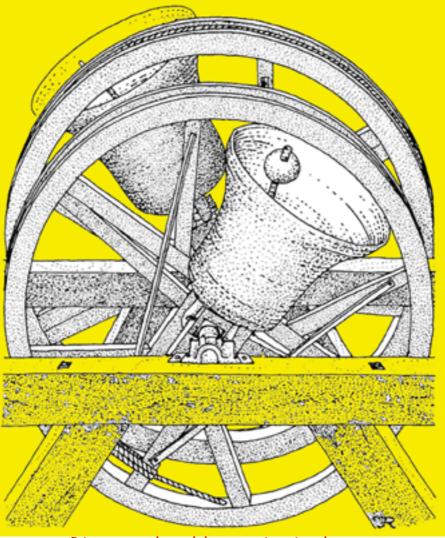
Parish Rems Kington, Huntington & Titley January 2022



Ring out the old ring in the new

SARGEANTS BUSES FOR KINGTON

FROM 3rd September 2020

email: <u>mike@sargeantsbros.com</u> Tel : 01544 230481 Mill Street, Kington Herefordshire HR5 3AL

 HEREFORD
 461 via Lyonshall
 462 via Eardisley

 Journey times vary
 Kington to Hereford approx 65minutes

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TIMETABLES FOR ALL SERVICES AVAILABLE ON MOST BUSES & OFFICE IN MILL STREET

Also available on www.sargeantsbros.com

THE KINGTON PARISHES



St Mary, Kington St Thomas a Becket, Huntington St Stephen, Old Radnor St Mary, Kinnerton St Peter, Titley www.kingtonparishes.org.uk							
CLERGY Rev Ben Griffith		The Vicarage, Church Road, Kington HR5 3AG Vicar's email: vicar@kingtonparishes.org.uk Parish Office email: office@kingtonparishes.or	01544 230525 g.uk				
ASSISTANT CU Rev Linda MacDe		5 Gravel Hill Drive, Kington, HR5 3AE Email: lindamacdermott@icloud.com	01544 239395				
Rev Denis Parry Rev Tony Jardine Rev Paul Buckingham		33 Mill Street, Kington HR5 3AL 9 Park Green, Kington The Cottage, Prospect Lane, Kington HR5 3BE	01544 230550 01544 239160 01544 231357				
READER Rob MacCurrach	01544 231848						
6 Head Mr Ro		nn Edwards dbrook, Kington HR5 3DZ dney Bowdler House, Bridge St, Kington HR5 3DW	01544 230271 01544 231501				
Huntington	Upper Mr Pe	nristina Powell Hengoed, Huntington, Kington HR5 3PQ ter Kelly field Farm, Huntington, Kington HR5 3PZ	01544 370655 01544 370266				
Old Radnor	Weyth Mrs Ro	chael Jones Iel Farm, Old Radnor, Presteigne LD8 2RR Dsemary Watkins Id Bungalow, Stanner Rd, Kington HR5 3NN	01544 370259 01544 230174				
Kinnerton	Upper Mrs Su	uth Jones: House, Kinnerton, Presteigne, LD8 2PE Je Thompson Farm, Kinnerton, Presteigne, LD8 2PE	01547 560207 01547 560333				
Titley		k Allford oft, Titley, Kington, HR5 3RL	01544 231052				
MAGAZINE ED	-	reda Lymath <u>freda@sparki</u>	esofkington.com				

Arrow Weir House, Kingswood Rd, Kington HR5 3HD 01544 231780

St. Mary's, Kington PCC is a registered charity and its number is 1185453

Letter from the Bishop of Hereford

In his letter to the Philippians, St Paul said that Jesus Christ was God in very nature.

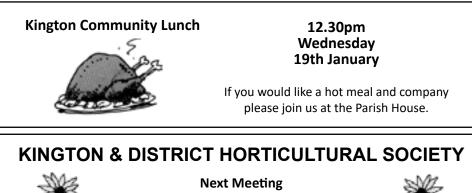
In the recent COP26 Conference run-up, some of us have been planting trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy Project. It is a fitting way of marking Her Majesty's 70 years as sovereign, and the tree-panting project acquires an urgent relevance in the light of the climate crisis. Gardeners will have collected seeds to multiply their stocks. It is a longer-term view and cheaper way than buying established plants from our suppliers.

Seeds are remarkable things. There is little correlation between their size and the size of the plant that emerges. What is more extraordinary is that the complete blueprint for the established plant resides in such a small package. Every detail is written in the DNA, ready to emerge when the conditions are suitable for germination. The seed is as much the plant as the tree is, despite their very different appearance.

All metaphors have their limitations. But when we contemplate the events of Christmas and the reality of God's incarnation in Christ, the seed to plant metaphor can be helpful. In his letter to the Philippians, St Paul said that Jesus Christ was God in very nature. In Jesus, God reveals himself not just as the creative hand behind all that is but also as personal. The human (albeit extraordinary) attributes of personality we see in Jesus are the characteristics of God himself. Paul is essentially saying that because Jesus was God, he took the lowest place, showed humility, and gave himself up for others. Appearing in human form, born as the infant Jesus was not a disguise for God, but God in his very essence.

The humble familiarity of the Christmas story reminds us that we can know God. The good news is that knowledge can be transformative as we enter into a relationship with him. I pray that we all enter afresh into this reality and prepare to celebrate his coming to us.







Next Meeting Thursday 20th January at 7.30pm Speaker Simon Thomas of Lyonshall Nurseries at the Masonic hall, Headbrook Subs are now due



View from the Vicarage

The Waiting Room of the World?

Dear Fríends

In the play and film "Shadowlands", the story of the romance and marriage between the academic and author C. S. Lewis and the American poet Joy Davidman the character of C. S. Lewis observes: "I've always found this a trying time of the year. The leaves not yet out. Frosty mornings gone. Sunny mornings not yet come. Given me blizzards and frozen pipes, but not this nothing time, not this waiting room of the world."

I'm reasonably confident that as you read those words during January your attitude to the frozen pipes and blizzards which Lewis speaks of with such halcyon affection is perhaps somewhat different and rather more pragmatic than his.

It seems to me that despite describing a different time of the year what Lewis describes as "the waiting room of the world" is probably quite close to many people's lived experience of January as the gleam and the glow of Christmas begins to fade and the darkest, coldest days of the winter take hold, it can often feel as if we're just holding our breath waiting for the summer days which we hope lie just in the distance in the way that Lewis describes.

It seems to me that the Church's calendar provides the perfect antidote to the January blues; although the Christmas decorations are removed following the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, the cribs remain. Their continuing presence is a reminder that Christmas doesn't end as some would suggest on either Boxing Day or New Year's Day it continues throughout the dark days of January until Candlemas or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on February 2nd which we'll be celebrating this year on 30th January with a Group Eucharist at Huntington if Covid-19 restrictions permit. (Kington if they don't!)

The small but subtle reminders that Christmas is not a day, it's a season provide that reminder that the light shining in the darkness isn't extinguished with the Christmas lights, that the angelic message of peace on earth is for life not just for Christmas and that the reign of the Prince of Peace doesn't end with the sprouts at Christmas dinner.

This surely is the good news that can counteract the January blues and turns this quiet largely uneventful waiting time of the world into a time of joy and quiet hope that in God's good time the reign of the Child of Bethlehem will extend across all time and all places and that begins heart by heart, person by person, as each and every human being becomes slowly but steadily the people whom God calls them to be, the world changes slowly, quietly but as inexorably as the first signs of Spring bloom in the gardens. Change happens and our calling not just as Christians but as human beings is to be the change that

we want to see. As we begin yet another year, a year in which the long shadow of the Coronavirus Pandemic still looms large over us, let's commit to being the light shining in the darkness and not merely singing about peace on earth but being part of bringing it to fruition one heart at a time, one person at a time here in our own communities, in our own families and among our friends and neighbours.

That light will overpower the darkest of nights and erase the waiting room of the world.

With my love, prayers and sincerest good wishes for a happy, healthy and blessed 2022.



Ben

Thank You

I want to extend a huge thank you to everybody who worked so hard to ensure that our Christmas services brought some much needed light and joy into a very gloomy national situation. Yet again, we have churches decorated splendidly, some fabulous music from our very talented musicians. It was a great shame to have had to cancel the Messy Church & Christingle in Kington particularly because I know that some hard work had gone in to preparing for it; none of which is wasted.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the handbell ringers at Kington for The Donkey's Story and to Malcolm, Michael, Gill and Linda Ellams for the magnificent Nativity in the Lychgate at Kington. If you're reading this before January 6th and you haven't seen it, do have a look, it'll be worth the visit.

However you helped to make our Christmas celebrations a bright point of light on the dark road we have to travel: THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!

Ben

Another Thank You

We received the following letter:

"To all the ladies who knitted bags full of hats etc.

They were posted off to two places the next day.

The baby and small hats went to the Neo-Natal Department, Honeysuckle Suite in Liverpool Women's Hospital. I knit for these.

The rest of the hats went to a lady called Sophie Lye in Ipswich. Some of the hats went to Help the Homeless and the rest to a village in Africa that she supports. They can all be found online.

Knitting for Angel babies/prem

With sincere thanks, June Spraggon"

Praying the alphabet



In this month of January we will be praying the letter H. The first word that comes to mind is Hospitals. As I write there is a lot of talk about the Omicron variant and the numbers of those people who need hospitalisation, going up again. So pray for the Drs and all staff and those who are ill at the moment.

We came up with quite a few ideas for our prayers starting with our county of Herefordshire, that we we all love so much. Pray for our homes and harmony in communities, for hawks, for hairdressers and for the homeless and hungry. We pray for hares, holidays, hedge layers and Hungary.

During Advent there has been a prayer station in the Vaughan Chapel, a place to pause, to rest and reset. The prayer station will continue to be available as a safe place and a quiet lay-by after Christmas. So if you are calling in at St Mary's take a moment to draw aside with God.

If you would like anyone to pray for you or with you contact Rev Ben 01544 230525 Rev Linda 01544 239395 or Trish 01544 231848

Kington Parishes Service Schedule for this month

Dependant on Government announcements, please see our website for up to date information. All services in Kington marked * below will be available via livestream at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCho108zE6VUpNGQAmmfA9OA

Sunday, December 26th: St. Stephen

2Chronicles24:20-	22, Psalm 119:161-168,	Acts7:51-end,	Matthew 10:17-22
11.00am:	Group Eucharist with Carols	S: Old Rad	nor

Sunday 2nd January: Christmas II

Ecclesiasticus 24.1-12Canticle Wisdom 10.15-21Ephesians 1.3-14John 1.10-18*10.00amGroup Holy EucharistKington

Thursday, 6th January: Epiphany

Isaiah 60.1-6Psalm 72.10-15Ephesians 3.1-12Matthew 2.1-126.00pmHoly EucharistTitley

Sunday 9th January: Epiphany I / Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 43.1-7	Psalm 29	Acts 8.14-17	Luke 3.15 -17, 21-22
8.30am	Holy Communior	1	Huntington
*10.00am	Holy Eucharist		Kington
11.30am	Holy Eucharist		Old Radnor
6.00pm:	Evening Prayer		Kinnerton

Sunday 16th January: Epiphany II

Isaiah 62.1-5	Psalm 36.5-10	1 Corinthians 12.2	1-11	John 2.1-11
8.30am	Holy Communion		Kinnerto	on
10.00am	Holy Eucharist		Titley	
*10.00am	Morning Praise		Kington	
6.00pm:	Junior Praise		Old Rad	nor

Sunday 23rd January: Epiphany III

5-6,8-10 Psalm 19.1-6
Holy Eucharist
Holy Eucharist
Evening Prayer
Evening Prayer

1 Corinthians 12.12-31a Luke 4.14-21 Kington Old Radnor Huntington Kinnerton

Sunday 30th January: The Presentation of Christ / Candlemas

Malachi 3.1-5Psalm 24 7-10Hebrews 2.14.18Luke 2.22-4010.00amGroup EucharistHuntington

* services live-streamed





Curate's Column – Cathedral Life

You may have noticed that I've been missing from the Kington Parishes for a while.

Every curate in Hereford Diocese, in their third year, gets the opportunity to spend a month away from his or her training parish, in order to gain some experience doing something which they may not get the chance to do once their curacy has finished.

I decided I would like to go to Hereford Cathedral. And so, after an informal interview with Canon Chancellor Chris Pullin of the Cathedral, it was agreed that I would re-locate my 'day job' to the cathedral for four weeks during October and November.

I found a note book, sharpened my pencils and packed up my lunch for my expected start

time – it felt like the first day at Big School. I was given a desk in the library, made two new friends of the Librarian and Archivist, and tentatively stepped out for my morning in the Cathedral.

Straight away I was welcomed and encouraged, and soon felt at home in that wonderful ancient building. During my 'rounds', I visited staff and volunteers, and peered into all of the places I wouldn't usually see. I visited the Cathedral Broderers at work on their wonderful textiles, staff and volunteers in the Mappa Mundi exhibition and chained library, toured the archive in the basement and went as far up the tower as I felt able -which wasn't very far!

Participating in services was as wonderful experience as any curate dare to hope. Outstanding musicians played and wonderful choristers sang, and I felt very happy indeed. It is true what the Psalmist says that we can *'worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness'* and no more beautiful a place could we imagine than Hereford Cathedral during a service.

One notable event was the Cathedral induction of 140 young people from Hereford Cathedral School. In groups they moved around each activity. Alongside Canon Chris I taught each group about Holy Communion. The young people were wonderful and a credit to their parents and the school.

On two occasions I stood in for the day chaplain, I talked to visitors, said prayers each hour (once I got over my nervousness of the microphone). The day chaplain is available for anyone who needs to talk to someone, and it was a privilege to be able to offer that support to some people.

All in all, I had a marvellous time at the Cathedral. It is truly a jewel in the crown of Hereford Diocese but it is lovely to be back with you all.

God bless & Happy New Year

Linda

St. MARY'S CHURCH, KINGTON

With Christmas day only six days distant as I write and with a new virus spreading like wildfire it is difficult to predict the way in which we shall be able to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child in 2021.



Saint Mary's stands beautifully decorated and we

thank Gill, Lesley and our gifted team of flower arrangers for this. Richard selected three fine trees and two of these have been decorated by skilful hands and when lighted stand as a beacon of hope in these troubled times.

We miss the Hospice Tree of Light but we welcome again the Memory Tree and thank the donor, those who erected it and the many who bought wooden stars, created by Elio, on which to write the names of loved ones to hang from its branches ."Carols Outdoors" saw the Rev. Ben lead us in a Carol Service round the tree. Poems were read and carols chosen by those present were sung. The highlight, of course, was the switching on of the lights and the dedication of the tree. Thank you Ben for setting us off on the Christmas journey. May the tree delight all who pass by.

We were saddened that we had to cancel Messy Church and the Christingle Service and have very much missed welcoming the Schools and nursery groups to St. Mary's this Christmas. We hope that by the time you read this you will have joined us at the Lych Gate for a Crib Service.

Safe distancing and wearing a face mask will be something we must respect and we hope that by doing this we can join together for other planned worship.

The Rev. Ben has given much thought and time to working out how we can celebrate this wonderful Festival as safely as we can arrange and for this we thank him.

I have received greetings from Geoffrey Treasure and Christine Jones and both have asked that I pass on good wishes to you all from them. When we left Church today Brian Savory's son was in the Garden of Remembrance and told us that Brian is well and is approaching his 90th birthday . He asked for special thanks to be given to those who tend the Garden

We all look forward to receiving positive news about Rodney but I am in no doubt that he would wish to join with me, his fellow Churchwarden, in wishing you all a peaceful new year, a year when safety is at the heart of our fellowship.



Ann Edwards.

More Journeys in Jane Mark III

Following Jane's successful appearance in Cinderella, the next challenge was our first trip to Tangmere via Old Sodbury. There had been no time for a trial run following the engine rebuild, risk assessment had not been part of our experience in the winter of 1965!



We set off with high hopes of reaching our destination. My only concern was the M5 Motorway

which was still under construction and ran for about 10 miles.

We cleared the first hurdle but then the exhaust tail pipe fell off. A quick refit and the tightening of the jubilee clips and all was well again.

Disaster struck just outside the village of Wickwar some four miles from Chipping Sodbury where we came to a sudden halt.

The problem was fuel starvation, I thought that I could cure this by cleaning out the carburettor bowl. It took two hours to travel to Chipping Sodbury with a quick visit to my older brother. He discovered that the petrol pipe from the tank to the carburettor was completely blocked. A quick blow through with an air pressure line cleared the problem. Anxious to continue on my journey, now running at least four hours behind schedule, I paid a quick visit to home explaining my delay. I arrived safely in Tangmere before darkness fell. The next day my future brother-in-law removed the petrol tank and gave it a good clean out. A large amount of rust rather like grains of sand was cleared from the tank. I was able to return home working once again in the shop.

For the next three months after any journey of 50 miles the car would come to a halt; the cure meant removing the petrol pipe and giving it a quick blow through. Looking back, our maiden voyage was successfully completed with only a few minor hiccups!

The 108 mile trip from Old Sodbury to Tangmere was completed on numerous occasions apart from a journey on Christmas day 1965.

My journey took me across the Salisbury Plain. Travelling merrily along, the car came to a juddering halt opposite a tank crossing. Fortunately, there was a telephone box in the village that I had just passed through. A call to Sonia and I explained my plight, again the family came to my rescue. As all petrol stations were closed Sonia and her brother decided to carry on hoping to come to my rescue without running out of fuel themselves.

Some time later, they arrived and using an empty bottle I was able to keep filling it with petrol from Jane's tank. A tow rope was attached and we set off for Tangmere via Stockbridge and Winchester before travelling along the A272 to Chichester.

As we approached Winchester, we slowed down to pass through a railway bridge on a sharp bend. The signs on either side of the bridge warned drivers to be "aware of oncoming buses in the middle of the road." Thinking that it would be highly unlikely that a bus would be on the road on Christmas Day, I lost a little concentration and ran over the tow rope: it snapped!.

We hastily fitted a slightly shortened tow rope and arrived in Tangmere at 10.30pm. What a day, we were all exhausted. *Tony Jardine*

NEW CITIZENS ADVICE HEREFORDSHIRE KINGTON SERVICE AT THE OLD POLICE STATION FROM Tuesday, 7th December 2021

Citizens Advice Herefordshire are delighted to announce that they are going to be providing to a new Citizens Advice regular service at The Old Police Station, Kington.

Citizens Advice have been helping people in the community for free since 1939 and we continue to provide advice on an astonishingly wide range of problem areas. The most common issues that we deal with are to do with debt and benefits. The comment that we most often hear is *"I wish I had to come to you sooner – I didn't realise how much you could do to help me"*.

Sonya Gregory, Advice Services Manager for Citizens Advice Herefordshire said *"Advice services are particularly important at the moment, as many people have found themselves facing difficult problems due to the financial and social consequences of the current Covid 19 crisis and are not sure where to turn to".*

Citizens Advice Herefordshire's dedicated and experienced advisers will be able to provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice on a range of issues including debt, benefits, housing and family issues locally that affect all our lives.

Sonya Gregory also said "Countywide outreach centres are invaluable for meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in the community, particularly for those who cannot access our services in Hereford city. We are committed to developing our services in these areas of the county to ensure more people can get advice".

The new Citizens Advice Herefordshire Kington advice sessions will be located at The Old Police Station, 1 Market Hall St, Kington HR5 3DP from Tuesday 7th December 2021.

To book a face-to-face appointment, clients should call our advice line, 0344 8269685 or text 0786 00 77 311 with your name and postcode.

We would also love to heqar from anyone who is interested in training to be a volunteer advisor for Citizens Advice. You only need to be able to commit one day a week and you do not need to have any special qualifications. You will join a community of people who love what they do and all get a great deal from it.

To find out more about volunteering and for press enquiries, contact gwen.fraser@ citaherefordshire.org.uk



ST THOMAS à BECKET, HUNTINGTON CHURCH NEWS

Pamela May Cate - The Swan, Huntington:

Pamela May Cate was born in the County of Hampshire, moving in 1938 aged 9 years to The Horse Guards public house at Tillington in West Sussex, so beginning a lifelong attachment to the Licensee Trade. During the war, when everyone was expected to play their part, Pam helped her family with the day to day running of the business.



Having learnt to play the piano from a young age Pam entertained the Canadian and American troops stationed at Petworth Park. Pam particularly enjoyed local sporting events, including motorbike scrambles, horse racing at nearby Goodwood (her favourite horse being Red Rum), and was also a keen fan of Portsmouth Football Club.

In January 1970 (52 years ago), John (Jack) Cate and his wife Pam, accompanied by their teenage daughter Jane, came to live at The Swan in Huntington, an historic Inn considered to be constructed around 1640.

Of a practical nature, Pam was proficient in many aspects of D.I.Y., a competent cook and a very good seamstress. Many of the Christmas decorations she created are still used annually to festoon the bar during the festive season. For many years, the Swan had two Quoits teams and two Darts teams and Pam always accompanied the younger more inexperienced teams to the various venues for competitions.

Having empathy and a special ability to connect with animals, Pam and Jane have rescued and cared for a large variety of animals through the years. Animal welfare and well-being always of paramount importance.

Pam was instantly recognisable in her MG sports car, which Jack gave her in 1972, and which Jane still drives to Kington regularly.

Since the passing of Jack 42 years ago, Pam and Jane have continued to run The Swan, together with their caravan/camping site at the rear. A very warm welcome has always been given to both regulars and visitors alike and many long-term friendships have been forged. Customers return to enjoy the "olde worldy" traditional atmosphere of The Swan and surrounding scenic beauty of the Welsh borders.

In recent years Pam valued the companionship of Sheila and Rachel, but it is the dedicated care and devotion given by her loving daughter Jane that ultimately shone through, enabling Pam to remain in her own home, surrounded by her beloved animals.

Thanks:

The New Year is always a good time to reflect on the year just past and to acknowledge and thank the work of so many who support our Church. Once again, this has certainly been an extremely unusual year for us all, with the restrictions Covid 19 has placed on us. However, work has carried on throughout the year to ensure the church is open and welcoming to everyone, with services resuming in a Covid safe manner.

On behalf of us all, our thanks firstly go to our Churchwardens – Christina Powell and Peter Kelly and also to Fiona Shone as Deputy Churchwarden. Particular mention must go to Peter who

constantly ensures the fabric of the building is adequately maintained. Special thanks also go to Will and Fiona Shone who daily open and close the church, ensure the composting loo is clean, and who work tirelessly to raise much needed funds. Fiona has made and sold soup at the Friday market during Advent, together with much of the jam and chutney sold in church. Will is also our Treasurer, who deals with all financial matters and ensures the books are efficiently maintained. Fiona also now ensures the grass is mown and the churchyard is kept tidy. A small group of dedicated ladies have continued to keep the Church clean and who quietly accomplish all the other necessary jobs throughout the year. Of course thanks also go to Rev. Ben and Rev. Linda who have supported us throughout the year.

Reminder – 2022 Parish News Annual Subscription Renewal:

The annual subscription of £6.00 (no increase this year) will be due shortly. Details for payment will be inserted in the January edition, thank you.

The Parish News will continue to be left in the telephone box outside the Old Post Office (Geoff's house), for collection. An e-mail will let us know when copies have been left there, usually after the 4th Sunday in the month. Should you have any queries regarding the Parish News for Huntington please contact Peter Kelly – Tel.No: 01544 370266 or e-mail: peterbkelly642@ hotmail.com

Susan Maiden

Kington WI

Our Christmas tea party was held on 8th December at Markwick Hall. Members enjoyed a delicious tea prepared by Fingers and Forks, we listened to some Christmas readings given by members, and sung some carols. Mr Stephen Gilling very kindly played the piano for us.

Our next meeting will be the birthday lunch on Wednesday 12th January at the Burton Hotel, 12.30 for 1pm. Margaret Cooke

Kington & District Community Shop

We plan to start 2022 with a return to groups changing over weekly especially since there is no-longer any requirement to quarantine stock. It is also clear that customers and volunteer staff are all behaving sensibly. The shop is as popular as ever and groups have raised an average of about £1,400 since it re-opened in May.

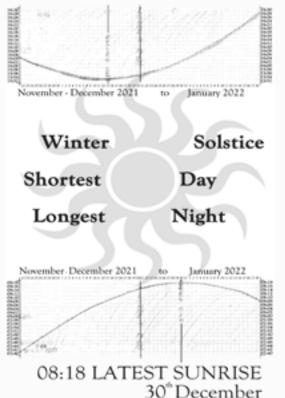
Groups will change-over on Tuesdays and a typical week will look like this:

- Stock-up after 6pm on Tuesday evening (or asap)
- Open from Wednesday
- Clear-out by mid-day next Tuesday (by the latest)
- Cleaning on Tuesday afternoon

I will be contacting groups individually to sort out dates, meanwhile here are the groups in the shop during January:

5-11 January	New Radnor WI	
12-18 January	tbc	
19-25 January	St. Mary's Church, Kington	
26-1st February	Kington Lions	Richie

December 13th EARLIEST SUNSET 15:52



The Winter Solstice

I thought you might be interested in the graphs shown here that were sent in by Ritchie Cotterill.

Although December 21st is the shortest day, you can see from the upper graph that after December 13th the evenings start to get lighter, but the lower graph shows that the mornings are still getting darker right up to December 30th.

We really have to get a fair way into January before we can really feel that winter is over and spring is on the way, which leads nicely into the feast of Candlemas on 2nd February.

When candles are lighted on Candlemas Day,

The Winter's behind us and Spring's on its way.

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Intermediate Sudoku

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14

ST PETER'S CHURCH TITLEY NEWS

Village Christmas Lunch

On Sunday 12th December the village came together in the Village Hall for a lovely get together.

In the past the ladies have provided a full Christmas Lunch but they have now retired and a brand new band of younger ladies and gents in



the village have come forward and arranged a wonderful event. The atmosphere was fantastic and we all sat down and enjoyed a lovely meal. A very testing quiz was also held but then a simple fun version of "Heads and Tails" was played. The day was rounded off with some community singing.

Once again on behalf of all the village a huge thank you to Di and her team for putting on a marvelous day.

Carol Service

Thank you to everyone who decorated the church so beautifully for the carol service. Special thanks go to all the children who took part in the service and to Gemma for the lovely solo. It was the perfect start to Christmas.

Thanks

On behalf of the PCC our thanks are extended to Ben, Linda and Tony for all their ministry in these still very difficult times. We look forward to a new year but still do not know what lies ahead for us. All we can do is look after ourselves and keep ourselves as safe as possible. We would also like to thank Steve, Lelia and Bill who have played the organ for us during the last year. It was so nice when we could all sing again.

PCC Meeting

A reminder that there is a PCC meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th January at Burcher Court. It is hoped that as many members as possible of the PCC can attend.

Dick

New Year Questions

What do farmers gives their wives at midnight on New Year's Eve? Hogs and kisses. Why do birds fly south for New Year's Eve? It's too far to walk.

What do snowman like to do an Now Year's Eve? Chill out

What do snowmen like to do on New Year's Eve? Chill out.

Why should you put the calendar in the freezer on 31 December? To start off the new year in a cool way.

Why did the man sprinkle sugar on his pillow on New Year's Eve? He wanted to start the year with sweet dreams.

Who gets the most excited about the New Year's Eve countdown?Calendar companies.Where can you find comedians at a New Year's Eve party?In the punch line.Why do you need a jeweller on New Year's Eve?To ring in the new year.

Not a Proper Gardener (Part 14)

I've started writing this on 25th November, a bit early perhaps for writing about the Garden in January. My excuse is that I've just returned from the Community Shop which is fund-raising for the Friends of St



Mary's, where I was simply dropping off a few bits and pieces, including a scarifier, when a certain person, who shall be nameless, (a musician and pillar of the church who has a nice garden and an allotment - guess who?) spotted this lethal looking object and was eager to buy it. Sold! Because I am not a proper gardener it was surplus to my requirements. I bought it years ago on impulse but never got round to using it, since our lawn simply isn't a lawn. It's just a patch of grass from which, it's true, we do occasionally remove a few unwelcome weeds like plantains and dandelions. But as for aerating it – too much trouble! We leave that to the worms.

No, it's too early to write about the garden in January. (I'm not an old testament prophet.) But you can be sure that, short days and weather permitting, we shall be as busy then as now. Do you, by any chance, without perhaps being addicted to it as we seem to be, listen to The Archers? If so you will be aware of Adam's concern for the proper care of the soil, a concern we should really all share, farmers and gardeners alike. In fact I'm told that Soil Week falls about now, in November, when we are supposed to direct our attention to this dirt which produces 95% of all that we eat. This dirt is such a precious commodity, full of living fungi and nutrients.

In her book This Blessed Plot, Hazel Southam writes that the words intensive and agriculture simply shouldn't go together; and she reports how a government survey has revealed that the terribly excessive use of chemicals is causing soil degradation on a huge scale (while much effluent and sewage are wasted, even run off to pollute rivers and the sea.) I've not room here to go into the details and statistics she gives, but I quote, "You try squeezing more and more out of the soil, using chemicals, and the earth will pay you back. In desolation." And to gardeners she says: "It's easy to think of a garden or allotment as a place that you inhabit in the summer, sitting outside drinking a glass of white wine perhaps, taking



in the view. But the summer can't happen without the winter. The processes of renewal, restoration, rest and enrichment must all happen now.... Winter, it turns out, is the real time to garden."

So, in our garden we are doing our bit to work the compost, turning it and feeding the soil with it. Emma and Giles are gathering up bags of leaves into biodegradable sacks to make nutritious leaf-mould and, when I take a carload of the garden waste to dump at the tip, stuff we would once have burnt, I import a bag or two of the compost, Green grow, produced from such waste by the Council at £2 a sack, too heavy for me to lift, but Giles has his uses! And if we ever dare have a bonfire, we use the ashes as potash for the fruit trees. This doesn't mean we cut out extra fertilizers altogether, but those we use are mostly organic. We buy in some grow-bags and some non-peat seed compost, and we use chicken pellets, garden lime, potash and blood and bone fertilizer and a little liquid seaweed, but all in moderation. Well, they don't come cheaply after all.

Meanwhile, the Hedgehogs are very sensibly off for a long sleep, and our Robin Redbreast gets ready to show off on Christmas cards.

Denis Parry

Poems and Prayers for the New Year

See, Amid the Winter's Snow See, amid the winter's snow Lots of cars that just won't go; It is not the drivers' fault – Councils have run out of salt! Here, we sit the whole night long! Where have all the snowploughs gone? If we'd known we'd be delayed We'd perhaps have a brought a spade!

Say, ye cheerful children, say Why aren't you in school today? 'We are skating round and round 'Cos the heating's broken down! 'Yes, the heating's gone beserk! 'Mum has missed a day at work! 'Though she's cross and seems on edge, 'We can ride upon our sledge!'

Sages on the weather show Said the sun would surely glow, And, said they, we may be sure Of a glorious day in store! But they missed a detail, small And the snow did thickly fall! But the met-men feel no shame – Their computer takes the blame! Nigel Beeton



A Prayer for Students

Grant, O Lord, to all students, to know what is worth knowing, to love what is worth loving, to praise what delights you most, to value what is precious in your sight and to reject what is evil in your eyes. Grant them true discernment to distinguish between different things. Above all, may they search out and do what is most pleasing to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thomas a Kempis

The Selkirk Grace

(Used at Burns Suppers)

Some hae meat and cannot eat. Some cannot eat that want it: But we hae meat and we can eat, Sae let the Lord be thankit

Reader Writes

Our little reading group has been looking at some of Leo Tolstoy's stories written later in life after the success of his big novels, which in some respects he came to despise. In his latter years he became more and more certain of faith and the contradictions around it. His own life and his marriage were often far from consistent with his declared beliefs. But for all that he is a master, and there are many who would declare Anna Karenina as the finest novel in the world. We looked at The Death of Ivan Ilych; an ambitious selfish lawyer puts his career and standing in the world ahead of his wife and his children. When stricken by a long illness Ilych moodily surveys his wasted life and finally repents of "choosing the wrong things" over family and true friendship and indeed faith. In the end, greatly fearing the "black bag" of death, he repents and at last sees "the light".

The story for me that most starkly contrasts this choice of worldly goods and ambitions over belonging to God was Master and Man written some 10 years later. It's a simple tragic story. A rather unprincipled and greedy merchant, determined to steal an advantage over his competitors, sets out late on a mid-winter day to try to close a deal on a stand of timber. The St Stephen's Day celebrations were scarcely over when he ordered the servant to harness his stallion and hitch up the sled. Master and man set out, late in the afternoon, snow beginning to fall. The master of course had 2 furs, the man had one rather threadbare coat. Needless to say, the wind got up, the light began to fade, the snow obscured the road and its markers. They kept losing the way, even passed through a village, but still the merchant determined to drive on.

Of course they get stuck, and lost, and prepare to spend a grim night out in the storm. The merchant tries to distract himself with calculations of how much he would make from this deal; the peasant resigns himself to death if necessary. The merchant even unhitched the horse and tried riding away, leaving the peasant to freeze; but he finds himself doing a circle and ending up back at the sledge. The contrasts are laid bare. Ambition, worldly riches, candles and icons versus the straight forward faith and repentance and wisdom of the peasant who was not unacquainted with the demon vodka. But the merchant has a conversion; "now I know what the real thing was ...now I know and I know for sure." The merchant unbelts his furs and lies on top of the peasant in the open sledge; "this is our way" he mutters, referring I think to an Orthodox faith. He is filled finally with joy as he falls into a deep and endless sleep. The peasant survives!

In this New Year, let's not wait for a storm or the quiet approach of death before we make our own choice. There is a God, and there is an eternity; everything looks different in the light of that eternity. Let's trust our year and our lives to God; that is our way. Jesus declared to the world "I am the light of the world" (Jn12:8). Seek and stay in that light! Robert MacCurrach

IN TOUCH - A message from the PPG

We're sorry to inform you that there will not be a report from Kington Medical Practice in the January issues of Parish Magazines. The Practice staff are working flat out and doing their utmost to organise and administer the covid vaccination programme. You are probably aware that the Government wishes to complete booster vaccinations by the end of January. In addition, it wishes

to ensure that all those eligible for vaccination against covid and flu are fully vaccinated in order to protect us all. Whilst the Practice of course shares these aims they do present the staff with a considerable amount of extra work in addition to the usual increase they have at this time of year as a consequence of winter ailments and falls etc.

With the emergence of the Omicron variant the situation is very changeable, and any advice given at the time of writing (9th December) could well be out of date by the time the magazines are published. In any event we all KNOW what to do to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe – let's repay the Practice for all their hard work by being sensible!

The Practice recently had a routine inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC report has not yet been published, but hopefully we will be able to give you a summary of their report in the February editions of your magazines.

Please note that the surgery will be closed on Monday 3rd January.

A Word from St Hugh's

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all thy wonderful deeds. Psalm 9 v 1.

It does not matter how many times we recite the Psalms, there is always a relevant truth fit for purpose in daily life. "Thankfulness" is one and a recurring theme throughout many of the psalms.



Kay Birchley

Each morning in our small chapel as we prepare to say Morning Prayer, the Sacristan will without fail draw our attention to the shapes and formations of the clouds, and

the colours of the sky as the early morning sun rises. These observations help us to feel grateful. Of course that moment could easily have been missed either by sleepiness, or thinking of the day's tasks!!

Listening to Dr Michael Mosley in a radio program on BBC 4, he suggested simple ways of improving our health and wellbeing and one episode was on "Gratitude". He indicated that we might acknowledge three things each day for which we feel a sense of thankfulness.

Perhaps when we endeavour to balance negative thought processes with thankfulness thoughts, the positive could well minimise the negative. It would appear that if we are grateful, the way to happiness might become possible with feelings of positiveness, and also general well being.

Spiritually we too are encouraged by Holy Scripture to give thanks to God each and every day. The more we do so, then God may have better access to our lives, and the opportunity to strengthen, deepen and affirm our faith. Gratitude assists in unlocking inner spiritual thinking and being. The tiny habit of saying two short words "Thank You" as often as possible may be a simple New Year's Resolution we can manage to keep!

A Carthusian Monk's reflection; Let us go forward with God and His Son Jesus Christ always giving thanks, willing creatively all he wills, clothing all things with beauty of his glory.

Peter and Pauline Swain. Tel. 01544 230999. Mobile 07950 877916 Email: pandpswain@gmail.com

Please feel free to contact us for specific prayers or queries about St. Hugh's.

Happy New Year!

Janus the janitor, god of the zippers, you wait at the door with my whisky and slippers; I sang Auld Lang Syne (what a hullabaloo!) while you zipped up the old year and unzipped the new.

Janus the janitor, god of two faces, you span fore and aft like a good pair of braces, peer into the future, examine the past and while opening this door the former make fast.

Janus the janitor, god of the doorposts, it's past twelve o'clock; I'll not drink any more toasts; so tell me, I pray you, before I make entry, what you see in the new year, O Janus the sentry.

Though I see past and future, I live in the present; there may be things evil, there may be things pleasant; your future depends on today, though unknown, likewise with no present, no past may you own.

You are what you are, and you cannot forego it, and save in the present you never can know it; so take whisky and slippers, and off to your bed: the password's TODAY – there's no more to be said.

My first teaching post as a qualified teacher was at Bembridge School on the Isle of Wight, set right on top of fairly steep cliffs above the Solent, from where you could hear music from ocean liners sailing out from Southampton. I took up residence in the Junior House at the outbreak of a nasty flu epidemic and spent the first couple of weeks sipping TCP and serving more like a ward doctor than a teacher, my room sandwiched between two long dormitories of bedridden junior boys. Once they were recovered, however, I discovered what a wonderful place the Island is, so much historical and geographical material for local studies, and for cliff-top rambles and early morning swims which would have given Health and Safety a field day. I would wake the boys early so that any who wished, perhaps up to a dozen, could come clambering and sliding down the slippery steep descent to the lovely beach, just me in charge, (in loco parentis?) to enjoy a dip, no lifeguard or boat or extra help available, and then climb back up for breakfast. Happy days! though I shudder to think of it now.

Still it was a wonderful way for TODAY to begin, and TODAY was the school's motto – which is why I relate this history. And what an excellent motto to have chosen! I'm sure the Roman god Janus would have approved. For when you think about it, TODAY is the only NOW when we are truly alive, as is suggested in my silly poem.



A 2-faced Janus like this is sometimes seen being used as a door knocker

And, we may ask ourselves, how long is NOW? How long is the present moment? An hour? A minute? Half a minute? A second? Half a second? You can go on halving that adinfinitum. Or can you? I never studied physics, it wasn't included in the curriculum of the pathetic grammar school I attended; so perhaps I can be forgiven for wondering whether down there at the bottom we might discover eternity. For eternity means outside time. It always worries me a bit when we pray for everlasting life. Do I really want to go on living for ever? I prefer to pray for eternal life, life outside time, which is where I believe God is, in Heaven.

But enough of this philosophical waffle. Janus the janitor bids us celebrate the New Year which starts on the first day of his month, January. His faces, which look both forwards and backwards, suggest we do the same, and it's probably a salutary thing to do, encouraging us to turn over a new leaf, make a resolution to do better than we did last year, a resolution which we may manage to keep for a week or two perhaps before we lapse back into our old wicked ways. I must tell you, however, how I once succeeded rather well. At the age of ten, I decided to give up sweets – well, they were rationed anyway – and it wasn't until I was called up to do National Service that a single sweet entered my mouth – I ate a Polo! *Denis Parry*

New Year Wordsearch

Here is a puzzle that include words associated with Epiphany and the wise men who, during the time of King Herod, rode on their camels to worship the baby Jesus. They were guided by the star, and brought gifts of gold, frankinsense and myrhh. January is also associated with new year resolutions when we vow to pay our bills on time, work and study hard, and try to lose weight by becoming more active such as going running or visiting the gym. Alas, they don't always last!

Epiphany Wise Men Camels Baby Jesus Star Herod Worship Gold Frankinsense Mvrhh New Resolutions Bills Work Study Running Gym

 WHRNAMERHEBO

 GINLBBLYYWJE

 NWSCSMDBCREW

 LHOEJNAYAUSI

 NEWRPBPNMNUS

 FRANKINCENSE

 EOMMHLPMLITL

 MDYSMLGHSNUG

 RGRTOSLDAGDO

 LOHAERNAENYL

 WAHRNNRSSRYD

 RESOLUTIONSI

What's on at the Cathedral

Epiphany Carol Service Sunday 9 January 2022, 3.30 pm

Sung by Hereford Cathedral Voluntary Choir, celebrating the veneration of the Christ-Child by the Magi. Tickets are required for this service: application forms can be collected from the cathedral or downloaded from herefordcathedral.org

Here beginneth... the lectionary! A talk by Revd Canon Chris Pullin

Start: 20 January, 2022 at 7:00pm End: 20 January, 2022 at 8:30pm Location: Reading Room, Hereford Cathedral, Hereford, HR1 2NG

Christmas Oratorio

Start: 29 January, 2022 at 7:00pm End: 29 January, 2022 at 10:00pm

Living in Love and Faith A 5 week course led by Revd Canon Chris Pullin

Start: 31 January, 2022 at 7:00pmEnd: 28 February, 2022 at 7:00pmLocation:Old Chapel, Hereford Cathedral, Hereford, HR1 2NG

'Notorious, but remarkably efficient, Gurney stoves' A talk by Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe

Start: 16 February, 2022 at 3:00pm End: 16 February, 2022 at 4:00pm

Location: South Transept, Hereford Cathedral, Hereford, HR1 2NG

Vegetarian Haggis

With Burns Night taking place on 25th January here is a recipe for anyone who would like to eat a vegetarian version of this famous Scottish dish.



Ingredients

- 1 tbsp {1 Sml) sunflower oil
- 50g (2oz) onions, very finely chopped
- 50g (2oz) carrots, very finely chopped
- 35g (1.5 oz) mushrooms, finely chopped
- 50g (2oz) red lentils
- 600ml (1 pt) vegetable stock
- 25g (1 oz) mashed, tinned red kidney beans
- 35g (1.5 oz) ground peanuts
- 25g (1 oz) ground hazelnuts
- 2tbsp (30ml) soy sauce
- 1tbsp (15 ml) lemon juice
- 11h tsp dried thyme
- 1tsp dried rosemary
- Generous pinch cayenne pepper
- 112 tsp mixed spice
- 200g (8oz) fine oatmeal
- Freshly ground black pepper You'll Also Need - 1 lb loaf tiin

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 190°C (375°F, gas mark 5).

- 2. Sauté the onion in the oil for 5 mins, then add the carrot and mushrooms and cook for a further 5 mins.
- 3. Now add the lentils and three quarters of the stock.
- 4. Blend the mashed red kidney beans in the remaining stock, add these to the pan with the nuts, soy, lemon juice and seasonings. Cook everything, well mixed together, for a further $10 \cdot 15$ mins.
- 5. Then add the oatmeal, reduce the heat and simmer gently for 15 20 mins,
- adding a little extra liquid if necessary.
- 6. Turn the mixture into a lightly oiled 1 lb
- loaf tin and bake for 30mins.
- 7. Serve with mashed neeps and tatties.

January Crossword

Across

- 8 How the Abyss (NIV) is described in the Authorized Version (Revelation 9:1) (10,3)
- 9 Frozen water (Ezekiel 1:22) (3)
- 10 The Ten Commandments (9)
- 11 In Roman Catholic theology, neither heaven nor hell (5)
- 13 Des cons (anag.) (7)
- 16 'Though [your sins] are red as , they shall be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18) (7)
- 19 Keen (Romans 1:15) (5)
- 22 Repugnant, loathsome (Jeremiah 24:9) (9)
- 24 Drink like an animal (Judges 7:5) (3)
- 25 First and last (Revelation 22:13) (5,3,5)

Down

- 1 Father of Ahi, a Gadite (1 Chronicles 5:15) (6)
- 2 Where David found the stone with which he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (6)

22

2%

- 3 'Hour by hour fresh lips are making thy doings heard on high' (8)
- 4 'And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their at night' (Luke 2:8) (6)
- 5 United Society for Christian Literature (1,1,1,1)
- 6 'If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would — or a tax collector' (Matthew 18:17) (1,5)
- 7 Where Paul was taken when things became difficult for him in Berea (Acts 17:15) (6)
- 12 Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican Bank) (1,1,1)
- 14 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new ; the old has gone, the new has come!' (2 Corinthians 5:17) (8)
- 15 Used to colour ram skins red for use in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5) (3)
- 16 Vat car (anag.) (6)
- 17 'Be joyful — , patient in affliction, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (6)
- 18 'The parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts special treatment' (1 Corinthians 12:23) (4,2)
- 20 Ancient rowing boat (Isaiah 33:21) (6)
- 21 Say again (2 Corinthians 11:16) (6)
- 23 What Jesus did in the synagogue in Nazareth after he stood up (Luke 4:16) (4)

Answers to December Crossword ACROSS: 1, Lame. 3, Obtained. 8, Omit. 9, Merchant.
11, Burdensome. 14, Crafty. 15, Please. 17, Blacksmith. 20, Splendid. 21, Tier. 22, Singeing.
23, Hand. DOWN: 1, Look back. 2, Main road. 4, Breast. 5, Accomplish. 6, Near. 7, Date.
10, Pestilence. 12, Basilica. 13, Tethered. 16, Action. 18, Asa's. 19, Clan.



News from Theodora No.10

May I say that I could apologise for the lack of appreciation of our winter season in Kington. The following was written in the high summer of 2008. I hope that it will serve to remind you or the bright days ahead. By the time you read this we will be beyond the winter solstice. Longer days and snowdrops very soon now.

Sideways across the Severn 29/5/08

Hm...

It looks as if I have been neglecting my journal. It is well nigh a month since I last wrote. I have been suffering from Writers' Block and have been so busy. "What with?" you say ungrammatically and with derision, "Some of us have to earn our money and the exam season is upon us and the amount of coursework to do or to mark and send off is too much to express in words of more or fewer than four letters."

I do sympathise with you all but the continuous cruiser also has his burdens. Frexample: who among you has done five hundred and sixty six locks since the twentieth of February? Who has looked after a twenty five year old Sherpa van engine while it chugs along for four hundred and thirty eight hours and forty eight minutes? Who has removed debris from around the propeller on no fewer than three occasions? Only three! That's good. I thought that the canals and rivers were messier than that.

Enough of that. What have we done of note since I last wrote? If I recall correctly we were half way up the Oxford Canal at Aynho when I last wrote. We are now a few miles up the Staffs and Worcester a bit north of Kidder-minster. In between times we have been up the Grand Union from Napton Junction to Kingswood Junction. That meant that we did the famous Hatton Flight of twenty one locks in the most beautiful weather. The ancient (even older than I) Triumph Sports bike with the oil bath chain case and three speed Sturmey Archer saved lots of time on this. You pedal up the hill to the next lock while the one with Theodora and Margaret in fills. Then open the paddles to set the lock and coast down the hill to let Theodora and Margaret out of the lock that they are in. By this time the lock that you have just set should be empty so you belt up the hill again to open the gates before they get there. Good fun and does wonders to the waistline. Hot, though.

From Kingswood Junction we went south down the South Stratford. The South Stratford is seriously beautiful. We did a bit of tourist stuff and called in at Mary Arden's but she wasn't in. Her house is lovely, though, and there were not too many crowds. We hung around a bit and Margaret continued with the painting of Theodora who is now looking a lot better without the all over dark red that she had before. I will see if I can upload a few staged shots of her in various stages of being painted.

We joined the Avon at Stratford and stayed there for a few days. We went to see the Merchant of Venice at the Courtyard Theatre. It was done by the Royal Shakespeare Company but the big theatre is being given a huge facelift so it was staged across the road. We will take Theodora down there again when the new theatre is finished and see Stratford when the area around the canal basin is less of a building site.

So that we did the whole of the navigable Avon, we went upstream to the lim-it of navigation, only a mile or two, and more painting was done. Going down the Upper Avon to Evesham we noted that there are more mobile home parks on the banks of the Avon than any other waterway that we have yet visited. I don't think that the Warwickshire planning officers have boats. The other notable thing about the Avon is the tendency to have unmarked weirs. These can be invisible when you approach them from upstream. We were happily cruising down towards the lock at Evesham and knew that there is a weir there. I could see the arrow indicating the direct for the lock and was look-ing for the weir but I could not tell where is was until I saw a swan standing in the middle of the river. Scary to think that some people don't use maps!

Much of the Avon is very beautiful and we bowled along merrily all the way to Tewkesbury where it finds the Severn. We spent a few day in Tewkesbury where we met some freinds who had rides in the boat. Linda and Mike had good weather for an afternoon's jaunt. Anne and Steve had wall to wall rain for their day and a half's jaunt. They all said that they enjoyed in and thank you very much but they might have been being polite. We have polite friends. We enjoyed it very much. It was good to see them.

We plugged along up the Severn and gave the engine lots of hard work. It was between Worcester and Stourport that we happened across a narrow boat at right angles to the flow of the river. This is not a usual occurrence in a river and he was stationary: stern on the bank and bow in the middle of a reasonably fast flowing stream. The chap on the bow waved us past but I am nosey and slowed down to investigate this strange thing. Having interrogated the skipper I discovered that he had broken down and, as is sensible, had let go the anchor and called the hire company. The company man was down the engine hole sorting things out when we arrived but the boat was a positive hazard to navigation. Now I imagine that having let go the anchor the boat would have come to rest in line with the flow of the river. How they had managed to get the stern to the bank I know not. However, this was done and the stern was firmly moored to a couple of trees. What was exercising the chaps on board was the fact that the force of the water on the boat was such that they could not weigh the anchor. Two chaps leaning over the side of the boat had insufficient strength to pull the boat upstream so that they could break the anchor out of the mud. I found this entirely unsurprising. I offered to tow their bow upstream with Theodora so that they could weigh the anchor. This was accomplished with some hard work from Theo-dora's BMC 1.5. I was truly proud of the old diesel. Once they had the anchor up we let go the tow rope and their bow drifted downstream until they were much more sensibly alongside. It was all highly entertaining.

After that there was no further excitement and we arrived safely in Stourport. I must say that it is rather nice to be back on canals after a lot of river work. Particularly, it is nice to be back on narrow canals.

No chuffing trains 8/6/08

We have experienced another superfluity of sublimities since I last wrote. We have traversed the whole of the Staffordshire and Worcester Canal from Stourport to Great Haywood, a little of the Trent and Mersey from Great Haywood to Etruria and the Caldon Canal about one and a half times from Etruria to Froghall and half way back.

Might I suggest that those who have yet to experience the delights of canal-ling hire a boat from Anglo Welsh at Great Haywood and set of South along the Staffs and Worcester. This canal is most delightful. There are 43 locks and it is 46 miles long and for much of the route it could have been land-scaped by Capability Brown. It owes something to the fact that the owners of Tixall Hall, of which only the gatehouse survives, wanted something special from their view of the canal and insisted that it be a couple of hundred yards wide so that it looks for all the world like an ornamental lake. Canal people sensibly call it "Tixall Wide". The Staffs and Worcester also owes some of its beauty to the red sandstone through which much of the southern part is cut. It is all set about with ferny grots and mossy brakes and even has a stable cut into the rock at one of the locks. It also boasts one or two hexagonal canal offices. Oh yes, and I nearly forgot the circular weirs. Most pleasing. I fear that there are no tales of drama and derring do for this episode of Theodora's Adventures. All the mechanical systems are working. I had to do a bit of plumbing when we started losing cooling water but that was soon fixed. We lost the witches hat which keeps rain out of the stove to a rather low branch of an oak tree. We did some minor modifications to the shape of the chimney trying to pass beneath the arch of bridge number 18 of the Caldon Canal. Apart from that boating has passed without incident. I nearly forgot to add that we had another polythene bag around the propeller.

As you have noticed, it is June, therefore summer. This means that boats are out it force. On some days we have met as many as five of them in a single day. On one occasion we had to stop a wait for another boat to go up the lock in front of us. On another occasion we had to wait for a boat to come down the lock that we wanted to use. This made the crowds on the Churnet steam railway seem rather daunting. We had to share the carriage on the down train with some other people but we managed to get a compartment to ourselves on the down train. I have to say that I was slightly dischuffed to observe that our train did not chuff. It went "brum" because it was drawn by a large diesel-electric locomotive. It was good fun, though, because the scenery and the weather were both beautiful and we stopped at Consall forge and had a lovely walk up through the woods. On occasions I believe that we were dragged over the rails at speeds up to forty miles per hour. This worried us. We have not experienced speeds of one tenth as much for some time and the contrast was great.

Here are some figures that I find quite surprising: we have covered 801.4 miles and operated 640 locks since we left Sproxton in February and we still think that canalling is the best thing ever. We hope to visit Cheddleton Flint Mill tomorrow. We are moored up outside it but they seem to be quite coy about opening times. We will have a walk around the outside anyway.

More next month...

Nick



For more information ring 07970 595 420



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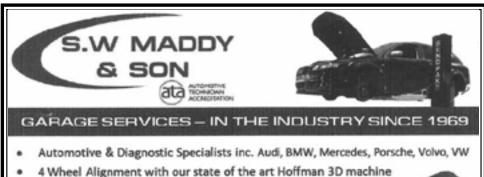
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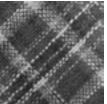


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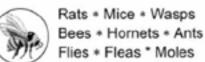
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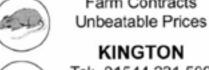


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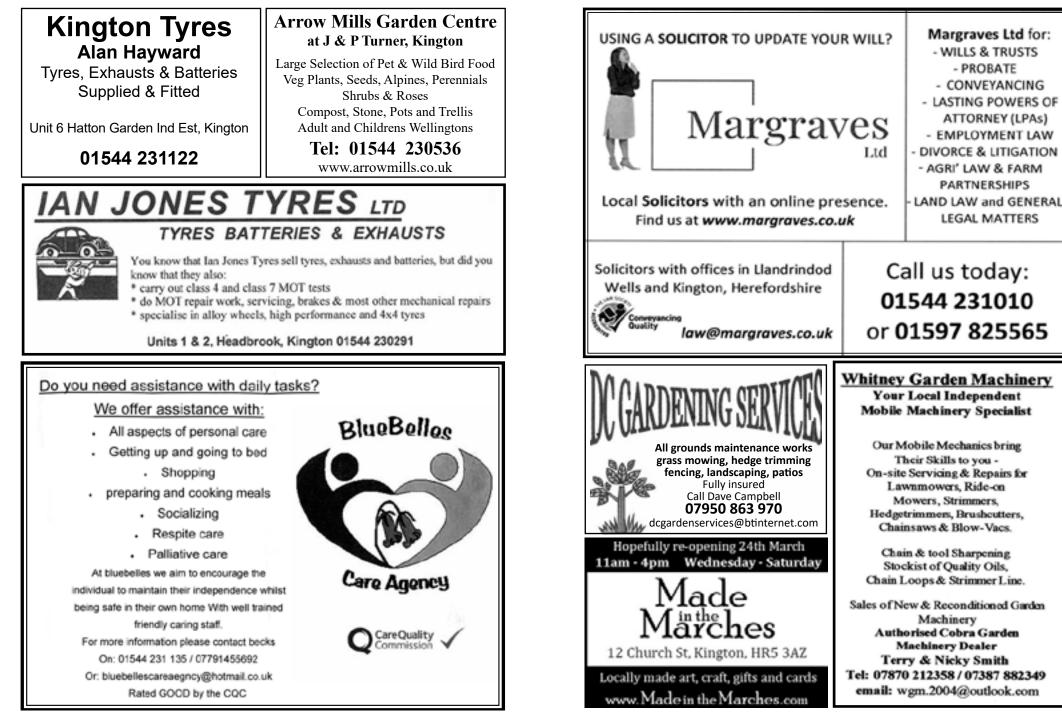
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Wed 12 Jan	12.30pm	Kington WI Birthday Lunch at the Burton Hotel
Sat 15 Jan		Cut-off date for the February Parish News
Wed 19 Jan	12.30pm	Community Lunch at the Parish House
Thur 20 Jan	7.30pm	Horticultural Society meeting at the Masonic Hall, Headbrook

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