After all, it's hard to imagine how people from another time would think of ours. What would amaze them, and what would horrify? Would they see a sunlit upland of progress, prosperity and humanity, or a dark valley of decadence, complacency, and depravity? Would they laud us as heroes, or damn us as villains?

To be a Western Christian in the 21st Century is to be surrounded by questions about human sexuality. It can feel like wearing your team's shirt at the wrong end of the football stadium, or like being on trial for your life. As western cultures have moved ever further from their historic Christian foundations, there is perhaps no place where the contrast between the new morality and the old is sharper than in the realm of sexual ethics. Many today look back with horror on the sexual mores of as little as fifty years ago, seeing there nothing but bigotry, repression, and hatred. And how might the people of that time see us? If they were able to look forward through time, wouldn't they be disgusted and horrified by what they would see as the public celebration of sexual perversion and degeneracy?

With two cultures so close together in time separated by such a great moral chasm, how can we tell who is right? For the Christian, the answer to this is the same as the answer we should offer to every moral question - what does Jesus think?

Jesus never directly addresses the topic of same-sex sexual activity in the Gospels.[1] Why is that? The answer is to do with his hearers. Jesus lived in a Jewish cultural setting where the consensus was that homosexual activity was both sinful and defiling. Since the nature of Jesus' public teaching was to challenge the understanding of his hearers, not to make points with which they would already agree, it is not surprising that we have no recorded teaching on this subject. Jesus wasn't a member of the mutual appreciation society. He never preached to the choir, and He didn't tell people what they already believed.

Given this silence, the best approach to establishing Jesus' view is to look for the standard He applied in making ethical judgments. What was his plumbline, his true moral north, against which everything else could be assessed? This sounds as if it might be a very complicated task, but in fact it turns out to be quite straightforward. The standard Jesus used in making ethical decisions is the Bible.

Once it has been observed that Jesus used the Bible as his ethical standard, the evidence can be seen everywhere in his teaching and ministry. He gives three Bible quotations as reasons not to give in to Satan in the wilderness (Luke 4: 1-13). The sermon on the Mount, perhaps Jesus' most famous extended discourse, is his teaching on how to properly fulfill the Biblical Law (Matthew 5:1 -7:29).

[1] He does directly teach about the nature of marriage, as will be discussed later in this series.

He says that anyone who sets aside even the least of the commandments of the Biblical law will be called least in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19). He repeatedly uses the phrase 'for it is written'- a clear reference to the Bible - in explaining the basis for his acts and teachings (e.g. Matthew 21:13, Matthew 26:31). He says that 'the Scripture cannot be broken' (John 10:35). He often rebuked his hearers for their ignorance of the Scriptures (e.g. Luke 24:25). The careful reader of the Gospels is almost drowned in examples of Jesus' attitude to the Bible.

One particularly clear example comes in Matthew chapter 22. Jesus is confronted by a group of religious teachers who deny His teaching about the resurrection of the dead. Jesus knew exactly what it was like to come under fire for what you believe. Nevertheless, His response to them is categorical.

"You are in error because you do not know either the Scriptures or the power of God."

For Jesus, these teachers' mistake is a consequence of their not knowing and believing what is written in the Bible. If they knew it and believed it, they would not have fallen into the error they are now promoting.

But why does Jesus have such confidence in the Bible? Why is He able to rely on it as his standard for all of life? The answer can be seen in His interaction with another group of religious leaders, in Matthew chapter 19. This time the topic of conversation is divorce, and in answering their questions, Jesus takes them back to the first marriage in Genesis chapter 1.

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" (Matthew 19: 4-5)

Jesus' response reveals exactly how He thinks about the Bible. In Genesis chapter 1, the comment that "for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" is not a part of the direct speech of God in the text, but rather a commentary from the narrator. Despite this however, Jesus attributes the narrator's words to God the creator: "... the creator made them male and female and said ...". This is the answer to the question of how Jesus can stake all of His life and decision making on the reliability of every word of the Bible. It is because, in Jesus' view, every word of the Bible is a word of God. In short, for Jesus, what the Bible says, God says. And if God is completely reliable, so is the Bible.

In part 1 we have seen that the Bible is the standard used by Jesus in every part of life. In part 2 we will use this understanding to explore how Jesus thought about homosexuality specifically. Parts 3 and 4 will then look at two occasions when Jesus met with people guilty of sexual immorality, and what His response and message to them was.

As the new morality has taken tighter and tighter hold of our culture, it can feel like to be a Christian is to be on the wrong side of history. But no matter how angry the crowd, or how hostile the questions, Jesus invites us to come and stand, with Him, on the standard of the Bible.

VICAR'S LETTER

"Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" - John 18: 37



Dear *Friends*

Recently I read about an early radio address by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), at the time still a young professor, who was not just a pastor, but a prominent theologian - closely associated during the 1930s with the German Confessional Church's struggle with the Nazi State. The broadcast happened live at the German Broadcasting Company on February 1 1933, just a few days after Hitler had been confirmed as Chancellor.

Toward the end the script contained a chilling warning, for anyone with ears to hear: "If a leader surrenders to the wishes of his followers, who always want to make him their idol-the image of the Leader will gradually become the image of the Mis-Leader." But Bonhoeffer discovered on leaving the studio his last sentences had not been broadcast. As early as 1933, Hitler had already become the Mis-leader, feeding his supporters with his version of the 'truth' and suppressing all dissenting voices.

There are parallels with the media distortion in our own day, which are numerous, and not just the obvious ones. Look at the BBC website and you will see 'Fact Checking' has its own search on the BBC website-it makes me wonder who is checking the checkers!

When the Lord Jesus was on trial for his life before Pilate, Pilate mused aloud asking "What is truth?" (John 18:37). The question was Pilate's attempt to keep at arm's length a claim which the Lord Jesus had just made-that he had come into the world to testify to the truth, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18:37). That was altogether too uncomfortable to Pilate, and he retreated to the safe distance of philosophical abstraction.

Many in the UK live in their own echo-chamber, and Christians are prone to capitulate to the zeitgeist of the age when it comes to grappling with, for example, other faiths or currently the nature of marriage. Instead of searching the Scriptures diligently to develop a Christian mind and submitting to the truth the Lord Jesus has given us some of us dangerously select our own version of reality. We need to listen to the Lord Jesus: "In fact for this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (John 18:37).

Are we doing this in the issues currently confronting the Church of England?

Yours in Christ,

John

John R.M. Cook
Vicar of Wargrave with Knowl Hill

PCC REPORT: 9th January

Sheila Williams

The PCC met on 9th January 2023.

The meeting opened by recording the appreciation of all present for the contribution Sandra Baker had made as a member of the PCC and Churchwarden for Knowl Hill. The enthusiasm and dedication she brought to her role was admired by all, and she will be greatly missed. Prayers were offered for her family at this time.

Lesley Bell and Valda Hadden were then officially co-opted onto the PCC to support Karen Larkins, representing Knowl Hill.

Other items addressed included:

- The co-option of Sarah Whiteside onto the PCC
- Sarah had agreed to take over the role of CoG Leader for Nurturing and she "hit the ground running " by undertaking a survey of the House Groups organised by St Mary's - she ascertained that a total of 84 people were now attending the 7 groups, meeting in various locations and times on a regular bases.
- Following a request from Nicola Uniacke, a location, timing and format would be sought to provide a House Group for those with young families who find the current sessions difficult to attend.
- Sarah also raised the question of what material might be selected for the Groups to study and discuss during Lent. A decision on this will be taken soon as Easter is early this year - watch this space to see what is chosen.
- Rosie Creedon, the Gathering CoG Leader, announced a meeting to review the services which had taken place over Christmas to help planning for Christmas 2023 (you can't start too early planning for Christmas)
- Sue Witney is the Leader of the Celebrating CoG and she reported on the enthusiasm being shown for the Church Branches and the sell out achieved for the Burns Night. Future events will include a Music Festival over a weekend in June (again watch this space)
- Knowl Hill would be holding a picnic to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. Adverts for this will appear in due course.
- Following Serving Sunday, a number of members of the congregation had volunteered to take on roles in a variety of areas of church life. Some can only offer an hour a year, whilst others have taken on bigger tasks. All help is greatly appreciated, and the reward is the satisfaction which comes with a more personal involvement in the Parish to which we belong; and a more vibrant church and community.
- January saw the Try Sunday service initiative in St Mary's; and Jubi De Silva and Richard Eves are planning a couple of sessions on Evangelism which sound really exciting.
- APCM - it was agreed this would take place on 16th April after morning service, with the Audited Accounts being presented to the PCC at their next meeting in March.

MUSIC GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY

Peter Dart

Saturday January 21st was the time the Music Group, with partners and friends, celebrated their music-making over Christmas, and indeed the whole of 2022.

It was a way of thanking so many who turn out Sunday by Sunday and either play or sing to lead our worship. Courtesy of the little deli down the road near Reading FC, delicious smoked salmon, prawns, lasagne, salad, cheesecake and profiteroles were consumed by some 36 people. Many helpers had worked on Saturday afternoon to make the Church Centre look like a Michelin Starred Restaurant; the majority of people came at 7pm where they consumed delicious wine from Latour in France before tucking into the food. We then had 5 star entertainment, amazing singing and a hotly-contested quiz.



Thanks to everyone who came, and especially the many helpers who cooked and served - and especially the washer-uppers at the end! If you are reading this and thinking you would like to come next year, all you have to do is join the Music Group!

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

RAMBLIN' WITH BOB: Sunday 26th March

We shall be starting our 2023 programme with a delightful walk on the old Thames towpath, now a cul-de-sac along the edge of Wargrave Marsh. This runs parallel with the whole length of the Hennerton Backwater.

We shall meet up by the War Memorial on Mill Green at 12.30pm and return in time for Sunday lunch at The Bull at 3pm.

If you would like to join Ramblin' Bob and his merry group please see details below, and at the same time advise whether you are staying for Sunday lunch. Closing date for entries is Friday 17th March as the pub needs to know confirmed numbers in good time.

If it is raining we shall cancel the walk but continue with the Sunday lunch.

We look forward to seeing you on our ramble!



If you would like to join us on our walks in the future, please contact Bob Austen to be included in our notices.

Email: austenrobert@hotmail.com

Home: 0118 940 3038 or Mobile: 07970 611013

TUESDAY YOUTH GROUP

Richard Eves



Looking Ahead

This term at Tuesday Group we are going to be looking at the book of Judges. The central question of the book of Judges is this - "What would it take to live in a society where evil things no longer happened?" It's hard to imagine a more relevant question.

The Bible describes that state of freedom from evil and perfect goodness as the Kingdom of God. And the message of Judges is straightforward. You can't have the Kingdom without the King. It takes the enthronement of God's King - Jesus Christ, to finally put an end to evil and wickedness. Anything less than that just won't cut it. A vaguely spiritual person can't do it. A person with a clear set of moral values can't do it. A wealthy person, with the resources to meet everyone's needs, can't do it. A humanitarian person, welcoming refugees and migrants, can't do it. You can't have the Kingdom without the King. This is the message of the Book of Judges. The people of Israel have everything going for them - a rich and fertile land, large and strong cities, a moral and legal code written by God himself, a national history with God that is unparalleled. And yet without His King, their nation becomes the darkest to ever inhabit that place.

In many ways it seems like we are living in a time when the forces of darkness are on the march. And this can be especially discouraging for us Christians. We are few (at least around here), scattered, and seemingly on the wrong end of every social issue. The older ones of us can remember a time when this wasn't so, but this is the only world our young people have ever known. Please pray for them. They need help. They need God to encourage and remind them that Jesus IS the Lord, that He IS the King, and that if we seem like the rebels in this current age, it is in fact because we are living in a rebel nation, and we are the loyalist resistance. And the King IS coming back. Actually I've changed my mind. Don't pray that for our young people - pray it for all of us. It's something we need to know.

A reminder of the contacts to reach out to for all our Young Clubs.

Crèche - Camilla Cook camillacook@btconnect.com

Sunday Club - Annie da Silva hobden.da.silva@gmail.com

Pathfinders - Marc Uniacke marcuniacke@gmail.com

Tuesday Youth Group - Richard Eves richard.m.s.eves@gmail.com

CAMEO EVENTS 2023

JAN 19	2 PM	QUIZ
FEB 16	2 PM	BETLE DRIVE
MAR 16	2 PM	MIXED ACTIVITIES
APR 20	3 PM	WHIST DRIVE
MAY 18	3 PM	DINGBATS
JUN 15	3 PM	BINGO
JUL 20	TBC	OUTING

NO MEETING IN AUGUST

SEP 21	3 PM	WHIST DRIVE
OCT 19	3 PM	MIXED ACTIVITIES
NOV 16	2 PM	BETLE DRIVE
DEC 14	TBC	CHRISTMAS LUNCH

EVENTS TAKE PLACE IN THE VILLAGE HALL
ACTIVITIES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO ARRANGE TRANSPORT,
PLEASE CONTACT LESLEY BELL ON 01628 822500.

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
KNOWL HILL'S PREMIER MURDER MYSTERY EVENT!**

Recipe for Love – A Valentine's Day Treat



Join us for the Valentine's Day Bake-Off finale!

A smattering of local celebs will be there as well as some wannabe professional cake makers. The competition has been fierce and the atmosphere moist. The only casualties so far are a couple of burnt buns and a spotted dick. But the tension is so firm it could be cut with a cake slice!

Will the winning cake be made with love or will it have a soggy bottom? Be there to witness the master baker crowned!

**KNOWL HILL
VILLAGE
HALL
SAT 11TH FEB
7.15PM**

**DRESS
CODE:
BLACK TIE**

**TICKETS £43
INCLUDING
DINNER**

**Contact Lesley 07966 178142 or elbcarillon@gmail.com
Please inform of any dietary requirements**

KNOWL HILL CE ACADEMY

Nichole Bournier - Head of School



Wishing you all a Happy New Year from the pupils, staff and governors at Knowl Hill CE Academy! Our school vision 'Encourage One Another and Build Each Other Up' (1 Thessalonians 5:11) continues to permeate through daily life at Knowl Hill CE Academy

December was a very busy month for us at Knowl Hill CE Academy as we prepared to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Our Year 5 and 6 spent the day in Maidenhead town centre, carrying out field work, surveying members of the public about their shopping habits and thoughts on the regeneration project. They were lucky enough to be invited onto the building sites and find out first-hand about the plans for the rejuvenation of the town centre. They also visited Maidenhead Heritage Centre to learn about Maidenhead's past. We were delighted to receive feedback from Maidenhead residents on the impeccable manners and behaviour of our pupils. Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed participating in the Christmas Unwrapped workshop held at St Mary's Church in White Waltham where they learnt about the true meaning of Christmas, whilst taking part in fun activities such as designing and making make mince pies and performing a Christmas rap!

We visited St Peter's Church in Knowl Hill several times during December. Our year 1 and 2 class held a beautiful candlelit Christingle Service and our year 6 class led a traditional Christmas service with some Christmas carols. Our choir also put on a fantastic performance at the St Peter's Christmas service and thoroughly enjoyed performing to an audience.

Back at school, we enjoyed Christmas jumper day, raising money for Save the Children as well as Christmas lunch, Christmas parties and our annual staff Christmas play written by Richard Best with supporting actress Lesley Bell!

We also held our first Christmas Fayre in two years, which was well attended by pupil, parents and members of the local community and raised lots of money for the school PTA. There was a brilliant buzz as the community came together once again for a day full of fun and games. Foundation and year 4 enjoyed getting out into the local community and spreading some festive cheer, delivering handmade Christmas cards and mince pies to some of our elderly neighbours.



The Spring term looks set to be just as exciting for the pupils at Knowl Hill. We have already started the term with some fantastic immersion days.

Foundation began the term by travelling to China on a magic carpet before celebrating the Chinese New Year, dressing up as a dragon, learning a dance, trying Chinese noodles and making fans. Year 1& 2 have also started the term with a bang, discovering a huge dinosaur egg on the school playground and then watching the CCTV footage of an enormous dragon landing on our field! They then went out in the local area, leaving clues for the dragon around



Knowl Hill Common. Year 3&4 dressed as Victorians for their immersion days and experienced the strict Victorian classroom, learning the three R's and being subjected to traditional punishments such as the Dunce hat and the cane!

Year 5&6 have been immersing themselves in their new topic 'identity', creating self-portraits and poems to represent their incredible uniqueness.



We will continue to encourage and build each other up in the new term.

Upcoming events include plenty of opportunities for our pupils to display their God-given talents with our annual Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust Eisteddfod competition and Dance Extravaganza. Our theme for the extravaganza this year is Musical theatre, and all of the children are excited to be choreographing their own dances, ready to perform at Braywick Leisure Centre in March.

We also have lots more trips planned for the children, with Year 3 & 4 visiting Reading Museum for a Victorian school day and year 1 & 2 off to Windsor Castle. Pupils are also looking forward to a visit from Olympian Emma Nwofo later this month.

What an exciting Spring term we have ahead of us!



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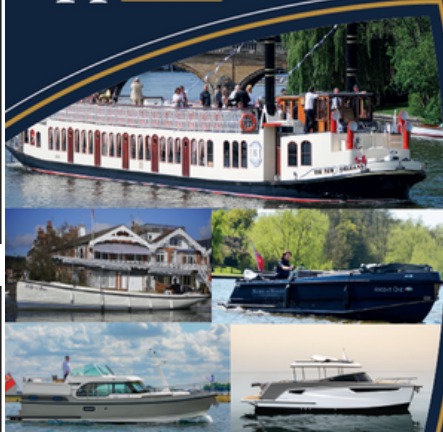
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