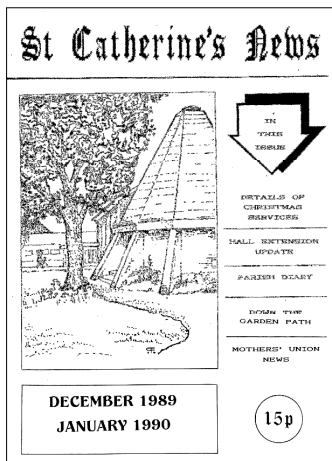


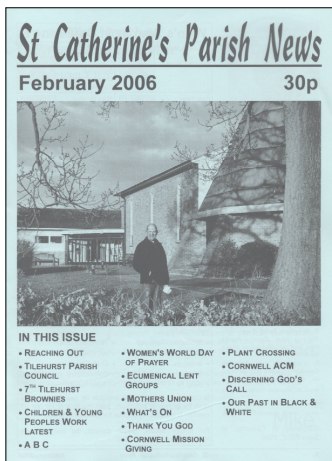
RG31 St Catherine's Tilehurst Parish Magazine Winter 2024

The final edition

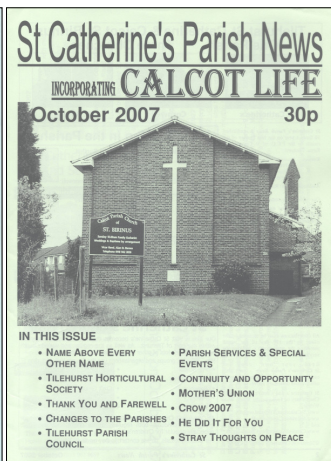
How St Catherine's Parish Magazine has evolved over the years



1989 - Editor Jack Smees



2006 - Editor Stuart Poore



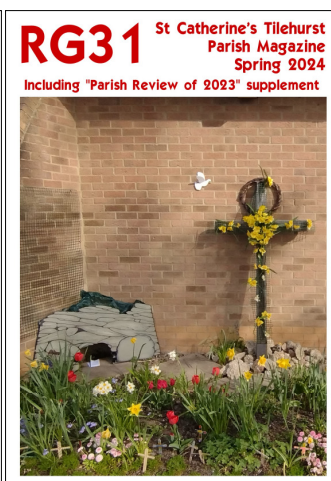
2007 - Editor Stuart Poore



2008 - Editor Stuart Poore



2013 - Editor Tony Bartlett



2024 - Editor Tony Bartlett

From the editor



I found it interesting looking through old copies of the Parish Magazine to put together the pictures on the front cover. With this last edition Stuart looks back on page 9.

In my previous article, I used the words of a song and these words lead into my thoughts this time: “The words of the prophets are written on subway walls” from ‘The sounds of silence.’

The library of past magazines tells the story of St Catherine’s, but written on the corridor walls are these lists of ministers.



Each brought something new to St Catherine’s, both physical and spiritual.

The story begins as an outpost from St Michael’s church, ministering to an area on new housing, then as a stand-alone church building, completed in 1963 as a daughter church of St Michael’s.

The separate Hall was added later.

Our family joined the story in 1978. At that time there was a temporary wooden wall where the sanctuary now is, the unfulfilled dream of a much larger structure.

In 1980 under the leadership of Rev Norman Brown (1978-1982) the East End was completed by a DIY team. Members of the congregation provided the project management, and labouring!

Norman’s successor was Rev Chris Parsons (1983-1988) with whom we embraced Charismatic revival, and a music group to complement the organist and choir was formed.

Next was Rev Stephen Hartley, (1988-1995) who was instrumental in launching the Cornwell Community Church which encouraged and enabled lay leadership, children’s work and a talented music group. He introduced us to Spring Harvest and groups of us continued to attend for many years. During his time the church Hall was extended.

Rev Alison Beever (1996-2001) opened our eyes to the needs of the disabled, and changes were made to the existing facilities. Under her leadership a number of banners were made to decorate the church.

Rev Denis Smith (2002-2016) inherited plans to extend and improve the premises, a legacy to build a ‘Garden Room’ was in hand and the decision to close St Birinus Church and sell the building gave us the opportunity to make it a reality. Substantial fundraising was

(Continued on page 4)

Rev Jackie Fountain

As we approach Christmas and the busyness of this season I want to draw our minds back to the real reason for Christmas. Immanuel, which means “God with us.” The amazing news that God entered our world, took on human form and came in humility as a baby in a manger.

His birth and life is a message of good news for us, because “God with us” means that we are never alone. It doesn’t matter how hard or hopeless our situation may appear to be, God is there for us.



We don’t have to journey through our challenges and struggles alone. He understands them, He walks them alongside us. He was willing to come into the mess and brokenness of our lives so He could show us God’s amazing love and make a way for us to truly know God.

It is this message that gives us comfort and great joy to celebrate at Christmas.

I wanted to let you know that at St Catherine’s we have recently started two new services which might be of interest to you. On the first Saturday of each month at 3.30pm we have St Cat’s lite which is a fun service for people of all ages including crafts, an interactive service and refreshments. On the second Sunday of the month at 6.30pm we have a service of informal worship and prayer. All are welcome at these.

This magazine will be our last magazine in this format. Don’t worry, we will still be communicating using a different format. I will let others who have been at St Catherine’s for a long time tell you about some of their memories of the magazine over the years.

Wishing you and your loved ones joy and peace this Christmas.

Jackie

(Continued from page 2)

needed and whilst rising costs scaled back the final plans, the completed building was opened in 2016. Denis' experience with his time working for British Gas is largely responsible for the new heating system which keeps the church building at a comfortable temperature.

Rev Gill Rowell (2018-2022) did not know the challenges that she would have to face. Firstly the decision that we would close Cornwell Community Church and its members would start a third morning service at St Catherine's. Secondly, just as these arrangements were settling down the Pandemic and then lockdown hit.

Fortunately at just the right time, she had Rev Phil Price as a curate. Services went online and we had to quickly master the art of recording and then broadcasting from our homes an act of worship each Sunday morning, as well as reflections, stories and chat to keep the church family together. Who can ever forget the 'Gill n Phil' show and them playing 'Sausage and Beans'?

As restrictions eased there were all the decisions to make; masks, sanitising etc.

We were well placed to begin 'livestreaming' our Sunday service, yes 'service' because a major change was

made combining all three Sunday services into one service and integrate the Cornwell musicians with the St Catherine's group.

We became one congregation and learnt to value different Sunday services that were not in our preferred style. Then a financial crisis when our largest Hall Hirer, the St Catherine's Pre-school closed.

Gill is now enjoying her retirement close to her daughters.

Rev Jackie Fountain has now been with us a year and in line with the needs expressed in our 'Parish Profile' is seeking to extend the age-range of church members.

We are beginning to see children at our 10am service, and the service itself has become more accessible to those with no church experience.

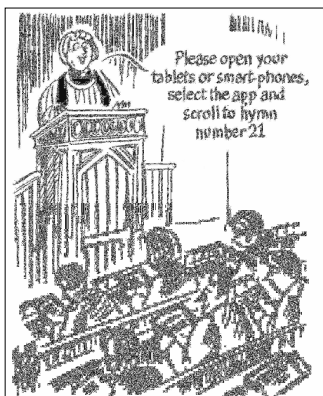
Moving the 0-5s group from the Cornwell Centre to St Catherine's Hall involved a lot of work and prayer and sacrifices, but it's a joy to hear the excited chatter of children on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and to see the long line of buggies in the corridor representing as many as 60 children coming along each week.

The 'St Cat's Lite' all age service on the first Saturday of the month has begun to build a group of regular attenders.

We have been blessed by Jackie's family too, with the gifts and talents of Paul, Christie and Dan.

The next chapter of St Catherine's has yet to be written. The first shows God's faithfulness to us. So we look forward to what things he has in store for us in the future!

Tony Bartlett



Operation Christmas Child



Thank you to everyone who contributed to Operation Christmas Child collection this year.

November 17th was 'Shoebox Sunday', during which we collected Shoeboxes filled with Christmas Gifts for children around the world who may not get anything else at Christmas.

At the Sunday service we learnt more about Operation Christmas Child and

what happens to your shoeboxes as they are sent off.

We collected 57 Shoeboxes, two large bags of knitted hats, and we know some of you also donated 'virtual' shoeboxes on-line.

Here's some images of what happened to those Shoeboxes after the service ...



Shoeboxes at the Sunday Service



Shoeboxes stacked ready for collection



Shoeboxes being loaded into Tony's car



Shoeboxes at the local collection depot

Send a Shoebox Online

National Collection Week may be over, but Operation Christmas Child 2024 isn't done yet! All the way up to New Year's Eve, you can continue spreading Good News and great joy by building shoeboxes or send a pre-packed shoebox online in minutes.

Go to: - www.samaritans-purse.org.uk

"I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD.

"They are plans for good ... to give you a future and a hope."

Jeremiah 29:11 NLT



Paul was totally invested in what God had called him to do. Are you?

When it comes to barriers to success, we are usually our own worst enemies. Taking the steps necessary to fulfil a God-given dream will cost you.

You will have to work hard. You will have to make sacrifices. You will have to keep learning, growing, and changing. Are you willing to do that? Most people aren't.

Ask people when they will do what they want to do, and most will answer that they hope to do it 'someday'. Why not now? Because you're not ready? Perhaps you're not. But if you wait until you are, maybe you will never do it.

You only get ready by starting. And if you're willing to start, here are some things you can count on.

First, it will be different from what you imagined.

Second, it will be more difficult than you imagined.

Third, it will be better than you imagined.

Mark Twain said that the two greatest days in a person's life are the day they were born and the day they discover why they were born.

If you want to discover why you were born, spend time with God. His Word says, "'I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me" (vv. 11-13 NLT).

This thought is taken from 'The Word for Today', Daily Bible reading notes produced quarterly by UCB (United Christian Broadcasters Ltd) PO Box 255, Stoke on Trent, ST4 8YY. If you would like to receive these free (although UCB do welcome donations) notes or those aimed at Secondary School age, call UCB on 01782 911 000

A Twitch Upon The Thread

As I was reading a book recently, one character said to another, "Don't give up on God entirely. There's always the twitch upon the thread."

This refers to a quote from a Father Brown story by G. K. Chesterton.

"I caught him with an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world,

and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread."

I found these words to be a wonderful illustration of God's grace.

I think they give such encouragement to anyone praying for people to come to know God or to rediscover their faith.

Susan Smyth

Confirmation 2024



Pauline, Joseph, Jackie, Rebecca and Alice

It was a joyful occasion on Sunday 24th November at St Barnabas Emmer Green at the confirmation service led by Bishop Henry Scriven. Pauline, Joseph, Rebecca and Alice were amongst 30 candidates from the local area to be confirmed.

Pauline & Rebecca had been baptised as children and are now regular worshippers at St Catherine's and wanted to become full members.

Joseph & Alice have been attending the Youth Bible Study and Youth Well Being Journey Course on Tuesday afternoons led by Jackie & Lynn Stevens.

Joseph said "I wanted to be confirmed as I felt that over the past few years I have become closer to God and I wanted to take my relationship further with him. The confirmation has helped me become at peace with myself and God."

Dwight L Moody

Dwight L Moody – extraordinary evangelist and peace-maker



It was 125 years ago, on 22nd December 1899, that Dwight L Moody, the famous American evangelist, died.

Moody was born in Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1837 and raised in the Unitarian Church. But his father died when he was four, and he had a hard upbringing as one of nine children.

At 17 he moved to Boston to work in his uncle's shoe shop – a job he got on condition that he attended the Congregational Church of Mount Vernon. There he was converted to evangelical Christianity through his Sunday school teacher, Edward Kimball.

One of Moody's favourite quotes was "Faith makes all things possible. Love makes all things easy." He devoted himself to bringing the Gospel to as many people as possible.

Unwilling to fight in the Civil War, he worked among the troops with the YMCA, and then built up a strong evangelical church in Chicago – only to have the building, his house and the homes of many in the congregation destroyed in the Great Fire of 1871.

Re-evaluating his priorities, Moody teamed up with Ira D Sankey, a hymn writer, and they made a number of tours to Great Britain, where he avoided divisive doctrines, preaching "the old-fashioned gospel".

They drew large crowds, inspiring many local people to start Sunday schools for children and young people. News of this had a big influence in Sweden, though the Americans had no knowledge of Swedish.

Moody showed his fearlessness in going to Ireland, where Catholics and Protestants were at loggerheads. He ignored the sectarian divide and was welcomed by both, leading to revival there.

He had meanwhile returned to Northfield to live, and ten years after his death the Chicago church was renamed the Moody Church in his honour. President Dwight D Eisenhower, born in 1890, was named after him.

Article from the 'Parish Pump'

Magazine Memories

By Stuart Poore

My earliest memories of helping with the Parish Magazine are from the mid 80's when I helped Phil and Rosemary French produce it. It was called 'St Catherine's News' back then and it was an A4 black and white booklet with a different coloured paper for the cover page each month. It was produced by typing onto Gestetner sheets with a mechanical typewriter. Gestetner sheets were like carbon paper, and the typewriter letters 'cut out' the letter shapes on the sheet, meaning the sheets allowed the production of multiple copies by use of a 'Cyclograph' – essentially wrapping the sheets around a drum and 'printing' through them as you rotated a handle to make the drum spin around.



1988 - Phil's Hand Drawn Cover

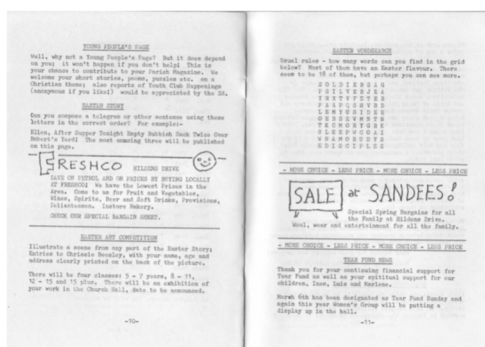
My job was to deliver the large heavy typewriter to whoever was 'typing up' the magazine that month. After typing, I would collect the typewriter and the Gestetner sheets, returning them to Phil. The sheets often needed repairing because the centre of letters like o and p would have fallen out and would need reattaching. Very basic crude graphics could be added by drawing directly on the Gestetner sheet with a stylus. Any mistakes and the whole sheet had to be typed again!



A Gestetner Machine

The printing ink was alcohol spirit based and generated fumes and a strong smell. With the vigorous work of winding the handle to produce the pages, you needed a well-ventilated room, or you came out drunk!

In late 1989 Jack Smee took over the magazine from Phil and brought things into the computer age – but everything was still primitive compared to today. The use of "Word Processing" as it was then called allowed the computer to print a few different basic fonts and letter sizes using a black and white dot matrix printer. Graphics were crude and were often supplemented by Jack literally cutting images out of a magazine or a book of line drawings and pasting them onto the master copy. The master copy was then photocopied on A3 pages.



1988 - Typewriter text and hand drawn graphics

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

Computers were still rare, so most articles were still submitted handwritten. I helped Jack by typing up some of the articles on my own computer. However back then, compatibility between computers was rare. Jack used an Amstrad PCW 8521 and I had an Atari ST512. While both machines used floppy disks, these were not compatible. This meant that every month I took my Atari round to Jacks house, connected the two computers together via a cable (remember, no internet in those days) and transferred the text from my computer to Jack's using a program called Kermit (yes, it was named after the frog).

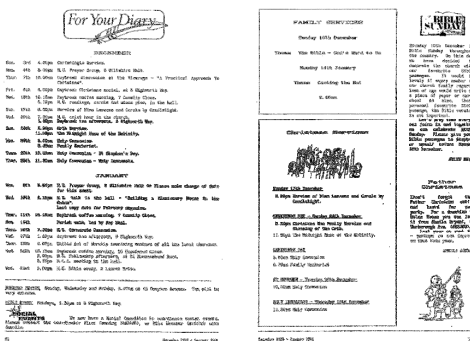
Phil was still involved, producing musings in his own inimitable style, right up until his death just a few months ago, and on page 22 there are two final ones.

Phil's own hand drawn image of the Oak Tree with the Church behind remained the basic cover design for many years, becoming a crudely digitised photograph by 2000, then a seasonally changing photo all the way to 2008, when changing cover photos took over.

By the time I took over from Jack in 2003, I had a PC running Windows and a monochrome ink jet printer, so I could do everything on just one computer. By now the term used to create a magazine on a computer was "Desktop Publishing". The program I used (Microsoft Publisher) could now do graphics and even photographs - but everything was still black and white!!

While there was still much typing up of handwritten articles, people could now send in their own articles as computers were becoming more common, along with compatible floppy disks and over time email and USB sticks slowly started to be used.

Doing everything myself, I now fully understood what Phil and Jack had had to do before me. Ten times a year (Summer and Christmas were double issues) there was a week of typing up articles, dealing with last minute changes to squeeze in that delayed but essential article, staying up late, often well into the small hours of the morning, to nurse a reluctant photocopier which jammed if you left it for five minutes, all to get everything ready for the deadline of the collation team who met



1989 - Basic Fonts and Line Art

WHAT'S ON December

See page 2 for right for details of Christmas services

Sat 1st	10:30 am	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	8:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	10:30 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	11:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve

January

Sat 1st	10:30 am	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	8:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	10:30 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	11:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve

February

Sat 1st	10:30 am	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	8:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	10:30 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	11:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve

Christmas Services

Sat 1st	10:30 am	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	8:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	10:30 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	11:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve

Ecumenical Services

Sat 1st	10:30 am	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	8:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	10:30 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	11:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve

Drama Workshop

Sat 1st	10:30 am	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	8:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	10:30 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve
Sat 1st	11:00 pm	St. John's Church - St. John's Christmas Eve

2003 - Fonts, Photographs and Cartoons
(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

to manually staple the pages together and collate everything into delivery bundles, complete with individual labels which you also had to update and print each month. It was exhausting!

By 2004 there was a subtle name change – it was now “St Catherine’s Parish News”. For a brief period in the final months of 2007, it was called “St Catherine’s Parish News incorporating Calcot Life” after the Parish’s merger with St Birinus.

2008 saw a major reformat. The magazine changed its name again, as well as its size, becoming an A5 booklet under its now current name of RG31. And with the earlier arrival of a colour photocopier, it was now produced in colour! Well, the cover at least – colour printing costs kept its usage to a minimum.

At the end of 2012 I handed over the reins to Tony, who has produced the magazine since then. While I often provided the cover and a few articles, it was now Tony staying up late to get things done – although the arrival of a printer which could collate and staple pages itself helped a lot!

September 2014 saw the magazine also go on-line, so if you look on our web site, you can still find and read every magazine since then.

In Summer 2020 as COVID hit, the magazine reduced from being ten times a year, to quarterly. Now, at the end of 2024, it is coming to an end.

Many other people have been involved with the magazine over the years. The additional and essential jobs performed by others are many, various and too long a list to complete here, but they include :- Writing articles, being on the original ‘typing up’ rota in the 80s, maintaining the annual subscription list, stapling & collating the magazine into delivery bundles and managing and invoicing the advertisers

We have all worked hard to produce something I hope you, dear reader, have found informative and have enjoyed over the years.

Stuart Poore

St Catherine's Tea Dance
On Thursday 13th December 2nd & 3rd January
At St Catherine's Hall Wittenham Ave
Time 2.30 - 4.30 pm
Price 4.50 includes Dancing, Instruction & Tea
Further details contact New Lavine Cohen ☎ 0114 943 2041

Friday Friends
Friday Friends - our activities group - welcome to St Catherine's Hall on Friday Afternoons from 2pm - 4pm. There are different activities each week and all are free. Sessions are free for friends and carers - contact 0114 943 2041 for the afternoon.
Programme for December and January:
Dec 1st - Quiz
Dec 8th - Quiz
Dec 15th - Christmas Carol and Carols
Dec 22nd - Quiz
Jan 5th - Quiz
Jan 12th - Quiz
Jan 19th - Quiz
Jan 26th - Quiz
If you know someone who would like to come to Friday Friends, why not drop them a line or call on 0114 943 2041 for a chat and handing form together.
Further details from Rev. Denise Smith on 0114 943 2041

St Catherine's Mothers' Union
What's On In and Around the Parish
December
Wed 12th - Carols and Readings 10.30 am - 11.30 am
Wed 19th - Quiet Hour in Church 9.30 pm - 10.30 pm
January
Wed 2nd - The History of Rockers 10.30 am - 11.30 am
Wed 16th - Bible Study 10.30 am - 11.30 am
Wed 23rd - Quiet Hour in Church 9.30 pm - 10.30 pm
February
Wed 13th - Acol Wobbling 10.30 am - 11.30 am
Further details contact New Lavine Cohen ☎ 0114 943 2041

Meeting Point
Now follow the Wednesday service at St Catherine's (see below).
Meeting point - meeting together and meeting with food.
Tea and Coffee will be available and people to bring and give to the person of your choice who is in need of help.
We have now established a regular Wednesday evening prayer group at St Catherine's. The service is at 7.30pm followed by a meal of coffee.
The service is held at St. Joseph's or St. Catherine's - please see weekly notices at either Church for details.

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Christmas Services
at St Catherine's Church unless stated:
Sat Dec 14
7.30 pm Merry Christmas (see page 10)
Sun Dec 16
8.30 am Carols and Nativity - Concert
10.30 am Carol Service at Wittenham
7.00 pm Carol Service
Christmas Eve
Sat Dec 21
7.30 pm Merry Christmas (see page 10)
Sun Dec 22
8.30 am Carols and Nativity - Concert
10.30 am Carol Service at Wittenham
7.00 pm Carol Service
For full details, see the service pull-out.

Dates for the Diary
December
Sat 1st - Heavy Christmas (see above)
Sun 2nd - PCF Sun St Catherine's
Mon 3rd - Carol Service at Wittenham
Tue 4th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Wed 5th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Thu 6th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Fri 7th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sat 8th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sun 9th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 10th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Tue 11th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Wed 12th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Thu 13th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Fri 14th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sat 15th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sun 16th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 17th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Tue 18th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Wed 19th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Thu 20th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Fri 21st - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sat 22nd - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sun 23rd - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 24th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Tue 25th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Wed 26th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Thu 27th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Fri 28th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sat 29th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sun 30th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 31st - Carol Service at Wittenham

January
Tue 2nd - Carol Service at Wittenham
Wed 3rd - Carol Service at Wittenham
Thu 4th - Carol Service at Wittenham
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Sun 7th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 8th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Tue 9th - Carol Service at Wittenham
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Sun 28th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 29th - Carol Service at Wittenham
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Wed 31st - Carol Service at Wittenham

2012 - Fancy Fonts and Graphics

Community Event at St Catherine's
Monthly meeting from 2.30 pm - 4.00 pm every Friday from 12.30 pm - 2.00 pm. There are different activities each week and all are free. Sessions are free for friends and carers - contact 0114 943 2041 for the afternoon.
March
Wed 13th - Carols & Games
Thu 14th - Carols & Games
Fri 15th - Carols & Games
Sat 16th - Carols & Games
Sun 17th - Carols & Games
Mon 18th - Carols & Games
Tue 19th - Carols & Games
Wed 20th - Carols & Games
Thu 21st - Carols & Games
Fri 22nd - Carols & Games
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Thu 13th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Fri 14th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sat 15th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sun 16th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 17th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Tue 18th - Carol Service at Wittenham
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Thu 27th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Fri 28th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sat 29th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sun 30th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 31st - Carol Service at Wittenham

January
Tue 2nd - Carol Service at Wittenham
Wed 3rd - Carol Service at Wittenham
Thu 4th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Fri 5th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sat 6th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sun 7th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 8th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Tue 9th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Wed 10th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Thu 11th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Fri 12th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sat 13th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Sun 14th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Mon 15th - Carol Service at Wittenham
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Tue 30th - Carol Service at Wittenham
Wed 31st - Carol Service at Wittenham

2020 - The last monthly 'What's On' centre page spread

Christmas Geese

The story is told of a farmer who didn't believe in Jesus. One snowy Christmas Eve, his wife was taking their children to a service at their local church.

He refused to come saying: 'Why would God lower Himself to come to Earth as a man? That's ridiculous!' So, they left him at home.

During the evening the winds grew stronger, and the snow turned to a blizzard. He heard a series of loud thumps on the window. In the field near his house he saw a flock of wild geese. They had been migrating south when they got caught in the snowstorm. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter.

The man wanted to help the geese and so he opened the doors of the barn, hoping they would go inside for shelter. But the geese didn't do anything, despite the man's efforts to move them.

He made a breadcrumb trail leading to the barn and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they only got more scared and scattered.

Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn: 'Why don't they follow me?!' Then he realised: 'If only I were a goose and become one of them, then I could save them.'

Finally, he understood the heart of the Christmas message. God has become one of us in Jesus. The eternal creator God has entered time and space as a baby, to show us who God is and how we can know Him.

This Christmas, let's celebrate again this amazing truth that we have a God who knows and can meet our needs in Jesus. 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God with us''. Matthew 1:23.

Canon Paul Hardingham

What sort of a Christmas card person are you?

The time to send and receive Christmas cards has come round again – time for our annual shock at the cost of a coloured card, and disbelief at what the Post Office intends to charge us to deliver them.

It seems there are three kinds of people when it comes to Christmas cards: the total abstainers, the total givers and the selective givers.

Abstainers write 'Happy Christmas everyone' on Facebook, and consider the job well done. Total givers spend a fortune on cards and stamps and send

them to everyone they know. Selective givers try to cut corners, but then cannot remember who sent who what, and as the cards pour through their door, spend time worrying...

However you do it, it is good to stay in yearly touch with your widest circle of friends and family.

Proverbs points out that: 'Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.' Prov 25:25. Your loved ones will enjoy hearing from you!

How can Christians fight back

Disinformation and fake news have helped fuel the riots and disorder that took place across parts of the UK. It's just the latest example of how social media can impact all of our lives.

Media campaigning charity Full Fact declared "The disorder we've seen, triggered at least in part by false claims circulating on social media, is an awful reminder of what can happen when online misinformation spills into the real world."

But how can Christians fight back against the tide of disinformation and fake news sweeping across the internet, and arriving at the smartphone in your hand? It's easy to feel powerless against the pervasive impact of social media, the algorithms of big tech serving up information that confirms inbuilt biases, or the 'influencers' seeking to use social media to wind up their followers. Elon Musk, the owner of X/Twitter is among those accused of stoking the fires of division in the UK.

But each of us has a voice within our own circle of friends, family, colleagues, and worshippers at our church, so here are some simple steps:

First, don't share without thinking. It's easy simply to share on social media or tell a friend something that you have just read online or in print. But take a few minutes to think over what you have just read or heard. Slow down your response.

Ask yourself: is this from a reliable news source? Can I check this information on another media platform? Slowing down our responses makes it much less likely

that we will share fake news or spread disinformation. If in doubt, then don't spread the story — even if you would like it to be true, because of your worldview.

Second, burst your bubble. Journalist James Ball writes: "Knowing what people we disagree with actually say and think — rather than the straw men and caricatures we create in our heads — helps us bridge gaps and makes it harder to demonize people whose politics are different from our own."

In social media, this means being willing to follow people or organisations with which you disagree, and being ready to engage with what they are saying. It may be uncomfortable, and it may not change your point of view, but you will understand better the views that they are expressing – and maybe sharpen your own.

Otherwise, you just see opinions that echo your own, and are never challenged about your viewpoint. The algorithms will keep serving you up posts that you like...

Third, don't succumb to conspiratorial thinking. Full Fact reports that an incorrect name for the suspect in the Southport killings spread rapidly online, alongside false claims he had recently come to the UK on a small boat, or was Syrian. These claims were quickly rebutted by Merseyside Police. But nevertheless, unrest broke out in Southport, with the police reportedly saying people behind the violence had been fired up by social media posts.

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

As seekers after truth, Christians should be looking for evidence and robust investigations rather than fabricated ideas that intrigue us.

Fourth, support independent journalism. News organisations are under pressure from free material offered on the internet from unreliable sources. If independent journalism is to survive, readers are likely to have to pay an increasing price to support media outlets. The cover price of a newspaper, or an online subscription, can help ensure professional journalism survives. Journalists launching community publications to serve their local areas should be supported by churches.

Fifth, take a stand against disinformation. US academic Dr Lee McIntyre writes: "The issue for me is not to learn how to adjust to living in a world in which facts do not matter, but instead to stand up for the notion of truth and learn how to fight back."

In an era of post-truth, Christians are called to challenge every attempt to obfuscate a fact and challenge

falsehoods before they are accepted as true. How you take action will depend on your circumstances, and where you see the truth being undermined.

It could be in your place of work or education, in the media that you consume, or in the social media posts that your friends are circulating. Small actions taken in churches, workplaces or friendship groups can have a ripple effect in drawing people back to the truth.

Post-truth, fake news, and disinformation together pose a serious threat to societies around the world. Citizens can feel powerless in the face of their demoralising and demotivating effects. But Christians can play their part in seeking to bring truth and integrity back into the centre of public life.

A final thought. Don't be afraid to take a step back from social media, if you find the relentless torrent of news and opinion impacting your wellbeing. For the sake of your mental health, take regular breaks away from your screen...and invest that time in prayer.

Article from 'Parish Pump'

Christmas observations

Nativity scene - "Here's a king!" announced the five-year-old as he unwrapped a figurine from the Christmas decorations box. "Here's a donkey!" he added a moment later. Then he removed the tissue from another figure, finding the infant Jesus moulded permanently into the little manger. The child exclaimed, "And here's Baby Jesus in his car seat!"

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? Nothing. It was on the house.

Fragile Nativity - A couple visited their son and his family for Christmas, and admired their beautiful nativity set in the hallway.

The grandfather asked his young granddaughter if she knew what it was. "Oh yes," she said immediately. "Of course I do. It's breakable."

Holly - Knock, knock! Who's there? Holly. Holly who? Holly-days are here again!

October

Our October meeting was opened by Hilary with notices and prayers before welcoming Katie Amos who is the leading member of staff of the Local Studies dept. of Reading Library.

Katie's talk was entitled 'Big Little Houses' – Dellwood, The Laurels and Kentwood House.

Dellwood was built in 1896 and was owned by various people before being bought by Reading Council for £3,060 to become a maternity hospital.

They extended it in 1927 but, sadly, in 1954 it caught fire and only 2 new-born babies out of the 15 there survived. They were buried in Henley Road Cemetery where there is now a memorial to them.

Some of our members recalled having their babies in Dellwood around 60 years ago!

If plans are accepted the now derelict building could become a Care Home.

The Laurels was built in 1875 and owned by a succession of people the most notorious being Horatio Hamp who had an affair with a Mrs. Blandford. It was then sold to Robert Latham, then on to Wilfred Powell who, in 1911 allowed the surrounding meadows to be used for camps.

In 1939 to 1946 the house was used as a First Aid Post and in 1951 some of the land was used for the present Library, and the infant department of Park Lane School was established in the house.

Kentwood Farmhouse was built in 1723 and is now a Grade 2 listed building. It has now been converted into flats and renamed Kentwood House. This building started with a history of having many occupants and now, with the presence of the flats, is carrying on the tradition.

Sheila Bryant

November

Hilary welcomed around 35 members and friends, including St. Michaels' MU, to an evening of Ideas for Christmas Wreaths and Decorations given by Valerie Poore.



Valerie had various examples of wreaths she had made and showed us how she had constructed them and reminded us how the Blue Peter presenters used to demonstrate in the same way.



One good tip was to go shopping in January and hopefully buy down priced items for decoration e.g. pipe cleaners, baubles, artificial leaves, tinsel and other glittery bits and pieces.

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(Continued from page 15)

After delicious refreshments Valerie gave audience members baubles, bows and other decorative items which they each added to an incomplete wreath which was passed round until it was finished under her guidance.

A fun and entertaining evening which ended with the drawing of the raffle.

Our next meeting will be on the 11th December when we will have our traditional evening of Readings and Carols - Mulled wine and mince pies - when those choosing a reading also select a carol.

Volunteers please see Rita.

Sheila Bryant

Once again the Mothers Union knitters have been busy making Christmas stockings for the Children Heard and Seen Project supporting children with a parent in prison.

We knitted 50 stockings which will be filled with chocolates and given to the children at their Christmas party. We have also made additional filled stockings which will be sold in aid of other Mothers Union Projects. Many thanks to all our knitters.

Hilary Smee



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Christmas Quiz 2024

Answers on page28

1. This year was a Leap Year. Were 1900 and 2000 Leap Years?
2. What is Whamaggedon?
3. Alan Bates hit the headlines in January. He shares his name with a famous actor, but why is he well known?
4. HRH Duke of Edinburgh met a special resident at St Helena in January who had also met his grandparents. Who is he?
5. A young actor, fresh out of drama school, was told by Arthur Lowe, “don’t worry if there’s not a lot of lines. They’ll come. In the meantime get yourself a funny costume and stand near me”. Who was the actor who passed away this year and starred in this classic sitcom?
6. Why did a family photo taken for Mothering Sunday lead to a lot of media speculation?
7. Why did North Korean television object to Alan Titchmarsh and his trousers?
8. How did a black cat called Matins get into trouble on 2nd June 1953 at Westminster Abbey?
9. Where was the Carnation Revolution fifty years ago?
10. What product manufacturer (a byword in usefulness) announced in 2024 they would introduce the first bladeless version?
11. Which Oxford Don applied unsuccessfully to be a code breaker in the 1940s? there was a note by his name “keen”
12. Where is the Elephant and Bear Line?
13. What is Election purdah?
14. What was Gamblegate?
15. 17th July was National Emoji Day. One of the most popular is known as ROTFL. What does that mean?
16. In this year’s Olympics the Philippines gold medallist Carlos Yulo got an unusual reward as well as the medal. What was it?
17. In August a north Italian city advertised for people to learn an ancient skill. The job requirements include being 18 or over, having a high school-level education, knowing how to swim, and possessing a medical certificate that proves “a healthy and robust constitution”. What job was this for?
18. What music celebrated its 200th anniversary? Liked by many, and Karl Marx thought it “a solemn mass of earthly joy”?
19. Why might you be looking forward to not looking back in anger?
20. What types of special judges were cancelled after 147 years’ service and replaced electronically?

Christmas Fair Satur



Friday 16th November



A Psalm for our Time

I've been writing for our RG31 magazine since 2010 and feel sad that this is the last edition. I am so grateful for the opportunity to share God's inspiration.

When I was growing up the Bible was found in every home and public building. It was the go to for wisdom, morals and the powerful Word of God. That was long ago.

New gods for our itchy ears have raised their heads under the guise of the 'smartphone' (other devices are available). We know the Father of Lies can appear as Angels of Light and these gods spout both truth and lies, causing us confusion. They even use The Cloud for backup!

Itchy ears only want entertainment and what feels good. So beware the itchy ear postings who tell us that all is alive and well in La La Land!

I offer this, with tongue in cheek, my psalm for our time.



The smartphone is my constant, tuned in companion
it makes me clutch onto it both by day and night
I listen for its call and it leads me away from reality but I shall not fear...
For my Smartphone is with me.

Online apps, bloggers and passwords, they anaesthetise my soul
they lure me to swipe away endless precious hours mindlessly
Though I want to pursue my Christian duties, I am distracted but I shall not worry...
For my Smartphone is with me.

Instagram, Facebook and Social Media, they engulf my mind with constant alerts
I am enslaved, I don't want to miss what the gods tell me
It infects me in the name of worldliness but I say never mind...
For my Smartphone is with me.

It anoints my mind with fake news and my anxiety overflows
screens and swipes have destroyed my joy as a paper page turner
I must dwell in the house of the smartphone forever but I praise all the techies...
For my Smartphone is with me.

2 Timothy 4:3 ISV

For the time will come when people will not tolerate healthy doctrine but with itching ears will surround themselves with teachers who cater to their peoples own desires.

Shalom,
Lorraine Roberts

Phil The Muser

'Musings from Phil French' have been a regular feature in the RG31 church magazine for many years now. They were always thought provoking on all matters scientific and/or celestial and written with intelligence and humility.

So, it is fitting that we offer a life group tribute. His last full submission was for the Autumn 2024 edition where his musings took him to AI (Artificial Intelligence). Sadly Phil died on 1st October after a fall. Two unpublished musings are overleaf.

As this is the final time we shall read the RG31 and there are no more Phil's musings it is poignant to bid farewell to both.

Phil joined Anne's afternoon life group after the loss of his beloved wife, Rosemary. He often reminisced and said she "saved my life". He found care and support from a group of all ladies until Richard Childs joined more recently. He and Richard joined ranks and sat side by side on the two seater settee in

solidarity, chatting through refreshments. Now Richard sits next to 'Timothy' (a bear left with us by Betty Want). Timothy fills the empty seat but we still perceive Phil's presence with us in the room.

Weekly, we were there for him as he recounted his challenges. He was determined to be independent and there was no holding him back when St Catherine's gave him the use of a walker.

(Continued on page 22)



Latest photos of Phil with our Life Group in August at the MU tea

(Continued from page 21)

His motto, heard often, was "use it or lose it". He had a diary of hospital appointments ranging from, Reading, Bracknell and Henley. Even with a plastered broken wrist he navigated the bus network alone to arrive in good time aided by his trusty walker.

Phil's hearing was always a problem he was determined to solve. At each meeting he would fiddle about with a strange little black box that sat on the coffee table. This gadget was attached to him and would squeak as he moved it to the best reception. We all sat patiently until Anne would check he was happy. Ironically, he had just one afternoon with us where he was wearing proper NHS hearing aids and could hear free from the little black box.

We would ask him to read the bible passages as he gave them such depth of character. In recent times though he would drop his head back with his eyes firmly shut.

We were never sure if he was asleep because he would suddenly open them and was totally back in the room – especially when the plate of biscuits was being offered to Richard, next to him!

Our abiding life group memories of Phil are that of an intelligent, practical, problem solving gentleman. He was a deep thinker and brought much to our bible study discussions.

We miss him dearly but know that some of his musings may have been partly revealed!

Thank you Phil for your gifts and the light you shone in the church and our Life Group. Your musings and quests for answers were an inspiration to us all.

Philippians 3 verse 14: *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

Rest in Peace Phil. Anne, Barbara, Jean, Joan, June, Lorraine, Richard, Rita and Sheila

Musings from Phil French

Received in the weeks before his death

Judgement

Many parents find they have to "threaten" their kids with punishments, to push them into keeping e.g. safety laws?

Some like to describe God's laws using pictures of terrible future trials and judgements etc. etc. But I sometimes wonder if many divine laws are not just judgements for us to fear, but wisdom and guidance for our welfare? Sins can sometimes punish sinners by their very nature?

Laser cooling

Yes, here's my hobby-horse again, the mysteries and riddles in today's science!

When I was sitting my exams in 1949, I think messing with photons would have been assumed to have a warming effect? But not so simple today: "common sense" notions are being challenged.

Michael Vanner fired photons at a tiny glass bead and cooled it. Complex story. I'm not going to explain, because I am puzzled! It's not just little me!

It's been said that "If you think you understand quantum mechanics, you don't understand quantum mechanics!" We see useful maths, etc., but questions keep coming about e.g., what reality is made of.

We welcomed
'Reading Kindness

Tilehurst Triangle WI
spent a relaxed time
decorating some kindness
rocks.

Rocks' to our October meeting.

Inspired by a similar idea in Florida, the Reading based group was set up in February 2018. Organised and led by volunteers, rocks are decorated with an inspirational message, positive quote or a picture and left in a local area for others to find.

Hopefully, the rocks with their positive messages will bring a smile to the person finding the rock and maybe change their outlook for the day.

If you find a 'Reading Kindness Rock', you are welcome to take it and some rocks have found their way to different parts of the world.

However, the idea is to create one of your own rocks to help spread cheer and happiness.

Rocks made by the group all have 'Reading Kindness Rocks' on the back of the rock to demonstrate the caring, positive side of Reading.



It was very therapeutic and we really like the ethos of spreading a little kindness and compassion in the local area.

Continued on page 24

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November saw the return of a speaker we have had before, Graham Horn.

Very knowledgeable and easy to listen to, Graham gave us an illustrated talk about Reading Abbey and on the screens walked us through parts of the ruins.

Both our Strollers group and Wednesday Walkers have done a treasure trail around Reading Abbey this year, so it was interesting to learn more about the ruins we have wandered around.



'Sumer Is Icumen In' was written at Reading Abbey. The original manuscript is in the British Library but there is a



tablet of stone in the abbey ruins which shows the manuscript. Our monthly competition was based on Reading's early association with music and members brought some interesting musical memorabilia.

Sadly this will be the last RG31 magazine, but Tilehurst Triangle WI would like to thank Tony Bartlett and Rosemary Cunningham for their support and for encouraging us to share our WI news with St Catherine's Parish. We wish the venture that will replace RG31 every success.

Tilehurst Triangle WI wishes everyone at St Catherine's a Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Ros Somerville

Tilehurst Triangle WI

tilehursttrianglewi@berkshirewi.co.uk



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The Everlasting Turkey

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.
On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard
As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.
On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,
The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.
On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.
On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,
But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.
On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.
The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.
On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince
When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.
On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,
For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.
On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,
He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.
On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,
Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.
On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,
And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.
On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,
The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.

Carebus Community Transport

Minibuses now available to local groups, from local community transport provider.

Carebus, the affordable, accessible, volunteer-driven community transport service for Tilehurst and other parishes in the Eastern part of West Berkshire, has two minibuses seating up to twelve passengers which are often available to local clubs, societies, schools, retirement homes etc. for trips of all kinds...social, sporting, charitable, community service and so on.

Carebus Community Transport was founded over 40 years ago. All volunteer drivers are DBS checked, and are fully insured. A contribution is requested to help cover fuel and running costs, currently £1 a mile, from and back to the Carebus depot near Theale.

The website www.carebus.org includes further details about seat layouts, accessibility etc under the Minibus tab. There is also an Enquiry Form under the Book a Trip tab.



Carebus also has two accessible cars designed to take people who need to travel in their own wheelchairs to medical and social appointments.

Other volunteer drivers use their own cars to provide a similar service to elderly people who are unable to drive and where public transport is unsuitable or unavailable.

Further details: www.carebus.org
info@carebus.org - 0118 930 4837

For anyone with relatives coming to stay this Christmas

An hour with your grandchildren can make you feel young again. Anything longer than that, and you start to age quickly. - *Gene Perret*.

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment. - *Anon*.

When we are out of sympathy with the young, then I think our work in this world is over. - *George MacDonald*.

Age doesn't always bring wisdom. Sometimes age comes alone. - *Anon*.

Nothing is often a good thing to say. - *Will Durant*.

Perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild. - *Welsh proverb*.

The best baby-sitters, of course, are the baby's grandparents. You feel completely comfortable entrusting your baby to them for long periods, which is why most grandparents flee to the south coast. - *Dave Barry*.

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents for a minute and look around. - *Anon*.

Tilehurst Afternoon Women's Institute

Our membership is slowly increasing, which is lovely.

In September we welcomed three members of the Fire Brigade to advise us how they could help us in our homes. They undertake 'safe and well visits' to over 60's, which might include smokers, deafness and disabilities and advice to test and dust alarm systems. You can ask for free alarms from them and ideally there should be one upstairs and one downstairs, also a Carbon Monoxide alarm. They pointed out other problems to look out for which was very useful.

In October Helen Landers told us about the women's section of the British Legion. She brought along her daughter Emily and gave a description of the colours and meaning of the Legion's Standard. The procedure for carrying and marching at parades was demonstrated by Emily. She also explained that the Poppy Appeal was a separate issue to other fund raising.



Our book group attended a Literary Event at Henley Town Hall where famous authors gave us an insight into their latest books.



Elly Griffiths was most interesting to us as we had been reading her Ruth Galloway series and we were able to speak to her. Elizabeth Chakrabarty and Nicci French were the others involved.

In November we had early Christmas entertainment from Billy Clayton with his playing and singing to music popular in the 1960's.



Everyone joined in with the singing and dancing.

(Continued on page 28)

(Continued from page 27)

We are currently planning our Christmas Meal out at the Southcote and our Christmas Party in Cafe Siena but this month we have Billy Clayton to entertain us with his music and his experiences.

Some of our members attended a meeting at the Barn, Purley for all the W.I's in our Group, where members were entertained by Amanda Shora, a folk singer.

In January we will be learning more about Greenham Common.

Visitors are always welcome to come to our meetings to see if they would like to become members. We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2.00 p.m. until 4.00 p.m. in Café Siena.

Diane Wakefield

Answers to the Quiz on page 17

10. Swiss Army knife.

11. JRR Tolkien. The word "keen" may have been a misspelling of his surname.

12. Near Coventry from Nuneaton down to Royal Leamington Spa.

13. The rule that civil servants and others will normally observe discretion about making new announcements or decisions that could influence voters.

14. The allegations that some politicians took bets on when the general election would be when they had insider information.

15. Roll on the floor laughing.

16. What was it? A lifetime of free colonoscopies.

17. Condolier.

18. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

19. The news that the group Oasis are performing again.

20. Line judges at Wimbledon.
1. The year 2000 was a leap year. But 1900 was not. Every year that is exactly divisible by four is a leap year (with some exceptions).

2. Whamagaddon is a game played during the 24 days before Christmas in which players try to go from 1 December to the end of Christmas Eve (24 December) without hearing "Last Christmas" by Wham!.

3. Sir Alan Bates has been very active in trying to address the Post Office scandal.

4. A giant tortoise.

5. Ian Lavender, who played Pike.

6. The photo taken by HRH Princess of Wales had been not very successfully altered.

7. He was wearing American style jeans.

8. The cat fell asleep on the Coronation throne.

9. Portugal.

Harvest Lunch



After our Harvest Festival service on 29th September we enjoyed a 'Bring and Share' lunch in the Hall.

The entries for a breadmaking contest were judged and after counting all the votes certificates were awarded to the top three bread makers.

Winners were; Christie Lee, Tamsin Harrison and Valerie Poore.

Any bread remaining after the tasting was added to the buffet along with a traditional Harvest Loaf donated by Warings bakers



Everyone who attended picked their top three loaves, it was very close; there was only one point between 1st & 2nd, and the top three were well ahead of the others.

Charity hike for the Leprosy mission

In 2020 I had a new Manager at work, and he challenged our team to raise £20K in 2020....this was the beginning and as a group we have now raised over £150K for various good causes as well as being encouraged to give our time in the form of volunteering hours.

Just last week my colleagues in Gloucester were helping at an animal shelter. When I helped at holiday club I was encouraged to use my 'volunteering leave', so its great to work for a Company that encourages us to try and 'give back' and support our communities.

Our big event though remains our hike, which this year was in late September. This year the route chosen was a loop starting in Salisbury, looping around Stonehenge and then back to Salisbury.

There were 2 options a half marathon distance or a full marathon. We always fundraise for whichever charity we want to support, and this year I chose the Leprosy mission as I feel it is a charity that many people (outside of the church) may not have been aware of....so I hoped that by my facebook and LinkedIn posts I could raise money and raise awareness.

We left our Youth hostel before first light, and set off into Salisbury – it felt quite magical to be walking around the cathedral as the sun was rising.



We did the first half of the marathon walk very rapidly, and were actually out-walking our support car (who met us at intervals with water/sweets and chocolate...all the essentials).

One of the best views of the day was when we climbed out of Salisbury and it was pretty hard – but we were greeted with an amazing sight, in fact the beacon that was Salisbury cathedral spire really helped me towards the end as well.



We met those doing the half marathon around mid/late morning and by now we were a group of around 25. It was a really sunny day which made it quite tricky, as it did make it harder – I was willing clouds to appear but it didn't happen.

About 5 miles from the end we stopped

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briefly and our colleagues with the support car had brought ice lollies, that was possibly the nicest ice lolly I have ever eaten.



This picture does have Stonehenge in it, in the distance on the other side of the A303!

Towards the end one of my colleagues Rob was a bit evasive and said he needed to stop, but that we shouldn't wait for him – we knew there was a small group behind so we left him alone....a few minutes later he appeared in a full dinosaur outfit....he had carried it for 24 miles just to wear it for the last bit!

Unfortunately as is always the way, we walked a bit further than expected so poor Rob was stuck wearing it for about 2.5 miles....almost an hour.



Dinosaur Rob catches up

It was an amazing day, although incredibly hard and I did acquire the biggest blister ever and a lovely rash all over my legs, although thankfully this year I did not end up with bruised toes... but it was all worth it.

I believe our fundraising total for the event is around £15K, and just over £1,000 is the money donated for the leprosy mission!

I was amazed by the support from my church family and many of my friends, family and business contacts.

Thank you to everyone at St Catherine's for donations, support and prayer – it makes a big difference.

Tamsin Harrison

As for giving generously over Christmas

Let us give according to our incomes lest God make our incomes to match our gifts.
- Anon

The world provides enough for every man's need but not for every man's greed. - Gandhi

If we have God in all things while they are

ours, we shall have all things in God when they are taken away. - Anon

It is easier to renounce worldly possessions than it is to renounce the love of them. - Walter Hilton

Nothing influences a man so much as that which he calls his own. - C H Spurgeon

St Catherine's Gardening Club



We were so pleased with the splendid number of people who appeared on Saturday morning 26th October to help with the grand annual hedge cutting. Thank you once again to everyone who helped.

Our generous neighbour, Darren, arrived with his professional gear and did a marvellous job. He did all the perimeter and internal hedges and also many of the shrubs around the grounds.

In particular he cleared the holly in the buttress bed facing the vicarage, to enable Chris to put a ladder up and clear the guttering from all the rubbish which had collected up there.

We did our best to remove much of the thick stemmed growth in the hedge ahead of time, to clear the way for Darren's hedge trimmer. Chris cut back several young oak trees, one with a diameter of at least 12cm!!

Apart from cutting the lawns, Rachel has also helped in many other ways, always being ready to offer wherever she sees a need. Paddy has helped a lot with strimming recently, making the garden look tidier.

Poor Hazel is still recovering from the surgery on her broken leg, and we have really missed her able and knowledgeable presence in the church garden.

Chris and Richard are able to help with various jobs in the garden now and then. They have put some of the wooden seating into safe storage for the winter.

Richard very reliably makes sure that the

green bin is put out and brought back in every two weeks, and keeps the car park clear of leaves and twigs etc.



I am slowing down a bit these days, mostly simply tending to the roses, although I did spend a few weeks attempting to bring part of the hedge back to where it should be, while removing ash saplings and small oak trees of various sizes!

The winter weather has prevented much activity in the garden recently. The odd dry sunny day does not often coincide with a Saturday! So the outstanding jobs will now probably have to wait until next year, though I never give up hope of getting some useful work done in the church garden on a Saturday morning! It's my happy place.

We are still keeping our eyes open for any interesting wild flowers, in keeping with our Eco church aims. I noticed some strange little bright yellow "stems" in the south lawn on the hedge cutting day. Chris identified them using an app on his phone as *Clavulinopsis helvola*, a club fungus. You really wanted to know that

didn't you? Well I was fascinated!!



Rachel also discovered an interesting plant in the grass on the north lawn.

Chris helped her to identify it using his phone.

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She looked it up in the Collins Wildflower Guide.

It's Latin name is *Pilosella aurantiaca*, commonly called Fox-and-cubs. "Habitat: hedge banks, grassy roadsides, walls, churchyards!"

Well, that's it from me, and that's it from all of us for a while now. Since this is the last edition of RG31 in it's present form, I would like to thank Tony for his patient and skilful editing of the magazine over many years.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and many blessings in the New Year.

Jo Day

*"The best place to seek God is in a garden.
You can dig for him there."*

George Bernard Shaw

God's Garden

Plant three rows of peas: Peas of mind, Peas of heart, Peas of soul.

Plant three rows of squash: Squash gossip, Squash grumbling, Squash selfishness.

Plant three rows of lettuce: Lettuce be faithful, Lettuce be obedient, Lettuce love one another.

Plant three rows of turnips: Turnip for services, Turnip for meetings, Turnip to help one another.

Plant three rows of thyme: Thyme for God, Thyme for Bible study, Thyme for prayer.

Finally – Water freely with patience, Cultivate with love, And remember – you will only reap what you sow.

From the Parish Pump

Your family history is waiting to be revealed!

"I was adopted in the 60s - can you help me find my birth family?"

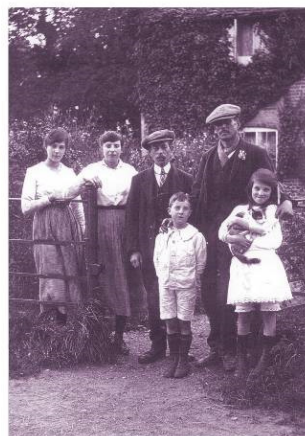
"In the early 1900s, my great Aunt disappeared leaving her two children to be brought up by her parents. What happened? Why did she abscond, or was her disappearance more sinister?"

"Are the Mendums of Bucks. related to those in Massachusetts, USA? How can I find out?"

"In the late 1800s, William Raven left Birmingham with the Army. He married and settled in Reading. Were his reasons financial, or to escape from something he'd rather forget?"

Do you have unanswered questions about your family or where you came from? I can help!

Give Tracey Horrell a call on **07585 442185**
or find out more at **www.genetracers.co.uk**



The Thurleys, Three Mile Cross, c. 1918

Gene Tracers

Professional Genealogy Research

On why Carol Services are so dangerous

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren,

So, you are excited about being invited to plan your first Carol Service. The dangers involved are only slightly less than being invited to judge the best cake made by the Ladies' Group. You seem to have no idea of the lifelong offence you will inevitably cause. In decades to come when you will either be a seasoned old clergyman – or more likely a double glazing salesman – you will be remembered as “the Curate who offended Mrs Smith.”

First, you have to decide which groups are going to be represented to give the readings. If the Brownies were asked last year, then it has to be the Cubs this time. But don't forget that every third year, the Boys' Brigade must be asked, or they will take their revenge and get their flag tangled in the nave chandelier come Remembrance Sunday. If someone represents the choir, then over a four year period, all four voice parts must be called on – and if the organist isn't asked on the fifth year, then all hymns subsequently will be played at double speed and with one verse missing. Should one person have been invited to read for two successive years, then their annual appearance thereafter will be taken as an inalienable right for the rest of their lifetime – and probably longer than that. To drop them may well invoke legal proceedings, Then there is the batting order to be considered. Someone from the church council will take it as a deliberate slight if they are placed lower in the order than a representative of the Men's Fellowship and no self-respecting bell ringer would voluntarily follow a brass cleaner.

If you do not specify where they should read from and how the readings should end, then a form of ecclesiastical inflation will happen. If the first reader speaks from the chancel step, the next one will go to the lectern; after the sanctuary and pulpit have been utilised, the final reader will probably ask you to move so he can take your place. The variations on “Here endeth”, “This is the Word of the Lord”, and “Thanks be to God”, are endless and will increase in length as the Service progresses. The final reader will probably end with a lengthy exegesis on what he thinks the passage means, correcting whatever you said in your sermon.

I once made the mistake of not telling all readers which Bible translation to use. One, an Old Testament expert, therefore decided to read in Hebrew. Not to be outdone, another read her Gospel passage in Greek – apologising beforehand that it may not be a perfect rendering, as she was spontaneously translating it from the English. And some say Christians are not competitive.

You have two alternatives: either repeat last year's Service without any alteration, saying that it could not be improved, or design your own – and then take Christmas off. Your loving uncle, Eustace

St Catherine's Centre
Church and Hall regular bookings
 (* is term time only)

Monday
 After School Club - 3:30-6.00pm *
 Exercise Class - 7.00-8.00pm *
 Yoga - 8.15-9.15pm

Tuesday
 Breakfast club - 7.30-8.45am *
 St Catherine's 0-5s - 10.00-12.00noon
 (for families) *
Tuesday Get Together - 10.00am-12.00noon
 After School Club - 3:30-6.00pm *
W.I. - 2.00-4.00pm (3rd Tuesday)
 AA - 7.00-9.15pm

Wednesday
 Breakfast club - 7.30-8.45am *
Communion Service 9.30-10.30am
 Yoga - 10.30-11.30am
 After School Club - 3:30-6.00pm *
Vivace Voices 1.45-3.45pm
 Kettle Bells - 6.30-7.30pm
Mothers' Union - 7.30-9.30pm (2nd Weds)
W.I. - 7.00-10.00pm (3rd Wednesday)
 YogaSculpt - 7.45-8.45pm

Thursday
 Breakfast club - 7.30-8.45am *
 St Catherine's 0-5s - 10.00-12.00noon
 (for Childminders) *
Cafe Siena - 10.00am-2.00pm
 Over 60's exercise - 1.15-2.15pm
 After School Club - 3:30-5.30pm *
 Zumba - 6.00-7.00pm
Trefoil - 7.30-9.30pm (4th Thursday)

Friday
Cafe Siena - 10.00am-2.00pm
 Friday Friends - 2.00-4.30pm
 Karate - 7.00-8.00pm

Saturday
 Yoga - 9.30-10.30am and 10.45-11.45am
 Crafty Space - 1.30-5.30pm (once a Month)
 St Cat's Lite - 3.30-5.00 pm (1st Saturday)
 Bowls Club - 7.00-9.00pm

**RG31 - The Parish Magazine
 of Tilehurst St Catherine
 & Calcot St Birinus**

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All details and events are correct
 to the best of our knowledge at the
 time of going to print.

The P.C.C. and Editors are not
 necessarily in agreement with the
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 & Calcot St Birinus P.C.C. 2024
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As I reach the end of this final edition
 of the Parish Magazine, my thanks
 and congratulations to those who've
 gone before me in producing it over
 several decades.

My thanks also to all of you who have
 supported the magazine by writing
 articles, sending photographs, buying
 the magazine and to our advertisers.

As to why RG31 cannot continue, well
 here's another song title - (see page
 2) 'the times they are a-changing'.

Tony

The Anglican Parish of Tilehurst St Catherine & Calcot St Birinus

ST CATHERINE OF SIENA

Wittenham Avenue, Tilehurst, RG31 5LN

www.stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

www.facebook.com/st.catherines.tilehurst

Please check these websites for up-to-date information on services and other events



We are 'live-streaming' our 10.00 am Sunday services so that they can be viewed via our Facebook page. Simply go to: www.facebook.com/st.catherines.tilehurst (you do not need an account to view - if asked to login or join, you can click 'Not Now'). Once shown on Facebook, all our videos can be found again on our Web Site: www.stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

Every Sunday, The Ten O'clock Service - varies in style and contents each week, but will always aim to be 'family friendly'. It will contain praise and teaching, with communion on the first and third Sundays and usually include a time of sharing what God is doing amongst us. Refreshments afterwards in the Hall.

On Wednesdays at 9.30 am - there's Holy Communion in church, everybody welcome.

Who's Who in the Parish



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