

New Leaves

December 2019/January
2020



**Parish Magazine
of St David with
St Michael and
All Angels,
Exeter**

50p

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WELCOME



To all Readers of “New Leaves”, the magazine for the Parish of St David’s with St. Michael and All Angels.

The editorial team invites you to submit appropriate articles which reflect Church, Parish or Community interest

Please send as Word documents to: newleavesnews@gmail.com

Please note that all articles will be printed with the author’s name

Enjoy this month’s read.

We will welcome critical comments on the magazine

Editorial Team: Bill Pattinson and Richard Barnes supported by
Stephanie Aplin and Clive Wilson

New Leaves

**December 2019
From the Vicar**

The Advent Vote

I doubt if anyone reading this will have voted in a December general election in this country before; I believe the last one was in 1923! So the slightly weird experience of electioneering against the backdrop of the Christmas lights will be new to us.

But the first Christmas, the birth of Jesus, was also set at a time of turmoil as people had been displaced to register in their home towns. Admittedly we are not under occupation in England, as the people of Nazareth and Bethlehem were then, but many of us are feeling apprehensive about the future. Our main political parties seem to have become more polarized in recent years. We can only hope and pray that whoever is elected will keep in mind those who didn't vote for them – as well as those who did – so that there may be reconciliation and growing together. Perhaps you would like to pray these words released by the Church of England as a pray for this election?

Lord, we give thanks for the privileges and responsibilities of living in a democratic society.

Give us wisdom to play our part at election time, that, through the exercise of each vote, your Kingdom may come closer.

Protect us from the sins of despair and cynicism, guard us against the idols of false utopias and strengthen us to make politics a noble calling that serves the common good of all.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

The Christmas Gift

As we get older presents may seem a little less exciting! But they still point us to a great truth about Christmas. When we receive a present we don't get what we deserve, we get what the giver thinks we need and will

appreciate. God didn't send Jesus because we deserved a Saviour, but because we needed one who would show us the way of love and bring us back to God. With this great and miraculous sign of love Jesus was born, and blessed this world by his presence and brought forgiveness for us through his death on the cross.

God blesses each one with this gift of love each day but we celebrate it especially at Christmas with a festival of generosity which, at its best, can speak of the ultimate generosity of God. I am continually amazed by the wonderful people of our churches and parish who live out this generous love in care for their families and loved ones; who look out for their neighbours or give them lifts; who volunteer for tasks within our churches or support our local charities. It is this generous love that can turn the world from a place of sadness into one of joy, just as Jesus comes as light into the darkness of our world not only to show up what is evil, but also to illuminate all that is good and beautiful.

I hope that you will all come and worship at one or more of our Advent and Christmas services. And why not invite a family member or friend to join you?

The lovely Advent Procession at St Michael's is on Sunday 9 December at 6pm and the next week, Sunday 16 December St David's will hold a Carol Service with augmented choir at 6pm. Then on Christmas Eve we will hold our Christingle and Nativity at 4pm at St David's. Our other Christmas services will be listed elsewhere in the magazine and I hope to see you all at one or more of them to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace and his continued presence with us.

Confirmation

It was a great pleasure to welcome Bishop Jackie on her first visit to St David's. She baptised and confirmed Alex and confirmed Isabel and Susan. Her sermon was based on the words of the confirmation service 'God has called you by name' reminding us that God knows each of us and calls us to his service. Thank you to those who provided cakes, assisted at the service and led the music for us.

Works completed and continuing

It has been very encouraging to see two great projects completed at St Michael's in the past couple of months. Firstly the Victorian tiles have been restored, many of which had cracked or become loose. We are not really missing the distinctive clacking sound which accompanied a walk up the aisle at St Michael's! More importantly the tiled floor is now safe and the restoration should prevent further deterioration.

The replacement of the light fittings at St Michael's has also made a huge difference to the appearance of the building. The modern energy efficient bulbs give a far better light which I know will be appreciated by worshippers and our many other users.

We have also just received an access report from our architect and will be considering the feasibility of installing a permanent wheelchair access point and toilet facilities. This will be a big project but an essential one to keep St Michael's as an active venue for worship and community use.

Works at St David's are going on steadily at the moment with the meeting room now carpeted and plans afoot to refurbish the Parish Rooms.

Thank you for your support

I would also like to thank all members of our church communities for their active support of our spiritual and worshipping life and especially those who have given their time to work on our committees and in other practical ways. The support of our new Parish Administrator, Mary Keaney, is very welcome and Mary has been doing great work, especially with our Safeguarding Group. I would also like to thank my licensed colleagues who give such great service in leading worship at our churches.

And I must say a particular thank you to everyone who has given regular financial support to our churches in the past year helping us to maintain and strengthen our ministry. And finally a big thank you to our fabulous magazine team who remind me so faithfully about the deadline - and produce such a full and fascinating publication!

With every blessing for Christmas and the New Year – may you know that God is with you and those you love and care for.

Nigel Guthrie



December 2019 and January 2020

Are you ready for your (Christmas) selfie? Eyebrows shaped/trimmed/dyed? Eyelashes lengthened/curled/dyed? Filler applied to the bits that need plumping out? Hair perfect? Pout absolutely practised? Good. Now you can settle down with a Christmas movie/boxset (I thought it was 'boxed' as 'a collection in a box' – silly me!) and a glass of Christmas cheer in front of the fire lit with Christmas kindling/logs/coffee-grounds formed into logs. You will have chosen the perfect background for your selfie. You will have selected perfect presents from gift lists that suggest everything for everyone you know, including the hamster and the budgie. We are invited via a catalogue of Christmas items from a national organisation to 'Discover Christmas'. The 17 cards on offer here show only one with a slight reference to the season and one other with, possibly, some angels. Christmas began early in September and is reaching towards real excitement. Christmas carols and songs fill the noise-gaps and we are inundated with good cheer. Only don't mention religion, or the Christ-child, especially at Christmas. Even our own Archbishop suggests that part of the great Advent hymn 'Lo, He comes with clouds descending...' embodies anti-Semitic themes. I disagree with him. We are all represented in the words 'Those who set at naught and sold him/ Pierced and nailed him to the Tree...' because we all have at times betrayed our Lord, but we hope to see the true Messiah, not through our own merit, but through the gracious love of God.

Today we celebrated the festival of Christ the King. During the year we have been moving towards this, the last Sunday of the Christian year; the anthem sung by the choir had this sense of building to the climax with the question 'Who is the King of Glory?', with the triumphant response, 'The Lord strong and mighty!' The majesty of Christ is all too apparent in the power of the Eucharist.

Many people will be tired of Christmas when the day actually happens; there may be a real sense of disappointment, a feeling of being let down after the big event when all the gaudy decorations are fading, the repetitive music is grating and the credit card bills come home to roost.

May I suggest, however, that Christmas isn't here yet. We are looking ahead and will be for the next four Sundays, because we prepare for the

festival that starts at midnight on Christmas Eve. After the great celebrations, we can look forward to Epiphany in January and Candlemas in February. Instead of starting Christmas in September, we can prolong it to February and not be tired of the tawdry spectacle that the secular world calls Christmas. Instead of being Christmas (selfie) ready, are you Advent ready? It's a solemn time of the year, accented in the northern hemisphere with the lengthening dark days, the reduction of light; we should contemplate our futures, the need for forgiveness and the promise of redemption, trying all the while to live as witnesses to the sacrificial love of Christ. When everyone else is fed up with Christmas, we can celebrate and rejoice in the Lord, the Light of the World.

Happy Christmas to you all! May a very peaceful and enriched New Year be yours.



Stephanie Aplin.



Baptism and Confirmation by the Right Reverend Jackie Searle, Bishop of Crediton

We were privileged to be part of a very special service and act of worship on Sunday 17th November at St David's, a service of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion led by Bishop Jackie. We welcomed Alex Johnstone, who was both baptised and confirmed at this service, and also Isabel Cammack from St Michael's and Sue Marsh from St Thomas', both of whom were confirmed. So we congratulate Alex, seen here gently smiling immediately following his Baptism and also Isabel and Sue. Renewal of our vows in Baptism and Reaffirmation of our faith in



Confirmation made this act of worship also important and memorable on the Christian journeys of all those present.



Bishop Jackie spoke eloquently on the sentence used during the laying on of hands for confirmation, "God has called you by name and made you his own."

This comes from Isaiah 43 verse 1, which reads, "I have called you by name, you are mine."

Bishop Jackie reflected on the importance of calling people by name recalling one occasion when the Bishop, who had ordained her, offered her the host at communion sometime after her special event. He not only remembered her name but also that she ate a gluten free wafer. I didn't count the number of times she called Alex, Isabel and Sue by name, but it was considerable. Talking with her after the service I empathised with her comment, "Remembering names becomes more difficult as you get older."

God not only knows our names but also our very thoughts and being. Recall the words in Jeremiah 1 verse 5:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you."

It is only right that just as God has great faith in our service to him, we should constantly confirm our Christian faith and discipleship. Thank you to all those involved in this service and special thanks to Bishop Jackie on her first official visit to our Church.



Alex, Isabel and Sue - we welcome you. God be with you!



William Pattinson

24.11.2019



St David's Church, Exeter

CHRISTMAS SERVICES



Sunday 15
December

6pm Carol Service

with St David's Choir

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday 24 December

**4pm - Christingle Service
with Nativity**

**11.30pm - Midnight
Mass**

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday 25 December

**9.30am - Christmas
Communion with carols**

**O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY 2020



**S. MICHAEL and ALL ANGELS,
MOUNT DINHAM, EXETER**

**Advent and Christmas Choral Services at
Church of S. Michael & All Angels,
Mount Dinham, Exeter, EX4 4EB**

Sunday 8th December (Advent II):

11 am Sung Mass

6 pm Advent Procession: a meditation with hymns and carols on the
Coming of Christ to redeem the world

Sunday 15th December (Advent III):

11 am Sung Mass

Sunday 22nd December (Advent IV)

11 am Sung Mass

Tuesday 24th December:

11.30 pm MIDNIGHT MASS, Blessing of the Christmas Manger Scene
with carol-singing beforehand at 11 pm and refreshments afterwards

Wednesday 25th December: CHRISTMAS DAY

10.30 am Sung Mass

Sunday 29th December: Sunday next after Christmas

11 am Sung Mass with Holy Baptism

Sunday 5th January 2020: Eve of the Epiphany

11 am Sung Mass

followed by the Bountiful Table at the back of the church, selling baked
goods, produce, S. Michael's shopping bags and other good things

6 pm Sung Evensong and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

For more information, visit our web site at
www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk

Licensed Clergy:

Prebendary Nigel Guthrie (day off: Monday): rev.guthrie@btinternet.com/

Rev'd. Alison Whiting: rev.alisonwhiting@gmail.com/

twitter: @StMikes_Exeter

St David's Eucharist December

Sunday 1st December Advent Sunday

Reading 1	Isaiah 2:1-5	Helen Friend
Reading 2	Romans 13:11-end	Emma White
Gospel	Matthew 24:36-44	
Time of prayer		Bill Pattinson

Sunday 8th December 2nd Sunday of Advent

Reading 1	Isaiah 11:1-10	Cathy Knowles
Reading 2	Romans 15:4-13	Philip Dale
Gospel	Matthew 3:1-12	
Time of prayer		Chris Gill

Sunday 15th December 3rd Sunday of Advent

FAMILY COMMUNION SERVICE 9.30am		
CAROL SERVICE 6.00pm		

Sunday 22nd December 4th Sunday of Advent

Reading 1	Isaiah 7:10-16	Robin Thomas
Reading 2	Romans 1:1-7	Jean Thomas
Gospel	Matthew 1:18-end	
Time of prayer		Robert Mitchell

Tuesday 24th December Christmas Eve 11.30pm

Reading 1	Isaiah 9:2-7	Jenny Baker
Reading 2	Titus 2:11-14	Alan Baker
Gospel	Luke 2:1-20	
Time of prayer		Carol Gerry

Wednesday 25th December Christmas Day

Reading 1	Isaiah 52:7-10	Geoff Crockett
Reading 2	Hebrews 1:1-4	
Gospel	John 1:1-14	
Time of prayer		Geoff Crockett

Sunday 29th December 1st Sunday of Christmas

Reading 1	Isaiah 63:7-9	Belinda Speed-Andrews
Reading 2	Hebrews 2:10-end	Geoff Crockett
Gospel	Matthew 2:13	
Time of prayer		Nigel Walsh

St David's Eucharist January

Sunday 5th January Epiphany

Reading 1	Isaiah 60:1-6	Sarah Rimmington
Reading 2	Ephesians 3:1-12	Richard Johnson
Gospel	Matthew 2:1-12	
Time of prayer		Charlotte Townsend

Sunday 12th January Baptism of Christ/Epiphany 1 Family service

Reading 1	Isaiah 42:1-9	Karen Facey
Reading 2	Acts 10: 34-43	Debbie McNeile
Gospel	Matthew 3:13-end	
Time of prayer		Mollie Curry

Sunday 19th January Epiphany 2/Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

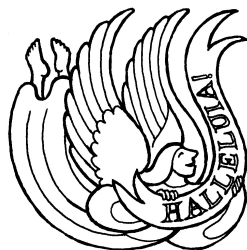
Reading 1		
Reading 2		
Gospel		
Time of prayer		

Sunday 26th January Epiphany 3

Reading 1	Isaiah 9:1-4	Maggie Draper
Reading 2	1Cor 1:10-18	Stephanie Hills
Gospel	Matthew 4:12-23	
Time of prayer		Richard Johnson

Sunday 2nd February Candlemas/Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Reading 1	Malachi 3:1-5	
Reading 2	Hebrews 2:14-end	
Gospel	Luke 2:22-40	
Time of prayer		Glynis Harflett



Journey Of a Lifetime – John O’ Groats to Land’s End (JOGLE) by bike – part 3 , Manchester to Worcester

Leaving our friends in Haslingden I headed down the Rossendale Valley towards Ramsbottom, Bury and then Manchester. The route follows the river Irwell and runs parallel to the East Lancs Railway which is a great steam preservation line. In Bury I stopped by the statue of Robert Peel who was born there. Peel is famous for founding modern Conservatism, introducing income tax (outside of war) , Catholic Emancipation, several Factory Acts and repeal of the Corn Laws (following the Irish Famine) for which he sided with the opposition Whigs and Radicals. Shades of the recent convulsions in politics over Brexit.



Fortunately, the route into Manchester is mostly off-road following canal towpaths and old railway tracks, to emerge by Salford Cathedral and then onto the Museum of Science and Technology on Liverpool road. I knew that if I called in here I would spend far longer than I could afford getting lost in Manchester’s rich history, and so I pressed on through the centre of the city, where I thought I was on familiar ground having been a student here and visited often more recently, when Ellen studied there. However Manchester continues to be a grand mix of old and new so was surprised by the new buildings of the Birley campus, of Man. Met. University, just next to the old Macintosh (later Dunlop) India Rubber works. The University buildings are black and white and glass and appear like a bar-code or DNA sequence, and so follow in the tradition of the Hollings building (old Manchester Poly) in Fallowfield which was dubbed the Toast Rack because of its iconic shape. The rubber factory is where the raincoats were made using the process invented by Charles Macintosh to bond two layers of



cloth either side of a rubber sheet; it supplied Mancunians with some protection from the rain (though with only 929mm annual rainfall, only 48mm more than Exeter, and not the wettest place in England which is Seathwaite in the Lake district with 3552mm). I passed the Community Garden Centre in Hulme. Hulme has been rebuilt with rows of new terraces replacing the modernist 1970's "streets in the sky" crescents of flats which despite being named after distinguished architects – Nash, Adam, Barry , Kent - had quickly become modern slums, described as "the worst housing stock in Europe" by the Architects Journal. Heading south through Alexandra Park, which had opened in 1870 to "deter the working men of Manchester from the alehouses during their day off" I was delighted to find a stop for a lunch of the thickest pea soup, at the Coffee Cranks Cafe, a workers cooperative. This is an appropriate memorial to the park's radical past, as the first May day rally organised by Keir Hardie and the Independent Labour party was





held here in 1902 as were several suffragette rallies, the Pankhursts family home being nearby. Finishing my soup I noticed it had become much darker outside as the rain had started which was to be my first (and single) wettest day. So much for Manchester not being the worst place for rain! I headed south through Chorlton-cum-Hardy to the river Mersey, passing the hall of residence (now

demolished like Hulme Crescents) where I first lived as a student and the Jackson's Boat pub run by the rudest landlord I've ever met.

The next major town was Northwich, one of Cheshire's salt towns and I passed a rusty steel sculpture depicting a salt-miner and Gary Barlow of "Take That" by the riverside. Unfortunately I got confused by the one-way system and found myself passing it again about 5 minutes later, but eventually found the way to Winsford and then ended my long day at Nantwich. My room for the night was in a Georgian house in Welsh Row, the town's best street. Arriving thoroughly wet, my hands were black with the dye from my gloves and my landlady fearful for her bedsheets found increasing strength hand-cleaners until we finally shifted the dye with "Cif". She then made me most welcome with a pot of tea and biscuits before recommending the chip-shop across the road in view of the late hour. The Albanian owners cooked me a wonderful plaice before shutting up and I soon turned in exhausted, after a long wet day.

In the morning Simon, an old colleague from the Met Office who had stayed in touch with Mick, cycled from Chester to accompany me on the ride. Despite not having seen him for 30 years we were soon chatting as of old. He'd taken early retirement from Shell Research, and now sat as a magistrate and found it really interesting and somewhat challenging at times. He was also set to ride from Land's End to John O' Groats later in the summer with his wife, so the training was useful. Simon's road bike was also rather special and I gladly let him take the lead on navigation with his built-in GPS; at least for this morning I didn't have to keep consulting my guide book or get lost. After a coffee at Market Drayton we parted and I headed for Telford, where I got lost again in a maze of criss-crossing cycle paths before picking up the Silkin way , another old railway path, and canal

tail which restored my liking for Telford. At Coalport I crossed the elegant cast-iron bridge before taking a detour to visit its more famous neighbour at Ironbridge; both are well worth a visit. The Severn now became my companion as I followed the Mercian way to Bridgenorth in glorious sunshine. On the bridge over the Severn there was a plaque to two great engineers – Richard Trevithick, inventor of the high pressure steam engine and John Rastrick, railway engineer who had built the first passenger locomotive to Trevithick’s design in the nearby foundry. As at Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge this area was the cradle of iron making and



initiation of the industrial revolution. As I still had 45 miles to do till Worcester and it was already 5:30 I couldn’t dally to explore more of Bridgenorth, I carried on, avoiding the stony bridleway that my guidebook warned me to be prepared to push the bike. Unfortunately I relied on Google maps for my route and it sent me along the River Severn on a footpath rather than bridleway, so that I slowed down to 3.5 miles per hour as I still had to push the bike and squeeze the bike through 7 kissing gates. After that I cycled as fast as I could along the main roads to arrive at 9:30 in Worcester where I stayed in a terrace house with a lovely couple who had written “Welcome Clive” on their kitchen blackboard and soothed my aches with copious tea.



Clive Wilson

25 November 2019

David Cannon tells me I got my peaks muddled last month and Pen-y-ghent was actually Ingleborough.

Arranged Marriages

Anathema, we cry! Received wisdom lauds and supports our Freedom to Choose, but let us consider a different approach (excluding, of course, forced marriages & child marriages, which may indeed be termed anathema...)

My convictions were strongly challenged by the stories of these brides:-

Sumara: from a **Muslim Pakistani-American** family; at 18, her marriage was arranged. The groom was older, in business with her father. Arranged marriage is not required by religion or law, in Islam - since protected lives can exclude falling in love & making an immature choice. The mothers & “auntie network” presented their choice of a good husband. She agreed, since he wanted an educated wife. Marriage is not a sacrament, but a contract, which can succeed only if rights and obligations are respected and cherished by both. After the betrothal - the binding together, and blessing of the couple and families - Sumara went away to get her BSc, then came home to marry.

Her surprised sister told me that she was really very happy..

Hannah: from an **Orthodox Jewish-American** exclusive community. She was intelligent, but her reading and personal contact were censored. Mosaic law does not require arranged marriage in the Torah, but rabbinic interpretation in the Talmud says everyone has a destined soulmate, their Bashert - chosen by Hashem and therefore made in heaven. To find him, Hannah’s marriage was arranged by a paid professional matchmaker.

Her aunt, a reform Jew, had married an Orthodox-turned-Reform man. He and his son went to his niece’s wedding. His wife and daughters refused, appalled by Hannah being forced into this without any choice. Was she? The matchmaker is deemed to have a more mature, lasting judgment. A shortlist of potential grooms/brides is made for the families to approve, then a series of dates make a swift weeding out. Once a hit is made, the couple can meet again to talk. I heard from her amazed aunt that her own daughter had visited Hannah, and found her cousin blissfully happy.

My nephew’s Sikh mother in law had the traditional arranged marriage. He was born in England, but she came from Sri Lanka specifically to marry him. They had never met until that day. After 50 years they seem content.

Their children, however, all married spouses of their own choice, as most of their contemporaries do. Sikh standards of conduct stress overcoming one's ego, especially in marriage. No astrological predictions or horoscopes are made. Their holy book describes marriage as two beings sharing one light.

Hindu marriage is seen as the harmonising of two individuals towards their ultimate eternity. Astrological charts are matched with the help of a priest. Prospective couples are allowed to talk and learn to understand each other. Either can decline and love marriages are accepted. Less than an estimated 1% of arranged Hindu marriages end in divorce.

How do these marriages work so well in the West?

I asked, and was told that rather than marrying the one with whom we have fallen in love, one learns to love the person one has married. It is the duty of the parents to present the most likely one or ones. Nowadays, the process of selection can be quite long, with the girl in particular being allowed to reject a series of candidates. So there is choice, however restricted.

Girls of my generation believed we could find The One, who would be all in all to us - lover, friend, father, nurse, etc. - an impossible dream. Expectations were so high that real life could never come up to them. In arranged marriages, both parties begin with more practical expectations, rising as the relationship blossoms. With complete freedom of choice, I married the wrong man the first time round. So many of my friends did the same, and most of them divorced in the first five years. I believe the statistic is one in five.

Another issue is that young people in "free societies" often set up their homes and families far away from friends and relatives, who could have formed a practical and emotional support system. In tightly exclusive or close communities, young couples are surrounded by a highly supportive network of family, friends & faith leaders, helping them through all kinds of difficulties.

The matchmaker/aunties' network really resembles an online dating service. Young people now seem not to have enough time, money or

patience for face- to- face dates, so the system screens out impossibles and arranges dates with possibles. It is the very model of a modern marriage matchmaker..

We all know that there are times in our lives when we are not fit to make important choices - under stress, in a hormone storm, feeling angry or depressed, under the influence of drugs, alcohol or lust, etc. - or at an age when we have little experience to employ rationally. Seeking advice has to be a good idea, especially from those who have themselves made this mistake.

Finally, even in a culture or religion with complete freedom of choice, selection is obviously still going to be made from a certain pool. Parents set up the scene by where they live or work, where they go to school, where they worship, what clubs they join, and whom they are most likely to meet.

What is so different from a formally arranged marriage?

Youngsters are usually urged to marry within their faith, social class, educational level etc., since marriage can be hard enough, without adding too many differences to the mix.

The most likely keyword here seems to be: EXPECTATIONS...



Vivien Finnigan



The Apple Tree.

It must have been the apples on November's Bountiful Table that got me thinking back to Michaelmas, listening to Tony Pugh singing "Linden Lea" during our Cream Teas entertainment.

It's a piece I love. The music composed by Vaughan Williams in 1901 has a folk-song feel and fits the words so well. "My Orcha'd in Linden Lea" was published in 1859 by Dorset dialect poet William Barnes, though it is usually sung in standard English.



My father, who grew up in north Dorset, also loved the poetry of his namesake. Space & copyright preclude printing the whole poem but it is readily found online. The 3 verses speak of Summer, Autumn & Honecoming, ending:-

'Or teake agean my hwomeward road
To where, vor me, the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.'

The Dorset dialect seems to have a 'Germanic', 'Anglo-Saxon' sound to it, with phrases like 'birds do hush their zingen' cloudless zunsheen' 'Let other vo'k meake money vaster'.

Having analysed the hugely diverse origins of the English language, Barnes had the idea of purifying English by removing its classical accretions, so the common folk were not disadvantaged. A laudable (whoops), aim, but a strange one since language & peoples are constantly evolving with the exchange of trade and ideas – a sort of linguistic Brexit, and just as contentious. Where does one stop? With the Brythonic Celtic spoken before the Romans arrived?

As well as writing poetry (he was admired by Thomas Hardy & Tennyson), William Barnes was a school teacher in Dorchester, and in his 40s was ordained becoming a country parson.

On Twitter I recently noticed a post about school children going to the Apple Store. In my childhood this would have meant the cold attic room in the rambling old house where my grandmother was housekeeper where the apple harvest was kept to be used over the winter and spring. To the young scholars at St Wilfrid's School it obvs meant the classroom where the laptops and tablets (other words with new meanings) were located.

Words and technology may change, but humans still have the same enquiring minds and need for love & forgiveness. The 'hopes & fears of all the years are (still) met in Thee (in Jesus) tonight', Christmas night and every day.

I know the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden probably wasn't an apple, but Adam's apple, Eve's pudding, Snow White and the Judgement of Paris are deep in our psyche. The 15th century Carol 'Adam lay y-bounden', best known in the 1957 setting by Boris Ord of King's College Cambridge, has a remarkably positive angle on the Fall of Man.

'Ne had the apple taken been,... ne had never our Lady abeen Heaven e queen. Blessed be the time that apple taken was,... Deo gracias.'

The great Mystery of the Incarnation is the focus of Christmas – Jesus, the Son of God, born of a human mother, blessing humanity even in our brokenness and restoring the whole creation to its Maker. The wood of the Tree became Christ's Crib before it became his Cross.

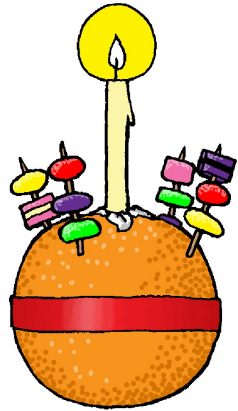
The other Carol which comes to mind is 'Jesus Christ the apple tree'. Surprisingly, it's not the work of some Victorian romantic, but written around 1760 by a Baptist minister in Northamptonshire, perhaps as an overtly Christian response to the secular songs for wassailing the apple orchards.

The simple but deeply crafted music of 20th century composer Elizabeth

Poston is loved by choirs. A few lines give a flavour...

'The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green
For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly I have bought:
I missed of all; but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.'

Christingle may be more prominent nowadays, but oranges are not the only seasonal fruit. In Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" plenteous apple sauce ekes out the goose. We might put an apple in our Christmas stockings as well this year.



Richard Barnes – 22/11/19.



*We don't sing carols no more...
you 'ave to listen to 'em off me iPod!*

Tranklement Drawer

Do you have a tranklement drawer? I once read that a house is not a home unless it has a tranklement drawer. What is a tranklement? It is an object which has no particular place. Ah! *now* you know what I am talking about.

Recently I had a new sink unit and needed to empty the drawers and cupboard. An excellent opportunity to get rid of rubbish, I thought. It was full to overflowing. It was easy sorting out wooden spoons, tin opener, tea strainers etc., but why so many elastic bands and small spoons given away with yoghurt?; why fridge magnets with no magnet?; twelve inches of striped ribbon; two neatly tied bits of string, a few inches long; a toffee hammer; bits of silver foil and three torches that don't work; a paper bag, although that might come in handy if anyone had panic attack. I put the elastic bands, buttons and curtain hooks in a plastic bag and put rubbish in the bin and returned the rest to the drawer. The toffee hammer, a garlic press and a gadget for poaching eggs went into the refuse room in case anyone else could use them. How long it will be before my tranklement drawer is once again over full is anyone's guess. However if you have need of an elastic band, I am your your first point of call.



a

Now look in your tranklement drawer and see what you can find. I believe our lives and minds are a bit like tranklement drawers and need a good sort out before a New Year begins.



Eileen Jarman

November 2019

I'm grateful for Eileen writing about the Black Country dialect word "tranklement", although Yorkshire also has some claim on the word. Mum would have called it a "bits and bobs"



dreamstime.com

drawer. The only poem I came across with this word in it was Liz Berry's
"Birmingham Roller" namely:
"yer heart's the china ower owd girls dust
in their tranklement cabinets"

Perhaps you have a dialect word or term you could write about for New
Leaves. BP

Smilelines

Shopping

The manager of a department store put this notice in the window: 'If you need it this Christmas, we have it.' But in the window of a rival, a sign appeared, stating: 'If we don't have it, you don't need it.'

Wise?

When I told my children the story of how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus, my six-year-old daughter was not impressed. "Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought nappies."

Chimney

Why doesn't Father Christmas suffer from claustrophobia when he climbs down the chimney? Because he has had his flue jab.

Poster in a French church

When you enter this Church it may be possible you will hear "the Call of God"

However, it is unlikely that he will call you on your mobile. Thank you for turning off your phones during our services!

If you do wish to talk to God please find a quiet spot inside the Church

If you are desperate to see God, send him a text whilst Driving!

December & January Events mainly at St Michael's

Regular times:- Sunday Sung Mass 11am. Choir Practice 7-8.30pm Tuesdays. Vespers is sung Tuesdays & Thursdays at 6pm. Matins & Low Mass are said Wednesdays at 9.30/10am.

Highlights include our candlelit Advent Carol Service, 8th December, and Christmas Midnight Mass. Celebrate with us, with beautiful Services engaging all the senses. Do come & support what you can.

There are still copies of "St Michael's Remembered – Articles from our 150th Anniversary" available for £3 donation –

an ideal stocking filler! And we have our own St Michael's Christmas Cards at 5 for £2.



Our special thanks to those who have worked hard to improve the lighting in Church and mend & affix the floor tiles – the welcome, usability and beauty are all enhanced.

Good to read last month of Rev Hannah Alderson becoming Lazenby Chaplain to the University; a post originally held by Canon John Thurmer whom we remember on 25th January.

So, diaries ready and here we go :-

Sat 30th Nov, 7.30pm at St David's Church. Exeter Bach Society perform J S Bach's B minor Mass. Tickets £18 on the door.

Sun 1st Dec, 11am. ADVENT SUNDAY. Sung Mass. Litany in Procession, 11, 15. Missa Brevis, *Lotti*. Matin Responsory, *Palestrina*. 12Noon Bountiful Table of Bakes, Preserves & Produce.

N.B. No Evensong on Sun 1st Dec.

Sat 7th Dec, 10 – 12. Church Cleaning Morning – please come & help if you can.

Sun 8th Dec, 11am. Advent II. Hymns: 5: 10: 16. Mass in the Dorian Mode,

Tallis. People Look East, Trad.

6pm ADVENT PROCESSION & CAROL SERVICE, followed by Mulled Wine & Mince Pies.

Fri 13th Dec, early evening, time tbc. Swedish Choir Santa Lucia celebration. All welcome.

Sun 15th Dec, 11am. Gaudete, Advent III. 7: 12: 499 . Mass in Phrygian Mode, Wood. E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, Manz.

Sun 15th Dec, 6pm at St David's Church. Service of Readings & Carols.

Wed 18th Dec, 7.30pm. The Revd. Dr. Alastair Logan "In Search of Ancient Gnostics"

Sun 22nd Dec, 11am. Advent IV. 21: 57: 186. Missa Brevissima, Casciolini. Ave Maria, Arcadelt.

Tue 24th Dec, 11.30pm. Midnight Mass of the Nativity. With Carols from the Gallery at 11pm. Hymns: 26: 29: 30. Mass in F, Sumsion. O magnum mysterium, Byrd.

Wed 25th Dec, 10.30am (N.B. earlier time) Christmas Day Sung Mass. 24: 32: 30 (v1,2,6,7). Mass in F, Darke. Ding, dong, Merrily on High, arr. Woodward.

Sun 29th Dec, 11am. Christmas I. 25: 39: 42. Merbecke/Shaw. O men from the fields, Cooke.

Sunday 5th January 2020. Christmas II/Epiphany. Sung Mass. 50: 47: 52. Mass in F, Wood. Whence is that goodly fragrance, arr. Willcocks.

6pm Choral Evensong & Benediction for Epiphany. Smith Responses. Psalm 98 (&100). Hymn 49. Stanford in C. Anthem: Christus, Mendelssohn. O salutaris 269 Tantum Ergo 268.

Sun 12th Jan, 11am. Epiphany I/Baptism of the Lord. 56: 495: 58. Missa l'Hora passa, Viadana. Lully, Lullay - Keitch

Sun 19th Jan, 11am. Epiphany II. 55: 294: 467. Missa Sancti Nicolai, Nicholson. The Lamb, Tavener.

Sat 25th Jan, 9.30am. Men's Breakfast at the Farmers' Union, Queen's Terrace.

Sun 26th Jan, 11am. Epiphany III. 36: 302: 57. Mass in F, Darke. Beati Quorum Via, Stanford.

Wed 29th Jan, 7.30pm Lecture. Dr. Robert Guyver will speak on John Coleridge Patteson, the martyred Bishop of Melanesia.

Sunday 2nd February, 11am. Candlemas. Sung Mass. 439: 408: 44. Mass in C&F, Nunc Dimittis in B flat, both by Stanford

6pm Choral Evensong & Benediction for Candlemas. Reading Responses. Psalm 122 (&132). Hymn: 475. Stanford in B flat. Anthem: O nata lux, Lauridsen. O salutaris, Tantum Ergo.

Wishing you a fruitful Advent and a joyful Christmas & Epiphany from all at St Michael's Mount Dinham.



Richard Barnes – 23/11/19.



*Little Wayne couldn't sing a note, so they
made him mascot*

Hair : its religious and social significance



I am not writing about the musical - although it represents the importance of hair in the late 1960s. Long hair was a symbol of rebellion (or social emancipation depending on your viewpoint) and the widening generation gap. After WWII, boys still had short hair & conformity was unquestioned; girls had to be virginal - an illegitimate child was a disgrace. Remember that? Social mores were challenged & changed to a new uniformity. All grew waist length hair - see me at 17, I could be anybody!

This totally reversed the significance of long hair. My mother, born in 1908, went directly from child to adult. Hairstyle, clothing and behaviour were obvious to all. Girls had long hair, loose or plaited; at marriageable age they “put their hair up” (and let their skirts down!). Hair was loose under the bridal veil, signifying virginity - only her husband would see her hair unbound again. A very old custom.

Now to this puzzling contrast. Muslim women cover their hair (and often their faces), to be seen only by their husbands at home- understandable, although it does imply danger from hair, and extreme possessiveness. Hijab means modesty. Conservative Jewish women often wear a scarf or hat at all times in public, a sign of modesty or marital status. Ultra-Orthodox (Chasidic) women have their heads shaved on marriage, and wear a wig (sheitel) thereafter. The wigs can be beautifully made of human hair.. It is hard to comprehend why they can look attractive to others - but must show a bald head to their husbands!

So what is the danger of “naked” hair? Pheromones? Science has not pinned down a sex pheromone said to be secreted and stored in hair. If so, there would be an effective pheromone perfume on the market. Facts still cannot prevent fear of the power of evil Eve to distract helpless Adam

from the straight and narrow.

Having considered the social & sexual importance of hair and head-covering, we come to their religious significance, starting with ourselves. Christian men remove their hats before entering a church, whether or not a service is in session. Catholic women still often wear a hat/veil/ mantilla in church. Many RC churches supply small lace head coverings at the church door. Orthodox Christian women may wear a white veil in church. Calvin and Wesley expected women to cover their heads in church. Conservative Anabaptist women wear a headscarf or bonnet every waking hour. Nowadays women of the the Plain People can wear a plain hat to divine service, men still wear the black hat but remove it to pray. Clearly, this is a sign of reverence - but why the gender difference? one on and one off?

Women's hair is said to be her glory, reflecting the glory of God, and at the same time a terrible temptation to the opposite sex. Men's hair in the Bible can be positive (Daniel's strength) or negative (Esau was a hairy man...) Men's head coverings in any place of worship also signify reverence. Jewish men, even Reform, cover their heads with the tallit (prayer shawl) to pray. They also wear the yarmulke/kippah, alone or under a hat. My son attended many Bar Mitzvahs, and acquired a large collection of satin yarmulkes. Of course the Pope wears a skullcap (zucchetto), abbots did too and monks originally (to keep their heads warm after being tonsured, perhaps).. All ordained members of the Latin church are entitled to wear a version of this, in a different colour according to their rank. The biretta is apparently optional in the Anglican church. I remember being confused by the bishop taking his mitre on & off at baptisms both C of E & Episcopal; now at St. Michael's the biretta is on & off - on for procession, sermon, off for the Eucharist/ when in the chancel? Some of our celebrants do not wear it.

Sikh men are supposed never to cut their hair and wear the turban (dastar) all the time (though my nephew's Sikh in-laws do not, only in temple). Hindu men need not cut their hair or wear the turban except ceremonially. Hindu women can use the end of the sari to cover their heads. Hindu, Sikh and Muslim men and women are all expected to cover their heads in temple or mosque, a reminder of humility to their God. Mormons seem to have no religious rule re hats in temple, but do expect men to remove hats

when entering a building, so there you have it. I think this is a pretty universal recognition of respect - men of my generation were taught to remove their hats when entering a building, greeting a lady, for a funeral procession passing by, etc. and going to church hatless was therefore automatically assumed.

If one were required to summarise, it would really come down to a mix of social, sexual and spiritual reasons for covering and uncovering the head, such as conformity, custom, modesty, humility, respect, reverence (and lack of any of these too). As always, these matters are intermingled and can change with the times.

“Is a puzzlement”..



Vivien Finnigan



More Memories of St Michael's

After receiving a copy of the "St Michael's Remembered" booklet from Tony Pugh, Mr John Langdon has kindly sent in these reminiscences of the Church from over 80 years ago.

"My memory of St Michael's goes back to 1932 when I started school at St Wilfrid's at the corner of Mint Lane and St Bartholomew St. which was run by Anglican nuns (As a 5 year-old I was allowed to travel to school on my own from Franklyn Drive – this wouldn't happen today!) . Sister Catherine, who ran the kindergarten, suggested that I attend Sister Madeleine's Sunday School at St Michael's who must have thought that I was well enough behaved to be a boat boy. Mr Manning, the thurifer, guided me with his hand discreetly behind my back until I learned the ropes. So I began as a server eventually progressing to acolyte . When the war started we youngsters needed to be able to take over as crucifer , occasionally thurifer and very occasionally when Gordon Ruming was away as Master of Ceremonies. In charge of the servers was Michael Hoskins, known behind his back as "Mr H".

Another personality was Miss Fewins who gave out the hymn books as the congregation came in. The priest-in-charge was Father Milla(e)r who presided at my confirmation but whether at St Michael's or St David's I am not sure.

Another sacrament was Confession which I didn't like much because I could never think of any sins worth mentioning!

The organist and choirmaster was Mr Treneer, the headmaster at the Episcopal School. I was presumptuous enough to go into the organ loft during the voluntary and turn the pages for him. He and Mrs Treneer were kind enough to invite me over for breakfast when I was on duty for both morning services. By then we were living out in Rydon Lane.

When Sister Madeleine was very ill I knocked on the door of the convent and asked to see her. This caused some consternation – Reverend Mother

had to be consulted , males were not allowed in unless they were in Holy Orders. Eventually permission was granted but not until the invalid donned her wimple. I do have a photo of her holding one of her godchildren.”



Richard Barnes – 23/11/19.



Three Musketeers Update

The end of another year. Is it “sign off time” for The Three Musketeers? Here’s an update.

The Kitchen

With the new door to the hatchway replaced and the woodwork finished, security is now complete. This leaves only the four wings to have the tracery cut. We are almost there!

The Seminary

The waxing and polishing is done. The front screens are finished to cornice level, all screen holes plugged, a lovely carpet on the floor and the death watch beetle looks vanquished .

I wrote in one of my last updates that the job on site had become largely one man. Roger had taken on the role of making , glueing and cutting the plugs which cover the screen heads. It is estimated that in a three week period, in addition to other work that we were doing, Roger filled 150 screw holes . This is a time consuming task which entails lying on your side for quite a few hours plugging skirting and bases. This work has made the cleaning and finishing off a lot easier for me. Some corners have as many as 23 screws to keep the decorative work in place.

Roger's hard and very precise intricate work is there for all to see. Take a look and get some idea of the time he gave to the task. Thank you Roger for all you have done and for all the help and support you have given me .

With the Seminary floor sealed and a final inspection carried out
“Is it time for The Three Musketeers to sign off?”



John Wakley November 2019

This fine example of woodcraft can be found in the seminary, where you will also discover its use. Please have a look in this room, in the south west corner of the church, which houses other examples of good craft work.



Concert Report – ExeVox Brahms

Requiem

The Eve of Remembrance Sunday was a brilliant evening at St Michael's in more ways than one. The upgraded Nave lighting was in use for the first time, making programmes easy to read and highlighting the church's beautiful carving.

ExeVox Chamber Choir, 21 singers directed by Peter Adcock, started their concert in a circle at the back of the church, the generous acoustic carrying the sound to the good-sized audience in the pews.

A Brahms folk-song “Am stiller Nacht” and the well-known Bruckner motet “Locus iste” set the scene for an evening of bright choral music. Next Peter Adcock dazzled with Brahms' Piano Rhapsody. Then the choir sang another of Bruckner's modest (by his standards) Motets. “Ave Maria” contrasts and then combines an upper voices trio with lower voices quartet, beautifully sung.

The main event was “Ein deutsches Requiem”, accompanied by the Piano duet arrangement made by Brahms himself and lyrically played by Alex West & Paul Morgan. For a chamber choir performance the piano accompaniment allows good balance & clarity.

Other composers had been experimenting with vernacular settings of the funeral service, but Brahms' German Requiem, written following his mother's death, is the first to establish a place in the choral repertoire.

Detailed analyses of the piece can be found online – here are just a few personal thoughts.

It was lovely to hear this piece in our Church; its first performance was in 1868, the same year as St Michael's was consecrated.

Rather than translate the Latin liturgy, Brahms chose verses from Luther's Bible – that German translation greatly influenced the English of Coverdale's Psalms, still in use in the Book of Common Prayer.

The 7 movements form a satisfying arch, starting and ending with “Selig” - Blessed are they that mourn.. they shall be comforted – Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord... they rest from their labours.

The funeral march in movement 2 – For all flesh is as grass – had gravitas,

and the central movement was sung with elegance and confidence, “Wie lieblich” - How lovely are they dwellings O Lord of Hosts.

The Baritone solos were strongly delivered by Dom Rousseau, while the Soprano solo in movement 5 was sung by all 3 first sopranos, their voices blending perfectly – You have now sorrow but... as a mother, so will I comfort you. These ideas of sorrow and consolation deeply infused Brahms' music and this this accomplished performance.

Towards the end I had a new feeling, that this was 'Ein europäisches Requiem', not just because of Brexit, but also the re-emergence of extremism across much of Europe.

With this in mind I headed up to the Cathedral the following evening for Holy Ground to hear guest speaker, Prof Piers Ludlow of LSE. He outlined the Catholic Christian background of the statesmen who had the vision of post-War European Integration to build peace and for economic reconstruction.

I wondered whether playing down the Christian heritage of Europe, for the sake of wider unity, has left something of a spiritual vacuum which has been filled by secular & religious extremes.

Whether we stay or go, having confident but moderate churches engaging in the public and political sphere is essential for a more compassionate and fruitful future.



Richard Barnes – 12/11/19.



After the Flood

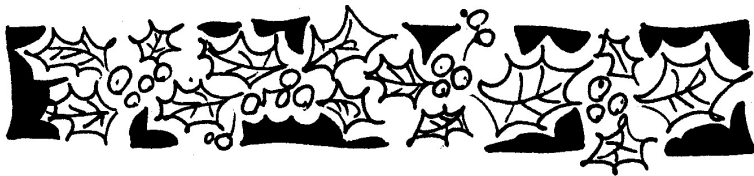
The Flood is over and the ark has landed. Noah lets all the animals out and says, "Go forth and multiply."

A few months later, Noah decides to take a stroll and see how the animals are doing. Everywhere he looks he finds baby animals. Everyone is doing fine except for one pair of little snakes. "What's the problem?" says Noah.

"Cut down some trees and let us live there", say the snakes.

Noah follows their advice. Several more weeks pass. Noah checks on the snakes again. Lots of little snakes, everybody is happy. Noah asks, "Want to tell me how the trees helped?"

"Certainly", say the snakes. "We're adders, so we need logs to multiply"



Christmas in the Workshop

"You won't get a Christmas Box as you are only an apprentice", Mr Pile informs me. "I'm telling you now because you will hear the talking about it. You will however get something from Mrs Pile and me .

"Thank you very much " I replied, as he turned and went back to his bench.

Christmas Day was a Sunday that year so we would be working right up until 12 o'clock on the Saturday.

Saturday arrived. We all gathered in the biggest of the cellars where the timbers were stacked and three joiners worked. After a while Harry got hold of me and I was thrown out of the workshop into the road and told to sing a Christmas Carol (my voice had not yet broken and I was able to sing solos still).

Having finished, the door was opened and I was brought back in and given 10/- (50 pence in today's money). I said thank you and we all went back to work .

Pay Days were Saturdays at 2 minutes to 12. It did not change.

Mr Pile gave me 10/- from him and Mrs Pile, so not bad

On time the workshop door opened. Herbie, as we called him, arrived.

"Payne " PayPacket placed on the end of the bench. You did not pick it up until Herbie had gone.

"Palmer, Codnor, Steer, Wakley, Allen". Pile's name was not mentioned.

With that Herbie went . As Allen was to call time the workshop door opened. Herbert Read walked back in.

"Happy Christmas, Payne " and a crisp £1 note was placed on his bench. It was the same for Jack, Frank and Harry.

He came into the cellar where I was ." Merry Christmas to your mother and father Wakley "

" Thank you Mr Read. A merry Christmas to Mrs Read , yourself and the family"

"Thank you", he said and put a crisp 10/- note on the end of the bench and was gone.

I walked out of work amid good wishes and made my way up the road with Harry, said goodbye and Merry Christmas and went home . What a morning! 10/- from the men; 10/- from Mr and Mrs Pile; 10/- from Herbert Read .A PayPacket of 17/6d (75p) for a 44 hour week. Total £2 and 7 shillings and 6 pence.

Christmas had indeed come early. I thought of the words of Tiny Tim in "A Christmas Carol " Truly it was a case of "God bless us every one ""

Merry Christmas!



EXETER MORRIS MEN

Exeter Morris Men regularly dance in and around Exeter



In our green waistcoats and black top hats & breeches Exeter Morris Men are a distinctive part of the traditional Cotswold Morris scene in the region. As well as dancing regularly for Exeter based events such as the annual Craft Fair on Cathedral Green and in many villages and seaside resorts in the area, we also travel to weekends of dance in other parts of the country and over the years we have performed at festivals in the U.S.A. and in several European countries.

A regular influx of new dancers is desirable and crucial. If you are looking for a healthy, active pastime and a friendly social atmosphere, then come along to Ide Village Hall and have a go at Morris dancing. We meet on Thursday evenings (October to April) from 8.00pm to 10 p. No previous experience is necessary and all the instruction is FREE! We will also be running a couple of taster workshops in the New Year and we are also very happy to run a workshop for a group of people at a venue of your choice!

For further details see our website, www.exetermorris.co.uk , or telephone Mike on 01392 660444



OBERRAMMERGAU 2020

ONCE EVERY TEN YEAR CHANCE TO BE AT THE WORLD FAMOUS PASSION PLAY!

The Pilgrimage to Munich and Oberammergau will be led by
Bishop Martin and Mrs Elspeth Shaw
Monday 18th to Friday 22nd May 2020

The performance of the Passion Play is on THURSDAY 21st MAY, starting at 2.30pm, with an interval at 5.00pm, finishing at 10.30pm.

The play was first performed in 1634. In 1633, the residents of the village of Oberammergau vowed that if God spared them from the bubonic plague, ravaging the region, they would produce a play 'for all time', every 10 years, depicting the life and death of Jesus. The town was spared! In 2010, there were 102 performances. Prior to our seeing the play, we shall be able to enjoy the picturesque village itself.

In the days before the play, we shall make a pilgrimage to ALTÖTTING, one of Germany's best known shrines. The HERRENCHEMSEE PALACE of Ludwig II is on the beautiful island of LAKE CHIEMSEE, which we will visit by boat, with a guided tour of the Palace and what was the Augustinian Monastery.

The HOHENSCHWANGAU AND NEUSCHWANGSTEIN CASTLES, which from photographs seem almost impossible, are much sought after attractions. We shall learn about King Ludwig II [1845-1886], who created them, his relationship to the Composer Richard Wagner and his huge generosity to those who lived on his land. Was he good or mad - or both? A particular picture of Europe just before the 20th century.

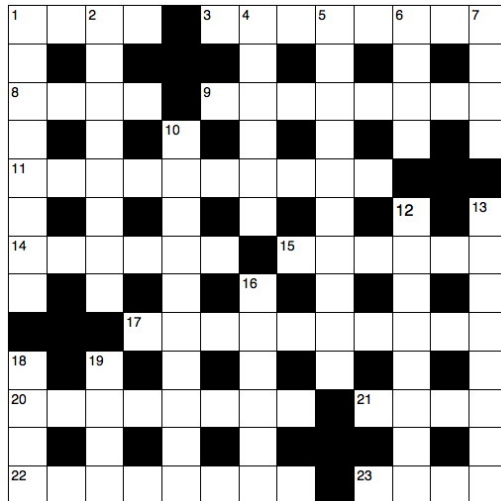
Price £1,229

Enquiries and Booking Forms: Bishop Martin and Mrs Elspeth Shaw.
amartinshaw@gmail.com Tel: 01392 663511.

Or

Directly to Pax Travel: Pax Travel Ltd, 2nd Floor, 102 Blundell Street,
London N7 9BL. Tel: 0207 485 3003.

December crossword



Across

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
- 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
- 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
- 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
- 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
- 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
- 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)
- 17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)
- 20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)
- 21 Rite (anag.) (4)
- 22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)
- 23 'The eye cannot say to the — , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

Down

- 1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
- 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)

- 4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)
- 5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
- 6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)
- 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
- 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
- 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
- 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
- 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)
- 18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)
- 19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)



December Sudoku - Medium

		1		7				3
			8				7	
		5				6		
1				4			3	
9			7		6			5
	8			3				1
		6				5		
	9				4			
4				8		7		

Days of Note - December

25th December: The history of Christmas and traditions

The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. In the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.

Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. They condemn the rise of 'misrule' – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.

In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, there was a sense that the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers.

In Europe Santa Claus is the figure associated with the bringing of gifts. Santa Claus is a shortening of the name of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the fourth century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor. By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop's robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today's Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols.

From: <https://christianity.org.uk/the-history-of-christmas/#.W9LmchNKhsM>

25th December: Christingle - a generous present from the Moravians

It is the Moravians whom we have to thank for bringing us the Christingle. Especially one Moravian clergyman: John de Watteville. On 20th December 1747, John de Watteville was taking a children's service in his Moravian church in Marienborn, Germany. He led the children in some hymns and read out verses which the children themselves had written to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Then he explained to the children that true happiness only comes through knowing Jesus. Jesus, said John de Watteville, "has kindled in each little heart a flame which keeps burning to their joy and our happiness".

John de Watteville then went on to illustrate that 'flame'. He gave each child a little lighted wax candle, tied around with a red ribbon. He ended his service with a little prayer: *"Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these children's hearts, that theirs like Thine become"*.

The visual aid was a great success with the children; for the Marienborn Diary for that day concludes: "hereupon the children went full of joy with their lighted candles to their rooms and so went glad and happy to bed".

No one knows for certain when the word 'Christingle' was first used with regard to the custom. No one even knows where the word 'Christingle' comes from. Some people say it is from the old Saxon word 'ingle' (fire), meaning 'Christ-fire or light'. Another theory is that it derives from the German 'engel' (angel), meaning 'Christ-angel'.

25th December: Why begin at midnight with Holy Communion?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the fifth century to symbolise the idea that Christ was born at midnight – a mystical idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the real hour of His birth.

25th December: And there were shepherds...

Luke's story of the birth of Jesus is brilliantly told – the angel's visit to Mary to tell her she would be mother of the long-promised Messiah, the old priest in the Temple told by another angel that his wife would have a son to be called 'John', who would prepare the people of Israel for that event, and then Mary and Joseph making the 60 mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, as required by the Roman census. When they got there, no room at the inn, and they settled instead for a convenient stable, where Mary gave birth to a boy child.

Suddenly, Luke changes the tone. 'And there were shepherds ...' – that's what he actually wrote, just like that. 'And there were shepherds', doing exactly what shepherds do, looking after their flocks by night. But this night was different: yet another angelic message – a call to abandon their sheep and go into Bethlehem to see the baby Messiah. They were given directions and a 'sign' to identify Him. He would be lying in a feeding trough. Well, at least they would recognise that.

And why the shepherds, in this glorious story of our salvation? Because the event needed witnesses, and the chosen witnesses would be this bunch of scruffy, smelly shepherds straight from the sheep-pen. Nothing could speak more eloquently of God's purpose than that. This was not a Saviour for the strong, rich and powerful, but for everybody. The carpenter and his wife guarded the Saviour of the world, and the very first witnesses were not kings or priests but a handful of shabby shepherds.

25th December: Where did Christmas trees come from?

There are two early stories that mention fir trees. The first involves St Boniface, who went to Germany in the 8th century as a missionary and found people sacrificing a child to their god under an oak tree. Boniface was appalled, and rescued the child. He then chopped down the oak tree and found a tiny fir tree growing nearby. He gave this to the people and said: "This is a symbol of life. Whenever you look at this tree, remember the Christ-child who is the One who will give you life, because He gave His life for you."

The second early fir tree story involves Martin Luther in the 16th century. It is

said that one year he decided to drag a fir tree into his home and to decorate it with candles. He used it as a visual aid, telling people that the candles symbolised Jesus as the light of the world, and the evergreen tree symbolised the eternal life that Jesus gives to us. Many of the people who followed Luther were struck by the idea and took up the custom.

25th December: Where did Christmas stockings come from?

No one is really sure, but a story is told of St Nicholas, a bishop who lived in the 4th century, who may have started the custom by accident. St Nicholas was of a wealthy family, and of a generous heart. As Christmas approached one year, he wanted to help a poor family whom he knew, but he did not want them to know it was him. So he climbed up on their roof on Christmas Eve and dropped some coins down the chimney. The next morning the coins, to the great surprise of the family, were found in the stockings of the ladies, who had hung them to dry by the fire the night before. Every year after that they put their stockings out, in the hope that some more money would fall into them. They told the story of this amazing appearance to their friends and neighbours, and the custom caught on.

25th December: Why was Jesus born in a barn?

Our pretty Christmas cards do not do it justice – the stable that Jesus was born in would have been smelly, dirty, and full of mess. So why did God not provide something better for His beloved Son? Why let Joseph and Mary scrounge around until they ended up in a smelly stable?

Perhaps because the King of Kings being born in a foul stable is a perfect picture of redemption. Jesus came from glory into a world filled with the dirt, filth and darkness of sin. And Jesus was not put off by darkness in the least – instead, He came to be the Light of the World. Thank God for His unspeakable gift. No wonder the angels sang “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14)

25th December: The story of mince pies

Did you know that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape - cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.

25th December: Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!

A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens. When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later. So, for instance, in *A Christmas Carol*, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!).

26th December: In praise of Good King Wenceslas

When I was a choir boy many years ago, *writes David Winter*, 'Good King Wenceslas' was a very popular carol. A man sang the King's lines, a boy sang the Page's, and the choir filled in the narrative. It was not of course technically a Christmas carol but one for which most people know as 'Boxing Day' – the 'Feast of Stephen' the first Christian martyr.

But you don't hear Good King Wenceslas these days. It fell foul of political correctness. The king was wealthy and very kindly, helped a poor man, but the last verse was the problem. It called on 'Christian men, wealth and rank possessing'. To help the poor and be blessed in doing it. All very patronising, class-conscious, and chauvinistic. So, it has simply disappeared. I think that's a pity, and I also think it's a serious misunderstanding of the carol. It relates to the good deeds of a tenth century Duke of Bohemia, Wenceslas I, and concerns a king and his page, and a poor man freezing and potentially starving whom he saw from his window.

The king didn't, as he might well have done, simply order some minion to take the man some food or fuel. He decided to do it himself assisted by his young page. Together they braved the bitter wind and snow in order to take pine logs and food to this humble dwelling. That is not patronising but true Christian grace. Yes, the last verse does express a Victorian view of characters but that's when it was written. No one should condemn the carol and its message. Who would shrink from following its example? I'm afraid texting a token ten quid to a charity does not quite qualify.

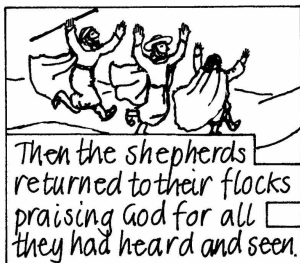
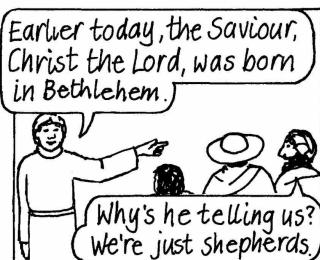
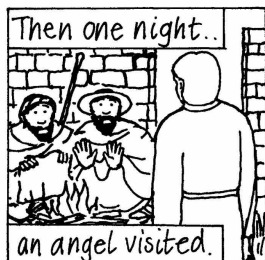
Love requires action, if we don't see that then we have missed the point. That is the message of this lovely carol.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 20

Shepherds were paid to look after the flocks out on the hillside. Uneducated and rough, they were usually avoided, or overlooked.

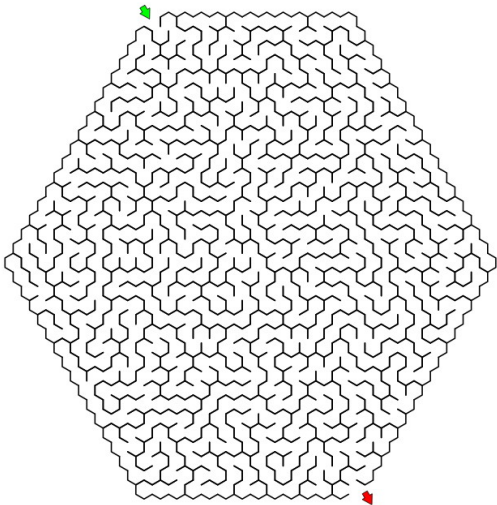


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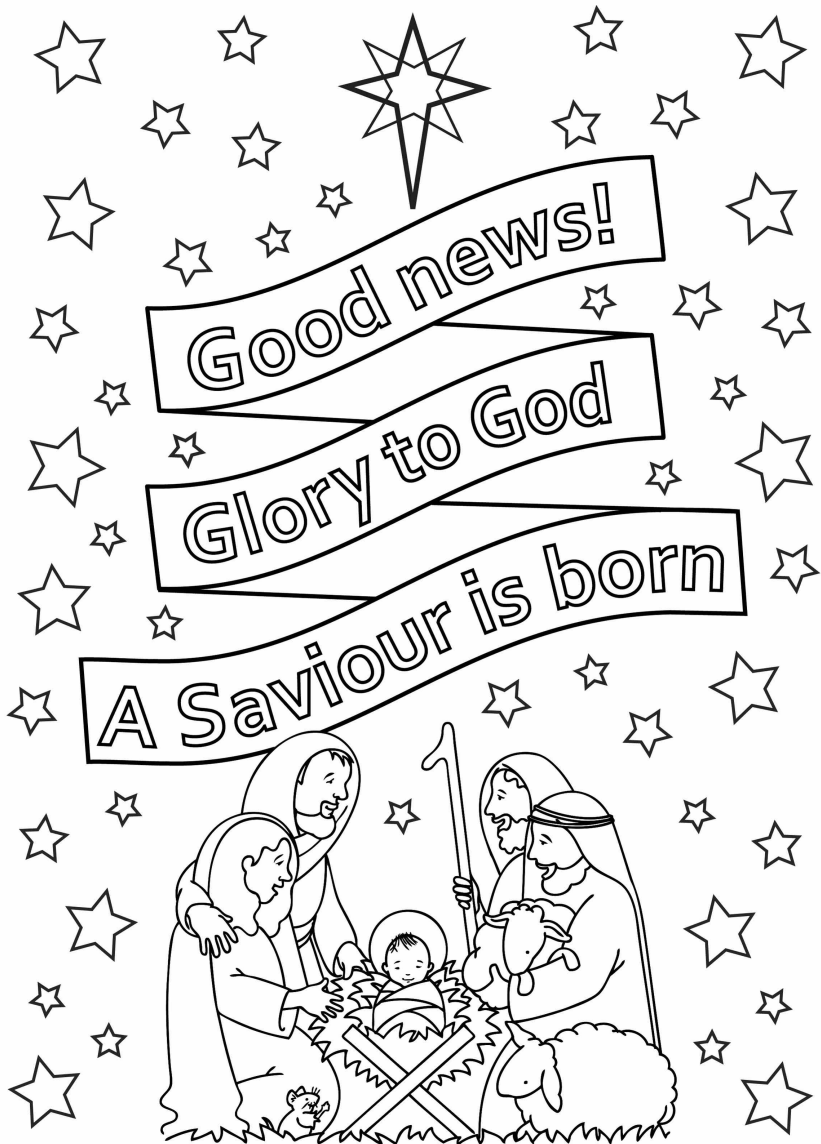
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shepherds	baby	heard
Christ	message	sky
Saviour	night	angel
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praising	flocks	Mary
hillside	manger	God
singing	good	seen

Maze



Colour-in



Puzzle solutions

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**The deadline for inclusion of articles
for the February issue of New Leaves
is**

Sunday 26th January

If you have images of any events of interest to the Parish community please send them to us. Any information and articles you'd like to submit for inclusion in future issues should be sent to the new editorial team at:

newleavesnews@gmail.com

Please send digital files via email and please make the subject header fit the content of the email - thanks!

Thank you to Graham Lerwill for organising the printing of this magazine

- his hard work is much appreciated.