

LINK

Monthly Magazine

50p

December
2014

A Joyful and Peaceful Christmas to All Our Readers



St Mary the Virgin, Rickmansworth
The Church of England and The Methodist Church in Partnership
Serving the whole community



REGULAR SERVICES

PLEASE SEE CALENDAR ON CENTRE PAGES FOR FURTHER DETAILS, AND OCCASIONAL VARIATIONS AND ADDITIONS

	TIME	SERVICE	FORM
SUNDAYS			
Weekly	8.00AM	Holy Communion	Anglican BCP
1st	10.00AM	Family Communion followed by coffee in the Church Centre	United Rite
2nd-5th	10.00AM	Sung Holy Communion followed by coffee in the Church Centre Children's Church in the Church Centre Crèche in the Tower	
2nd Weekly	12.15PM 6.00PM	Holy Communion Evening Service	United Rite
WEEKDAYS			
Mon-Fri	8.30AM	Morning Prayer	
Tue	9.30AM	Holy Communion	United Rite
Mon-Fri	5.45PM	Evening Prayer	

CONTACTS

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Opening Hours	9.30AM-1.30PM, MON, THU, FRI, and 1.00-3.00PM WED, in school term time		



LINK

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The Vicar's Letter

Dear Friends

“So which is your favourite ad? The penguin or the chocolate bar?” This is the question a lot of people have asked me over the past few days. In fact, I’ve only seen one of them so far.



The way in which we speak about the latest ad on television or story-line in *The Archers* or fall from grace of yet another personality/ politician/ business guru is, I imagine, rather like the way in which the fact that a child had been born in Bethlehem and was receiving some shepherds as visitors was talked about 2,000 years ago. “What do you think?” “Why them?” “Can you believe it?” And then there were the visitors from the East when Jesus was a few years old...

When I was studying to be a Primary School Teacher, my Psychology Tutor noted that ‘The Press’ had to use increasingly eye-popping and sensationalist headlines in order to grab the attention of the public. People become immune to what is in front of them and so extra effort is needed. Perhaps this is the methodology God was using when he sent a star, then shepherds, then wise men from the East to mark the fact that he had come into the world as a child. God had done what the people had been pleading with him to do: ‘Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down...’ (Isaiah 64.1).

I love the fact that God never gives up on seeking different ways of trying to get through to the people that he is involved in their lives, that he is listening to their cries and that he is able and willing, and has indeed, come down to be in the midst of them.

Advent is about connecting again with the reality of God in our midst and the difference that this makes to our lives. It is about waiting, longing, getting ready, putting our house in order so that we will be ready for when He comes again. Christ has come, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. In Advent we live this truth - the infant Christ came; the adult Christ rose

again; and now we wait for his coming again in glory when he shall come to be our judge.

So let us make ourselves ready. Let us not be swayed from the pathway. Let us be ready to meet him when he comes. A special star, the Incarnation, the Resurrection... it doesn't get more cataclysmic than any of these... but it will. Advent is about getting ready for when it does.

Let us journey together in hope and believing.

Readings at Communion

7 Dec	Isa 40.1-11*	2 Pet 3.8-15a*	Mark 1.1-8
14 Dec	Isa 61.1-4, 8-11	1 Thess 5.16-24	John 1.6-8,19-28
21 Dec	2 Sam 7.1-11,16	Rom 16.25-27	Luke 1.26-38
24 Dec	Isa 52.7-11	Heb 1.1-4	John 1.1-14
25 Dec	Isa 62.6-12	Titus 3.4-7	Luke 2.1-20
28 Dec	Jer 31.15-17	1 Cor 1.26-29	Matt 2.13-18

*8.00am service only

Prayers

Weekly Pointers for the Month

7 Dec	For time to think and reflect
14 Dec	For courage to speak
21 Dec	For willingness to give
28 Dec	For grace to be thankful

For Local Churches

	The Deanery	The Methodist Circuit
7 Dec	St Oswald's, Croxley Green	Berry Lane, Mill End
14 Dec	Sarratt and Chipperfield	Bushey and Oxhey
21 Dec	St Andrew's, Chorleywood	Carpenders Park & South Oxhey
28 Dec	St Lawrence, Bovington	Croxley Green

People Living in Rickmansworth

- 7 Dec Sherfield Avenue
- 14 Dec Woodcock Hill, Shrubs Road
- 21 Dec Anson Walk, Astons Road
- 28 Dec Askew Road, Sandy Lodge Road

St Mary's Network

- 1 Dec Bill and Alyson Sylvester, John Thacker
- 2 Dec Brett and Sue Thomas, Hugh and Mary Thomas
- 3 Dec Eilian and Carol Thomas, Renny and Gillian Thomas
- 4 Dec Nick Tibbles, Timothy and Elizabeth Tims
- 5 Dec Alice Tims, Mabel Tindall

- 8 Dec Andrew and Lynne Turner, Neil and Rachel Turvey
- 9 Dec Louise Ungar, Alison Vincent
- 10 Dec John and Helen Walker, Brian and Pat Warmington
- 11 Dec Mary Weatherilt, Jackie Wilcox
- 12 Dec Roger and Frances Willett, Nesta Williams

- 15 Dec Marion Willmore, Margaret Winder
- 16 Dec Gillian Winder, Malcolm and Jenny Woods
- 17 Dec Pat Woollams, David and Jaleh Yeaman
- 18 Dec Ivy Addison-Quarshie, Simon and Julie Allard
- 19 Dec Steve and Pat Allard, Heather Allum

Extended Study Leave

The Revd Deborah Snowball

Further to the information I shared in the August edition of LINK, I can now provide further information and dates for you... I shall be 'out of action' from 11 January until 10 April. For security reasons, I shall not be telling people publicly when I am away - but Barbara, Derek, Michael, Scott and Gareth will all know my whereabouts at any given time. Please feel free to ask them, but don't tell the whole of Rickmansworth. I would like some of my possessions in my house when I return!

Some people have asked about parking at The Vicarage as a 'security deterrent' on my behalf. As I have people coming to stay in the Vicarage whilst I am away, I should be most grateful if you would refrain from parking at The Vicarage so as to maintain their privacy. This applies at any time in fact - whether I am away or not. If you are in the habit of parking without asking here at The Vicarage 'just for a few minutes' - please don't... thanks!

A Prayer from Junior Church

One Sunday in October, the Sunday School thought about what they needed to say sorry about to God. This was Grace's confession

Dear Jesus

Please help me to go to bed on time and stop saying mean things to people and hert them.

Amen

Although the Sunday School lesson was nothing to do with him, we think Father Christmas will include Grace and all our other Sunday School children in his rounds this Christmas.



Christmas at St Mary's

Batchworth Lock Christmas Carol-singing

At 4.30pm on Saturday 13 December we gather for the Carol Service organised by the Boaters' Christian Fellowship at Batchworth Lock. Sing some favourite Christmas carols to the accompaniment of a brass band. Wrap up warm and bring along a torch!

Christingle Service

This is at **4.00pm on Sunday 14 December**. Come and join us as we sing carols as well as make and light our Christingles in this delightful service - one with children especially in mind.

Following the service we enjoy cakes and drinks in the Church Centre. If you can call to let us know you're coming that would be helpful - but if you don't get a chance, come along anyway. This service raises money for The Children's Society. If you would like a special Christingle candle to collect money in, drop into or call Louise in the Parish Office.

The Christmas Tree of Prayer

Continuing the tradition of decorating our Christmas Tree of Prayer with the names of those family, friends or situations we are thinking of now, the 'decorations' on this special tree are the stars that shine as lights of hope. The tree will be in church from Sunday 21 December until Twelfth Night. The church is open during daylight hours for you to come and add names, and you are welcome to invite others to do so too. Feel free to spread the word

Carol Singing with Churches Together

We're engaging in another spot of Community Carol Singing around the town, along with friends from other churches in Rickmansworth and Mill End, all in aid of the charity, Crisis. Come and join us on Saturday 20 December: 10 - 11am at Marks and Spencer (car park side) and 2-3pm at Tudor Parade. If you can't sing - come and shake a tin for us!

Decorating the Church

The church will be decorated for Christmas on Monday 22 December from 10.00am. Please bring foliage with berries to the church that morning (please do not leave it in the tower before the day).

Christmas Greetings

There are two options for sharing Christmas greetings at St Mary's this year:

1) There is a board at the back of church where people can put up a card to everyone in the parish. Money that would have been spent on cards is then given to the charities named below via the same system.

2) Lettered boxes will be at the back of church for people to post their cards to other members of the congregation. There is a 'charge' of 10p per card which will be divided equally between the Children's Society and National Children's Homes (Action for Children). Please drop payment into the Parish Office. The boxes will be available from Sunday 14 December until after the Service on Sunday 4 January. Any cards not collected by this date will be given over to a recycling facility. If you see some cards you could deliver, please do so.

Carol Service

Our Carol Service at **6.00pm on Sunday 21 December** will be followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the Church Centre. The members of X Team will be making the pies this year, but if you would like to donate a few, feel free: please bring them along in the morning.

Crib Service

4.00pm Christmas Eve

This is principally for families but others are also welcome to attend. If you are bringing along younger family members, please encourage them to dress up as a shepherd, lamb or an angel. We usually have far too many Josephs... yes, really!

Services through the Christmas Season

In addition to our usual Sunday Services, the following are offered.

Blue Christmas

6.00pm, Sunday 28 December

Christmas is a difficult time for some, for all sorts of reasons. This is a quieter, more reflective service, with readings and music to offer comfort. All are welcome.

Carols, Music and Readings at the Crib

6.00pm, Sunday 4 January

We sing the last carols of the Christmas season and hear readings and music to bring to a close this time of celebration.

Looking forward to Epiphany,

Tuesday 6 January

On the Feast of the Epiphany, we shall have two services, at 9.30am and 7.45pm. By special request, we shall be using incense in the evening. If you are able, come and join us for the Service and then for refreshments at The Vicarage afterwards.

Christmas Entertainment for St Marys

Chris Hillier



A Motley Crew Double Bill
Old Time Music Hall
and



***Robinson Crusoe* – the pantomime**
Fri 2 Jan at 7.30pm; Sat 3 Jan 2.30pm and 7.30pm
St Mary's Church Centre

Tickets: £7.50 adults, £4.00 Children
from Sue Hillier (779580) or the Parish Office

Cash Bar

Refreshments, tea and coffee

Once again St Mary's is going to entertain you - The Motley Crew and friends are putting on an Old Time Music Hall and a pantomime - "Oh no they're not" I hear you cry!

There will be a veritable extravaganza of entertainment not just an Old Time Music Hall with many St Mary's personalities appearing as you've never seen them before but this is not all... The Music Hall will be followed by a traditional pantomime - the story of Robinson Crusoe with real life pirates of all sizes, ethereal beings, love stories and a sea battle worthy of Steven Spielberg himself! A good time is guaranteed for all.

See you there, book early to avoid disappointment as tickets are limited!

The Revd Gareth Powell

We extend to Gareth our warm congratulations on his recent appointment. He is to serve as the Secretary of Conference from 1 September 2015. The role is one of the most senior positions of Church leadership in Methodism, alongside the roles of President and Vice-President of the Conference. The Methodist Council meets three times annually to undertake ongoing work on behalf of the Methodist Conference, which is the governing body of the Methodist Church.

He will succeed the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, who remains in post until 31 August 2015. Martyn, offering his congratulations, said, "He is a person of great gifts and I look forward to the next nine months when we shall work together in a time of transition seeking the health, unity of benefit of the whole Methodist Church."

Well, we at St Mary's have been fortunate to discover that already and Methodism's gain will sadly mean that we shall almost certainly enjoy less of him. As we have not published

Gareth's profile in LINK so far, readers may be interested in what the Methodist news-sheet, The Week Ahead, has to say about him.

Gareth has been the Assistant Secretary of the Conference since 2011. He read theology at Westminster College, Oxford and then undertook ministerial training at The Queen's College, Birmingham, obtaining an MA in Pastoral Theology before spending time at the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies, the University of Geneva. Having served in the Coventry Circuit, he was ordained in 1999, when he was stationed to the Cardiff Circuit as a circuit minister and university chaplain. From 2002-2008 he was Methodist Chaplain and Chaplaincy Coordinator at Cardiff University.

In 2009 he was directly stationed to the Connexional Team to be based in the Governance Support Cluster as the President's Assistant and is currently Head of Governance Support. Since 2010 Gareth has been a member of the Council of Cardiff University. He has vast experience of ecumenical partnerships and is highly respected in such circles. He is a member of the Council of Christian Unity of the Church of England. He was a member of the Methodist/Roman Catholic Committee from 2001 to 2012 and was The Ecumenical Officer of Y Gymanfa from 2005-7. He has served on a variety of committees of the Methodist Church.

Meetings of the United Church Council September

Matters discussed included: Coffee after church - specifically that the profits from donations will go to the charity Toybox. The Charitable Giving Policy was reviewed, including the amount we give away and which charities we will be giving to as a result of Planned Giving in 2015. The **UK based** charities agreed are:

ASCEND, 'Beat the Killer Cold', Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust, Church Housing Trust, Herts Young Homeless, Michael Sobell House League of Friends, New Bridge, Nine Lives, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Linda Jackson Macmillan Centre, Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Project, Watford Sheltered Workshop, Street Angels (c/o Town Centre Chaplaincy).

Overseas based ones are: ABCD Project, Anglican Diocese of Kumasi in Ghana, Barnabas Fund, Espoir Congo, Five Talents, McCabe Educational Project (Anand Niwas Boys Home), Freedom from Torture, Save the Children (South Sudan), Send a Cow, Shelterbox, Toybox, Work Aid.

We have agreed a Reserves Policy. In view of the overhanging of a substantially sized branch, we agreed to the pollarding of the plane tree by the North Porch as advised by TRDC.

November

Matters discussed included: The news of the bequest of £5,000 from the estate of Sylvia Carter. A letter of thanks has been sent to her family. The Budget for 2015 was agreed - we are hoping that, with increased giving, we may make a slight surplus of income over expenditure. Items relating to the Garden of Remembrance: words and naming on plaques (to be names and dates only, with only one person's name allowed per plaque), general tidiness - with the need to attend to the re-alignment of some stones. Money for this will come out of the fees paid to St Mary's by families when ashes are interred and/or plaques placed.

At an **extra-ordinary general meeting of parishioners** on 16 November, Simon Allard and Darryl Sharp were elected to the Deanery Synod.

Remembrance Sunday

Rickmansworth's Remembrance Sunday Service was one of the best attended for many years, no doubt due to all the national publicity for the 100th anniversary of the First World War and media coverage. All the Church Centre chairs had been brought into the church, which seemed already almost full when the parade arrived, but somehow everyone was seated and a moving and dignified service began in the church and continued around the War Memorial, the congregation crowding around the large rectangle for the traditional part of the commemoration.



The collection and sale of poppies raised about £1000 for the Royal British Legion.

Throughout the day, Brian Morgan's exhibition describing the birth of plastic surgery in WW1, in the Church Centre and Lilly Gowing's knitted model of a Poppy Parade, mounted by Peter Loosley, both attracted much attention.



Choir Inspire

John Shaw

It was a bit of a leap in the dark but in the event it turned out really well. 'It' was a day, organised by the Royal School of Church Music, to encourage members of Church choirs and to remind us of some of the key aspects of successful choral singing. It was held at Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School at Aldenham - fine buildings, and playing fields so immaculate that one wondered whether anyone ever played on them. Five of us went (Andrew Sykes, Brian Warmington, Joan Martin, Heather Pearce and myself). Heather went under her own steam; Andrew (master of the sharp left turn at speed) kindly drove the rest of us.

The day, which was a sell-out, began with a plenary session (for all 200 of us), led by Brian Kay, the well-known broadcaster and chorus master. He was a founder member (bass) of the King's Singers, Chorus Master of the Huddersfield Choral Society for many years and, according to his web-site 'the lowest frog in a Paul McCartney single'. But his key local claim to fame is that he is Shirley Lupton's cousin. Brian took us through various warming up exercises, enthused us about the day's prospects and told us some very funny stories, none of which I can now remember. I do, however, remember his strong support for volunteering with the best quip of the day, 'Remember. Noah's ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic was built by professionals'.

And then we had a round of four workshops to attend, each lasting 50 minutes. We had chosen them in advance from a long list of options. Some sounded too demanding (Advanced Choral Singing, for example) or outside one's technical reach (Choosing Repertoire for the Organ or Conducting with Confidence). Others too mysterious (West Gallery Music). So, most of us plumped for Gospel Music and Singing for Fun. The former was led by a West Indian woman of tremendous energy and huge voice; she soon

had us clapping cheerfully off the beat, swinging our hips (a little self-consciously) and shouting 'Allelujah' at regular intervals. The latter was - despite not feeling well - led by an energetic Primary School teacher who soon had us singing all manner of children's songs, complete with catchy tunes and complicated actions. If you know any children of this age, ask them if they know the 'Bungalow Song' and get them to demonstrate it. Then join in with 'My hands are high, my feet are low; this (*silly action of choice*) is how I bungalow'.

The day concluded with Evensong, which included parts of Durufle's Requiem, which we had rehearsed earlier in the day, and Stanford's setting in B flat of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. It was inspiring to take part in such a service and we all felt that the day had been well spent. There is, of course, a natural friendliness among Christians and this was magnified during the day by the fact that we were all there because of our love of singing. Then home and Choral Evensong the following day with an attendance of only ten people in the congregation. What next? 'Congregation Inspire', perhaps?

Watford & Three Rivers Refugee Project

A letter we received from Mick Hayte, a volunteer with the project

We were delighted to have received some of your Harvest Festival gifts. These are especially needed as our stocks are constantly being used up to support our clients. In June we made up 33 boxes which unfortunately was the highest number to date although this has now reduced slightly. Sadly this is indicative of the lack of help they receive from the government.

We now run a Drop-in Centre every Tuesday and Friday from 11am until 1pm, at St. John's Church in Sutton Road Watford, where people in need can come in for coffee and a chat. At the

Centre on a Tuesday we hold ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes which are well attended.

To enable us to offer help to all those in need we need a few extra caring people, with some spare time, who could befriend one of our clients. This is a very rewarding rôle and means a great deal to the client. Any volunteers? Do contact me (262781) in the first instance if you can help.

We do very much appreciate your continuing support.

Rickmansworth Society Autumn Market

Barbara Paterson

Many thanks to all those who made biscuits for our stall at this community event. The response was amazing; it took us (myself, Madge and Jenny) all day to do the packaging, which was so worthwhile.

120 bags of biscuits were made, and those not sold on the Saturday (with help from Judith and Dorothy), were soon snapped up on Sunday morning. The quality of your bake was exceptional - Mary Berry would be proud of you!



It was good to be taking part. £175 was made for church funds.

Stop Press

Shortly before our editorial meeting we heard that the General Synod had approved the motion that women will now be considered for the episcopacy.

CALENDAR

December 2014

- 1 Mon ANDREW, THE APOSTLE**
 12.30pm J Club, St Mary's School
 2.00pm Clergy Fraternal Meeting
 7.45pm Community and Outreach Committee (Cloisters Hall)
- 2 Tue** 9.30am Holy Communion Service United Rite
 7.30pm Chiltern Choir rehearsal
- 3 Wed** 7.00pm St Mary's School Governing Body meets
- 4 Thu** 10.30am St Mary's School Assembly
Copy deadline for January LINK
- 5 Fri** 7.30pm Lemon Tuesday Concert in Church
- 6 Sat** 1.00pm Chiltern Choir rehearsal and concert
- 7 SUN THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
 8.00am Holy Communion Service Anglican BCP
 0.00am Family Communion Service United Rite
 Home Communions
 6.00pm Advent Carol Service
- 8 MON THE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**
 11.30am Prayer for healing Group (in Church)
 12.30pm J Club, St Mary's School
 7.30pm LINK Editors meeting
 7.45pm Fabric and Churchyard Committee (Cloisters Hall)
- 9 Tue** 9.30am Holy Communion Service United Rite
 12noon Ten-bell Ringing Practice, *All ringers welcome*
 7.45pm Exploring Prayer Group (at Vicarage) *All welcome*
- 10 Wed** 7.45pm Housegroup (for contact, see cover)
- 11 Thu** 10.30am St Mary's School Assembly
- 12 Fri** 11.00am Charlotte House End of Term Service
- 13 Sat** 10.00am Wedding Meeting
 4.30pm Carols at Batchworth Lock
- 14 SUN THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
 8.00am Holy Communion Service Anglican BCP
 10.00am Sung Communion Service United Rite
 12.15pm Holy Communion Service United Rite
 1.00pm Lunch Club

- 4.00pm Christingle Service
 6.00pm Said Evening Prayer
 7.00pm X Team
- 15 Mon 12.30pm J Club, St Mary's School
 7.45pm Stewardship and Finance Committee (Cloisters Hall)
- 16 Tue 9.30am Holy Communion Service United Rite
 7.00pm Carols at The Rose and Crown, Harefield
- 17 Wed 7.30pm Wedding Meeting
- 19 Fri 9.00am St Mary's School End of Term Service
- 20 Sat 10.00am Churches Together Carol Singing for Crisis
 at Marks and Spencer
 2.00pm Churches Together Carol Singing for Crisis
 at Tudor Parade
- 21 SUN THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
 8.00am Holy Communion Service Anglican BCP
 10.00am Sung Communion Service United Rite
 6.00pm Christmas Carol Service
followed by mulled wine and mince pies
- 22 Mon 10.00am Decorating the Church for Christmas
 1.00pm Children's Craft Workshops
- 23 Tue 9.30am Holy Communion Service United Rite
- 24 Wed Christmas Eve**
 4.00pm Crib Service
 11.30pm Midnight Christmas Communion Service
with the Blessing of the Crib
- 25 THU CHRISTMAS DAY**
 8.00am Holy Communion Service Anglican BCP
 10.00am Family Communion Service United Rite
- 26 Fri STEPHEN, DEACON, FIRST MARTYR**
- 27 Sat JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST**
- 28 SUN THE HOLY INNOCENTS**
 8.00am Holy Communion Service Anglican BCP
 10.00am Sung Communion Service United Rite
 12noon Holy Baptism
 6.00pm *Blue Christmas Service*
January LINK is published

30 Tue 9.30am Holy Communion Service United Rite

January 2015

1 THU THE NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS

2 Fri 7.30pm Motley Crew Entertainment (see page 10)

3 Sat 2.30pm Motley Crew Entertainment

7.30pm Motley Crew Entertainment

4 SUN THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

8.00am Holy Communion Service Anglican BCP

10.00am Family Communion Service United Rite
Home Communions

6.00pm Carols and Readings at the Crib

6 TUE THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

9.30am Communion Service United Rite

7.45pm Sung Communion Service (*with incense*)

Regular Weekly Practices

Wed 7.30pm Bellringing Thu 7.45pm Choir

New members welcome at both practices - just come along

The Thames Challenge: Raising Money for Parkinson's UK

Gill Bayley

Thank you to all those who gave donations to the Bayley Girls' Thames Path Challenge. The girls completed their 50K challenge along part of the Thames Path. There were blisters and tired feet but we were so pleased that they raised nearly £5000 with another £1000 in gift aid for Parkinson's UK.



We know the money will be put to good use. Thank you so much.

Shoe Boxes

Sally Morgan

A very special 'thank you' to all the amazing knitters who have produced: 48 hats, 22 scarves, 9 pairs of mittens as well as 6 hat and scarf sets and 7 hat, scarf and glove sets.

How wonderful to think of all those in Eastern Europe and Asia receiving the shoe boxes with warm things in as well as toys and toiletries - they are so appreciated, and so many thanks to you all from J Club organisers.



St Mary's School News

Meera Chauhan

The children are continuing their excellent work and will shortly be preparing for their Christmas performances as well as learning more about the story of Christmas.

We enjoyed a wonderful Firework display during the half term break. Thank you to the PTA for organising this and for all of their hard work supporting the school. Year 1 wrote some lovely acrostic poems about fireworks, this is just one example from Hugo:

Fizzing fireworks

Fireworks
In the night
Red and yellow
Exciting
Wow
Ooooh
Red and blue
Kpow
Sizzling in the sky

Meanwhile, Year 3 have been learning about the Stone Age and produced a striking display of posters with neat handwriting to show what they have learnt. Here is the text from Freya:

The Stone Age

The Stone Age began when humans (homo-habilis, homo-sapiens and then Neanderthals) first began using stone tools 2 to 3 million years ago and ended at around 3,000 years BC, with the invention of metalwork, known as the Bronze and Iron Ages. The Stone Age is referred to as prehistory, where humans could not write and used drawings instead.

2.5 million years ago	15,000 years ago	11,000 years ago
PALEOLITHIC 'OLD' STONE AGE	MESOLITHIC 'MIDDLE STONE AGE'	NEOLITHIC 'NEW' STONE AGE
Humans used stones for hunting. They are the 'hunter-gatherer', Surviving on plants, fish, berries and meat. They live in homes made from branches, leaves and stones, and make fire from rubbing stones together.	Humans sharpen their stone tools and use these and flints for hunting. Still very much the 'hunter-gatherer' but starting to settle in one place.	Humans begin to learn about agriculture, Living in settled communities. They are collecting wild crops and domesticated wild animals, for example, the dog. They begin to plant their own seeds to produce their own vegetables, grain and fruit.

Footnote: *Our Tiles*

Joanna Swan

Further to the article in October's LINK about St Mary's tiles; during the refurbishment of St Albans Abbey in the nineteenth century, mediaeval floor tiles which were discovered in the monastic buildings were moved to the Abbey where they can be seen today. The tiles in St Mary's are examples of the copies produced at the time by several manufacturers.

What's on in Rickmansworth Watersmeet

December

Sat 6-Wed 31

Aladdin pantomime

For times of performances check website or Box Office.

RDFAS

Sarratt Village Hall

Tuesday 2 December

11.00am; tea or coffee from 10.30am

THE HISTORY OF STAINED GLASS seen through the Christmas Story

*from Chartres to Chagall via Leon in Spain,
New College Oxford and the Victorians*

Diana Lloyd

For further information contact
Membership Secretary, Diana Jefkins (01494 874507)

From the Registers

Baptisms

We welcome into the Church

26 October **ELEANOR and ISABELLE** , daughters of Nicola and
Tom Kiely

Funeral

May she rest in peace

31 October **SHIRLEY MILLS**

St Mary's People

Thank you to everyone who remembered me with prayers and messages while I was ill. **Mabel Tindall**.

Birth

Congratulations to **Joanna** and **Ashley James** on the birth of **Charlotte** on 13 October, a sister for William.

Death

It is with great sadness that we report the death of **Colin Lucas** on 14 November.

Audrey Ethel Begg

This tribute is based on the words of her daughter at her funeral

Audrey was born in 1922 into the loving Coles family. She was a much cherished daughter and shared great affection with two elder brothers throughout their lives.

After school and college she started work at the Post Office Savings Bank in what became a 'reserved occupation' during the war years.

After the war she somewhat reluctantly transferred to Harrogate, still with the Post Office Savings Bank, but there met Ray Begg, whom she married in 1949 and had two children, Andrea and Duncan before the family moved to Pinner in 1956, where Judith was born.

They arrived in Rickmansworth in 1970, where Audrey quickly became a devoted and active member of St Mary's as well as playing her part in the community. Later, she and Ray moved out to Hyde Heath for a few years, where Audrey greatly missed St Mary's, then back to Little Chalfont, which was close enough to attend St Mary's again.

She became a volunteer at Amersham Hospital, joined the Fitness League, was a keen member of Hyde Heath WI until recently and sang with several choirs. But her greatest love and

interest was people, especially every aspect of the interests and development of her grandchildren, and maintaining correspondence with her friends, and their children, and friendship with neighbours - she never forgot a birthday.

She was feisty too and fiercely independent. She would write a complaint about rescheduling a favourite programme to the BBC as easily as a letter to a friend. She was always well-dressed, with hair and make-up done - even when unwell. She enjoyed political and religious debate, having great clarity of mind even towards the end of her 91 well-lived years.

The following are some of Deborah's comments in her funeral address

I have no hesitation in assuring you of Audrey's hope in the resurrection as she was someone who bore witness to this hope in her faithful, diligent attendance at services here at St Mary's over many years

Amongst many things I valued about Audrey was her feisty nature. I quickly came to recognise Audrey's handwriting and, when a letter from her dropped through the Parish Office letterbox, I would open it with interest to see what she had taken the time to write about. This was her church, and she cared about it.

It wasn't just me who appreciated Audrey though, others have expressed their sadness at her death, and their gratitude at her contribution to the life of St Mary's over so many years. Audrey was a member of our Parish Breakfast/Coffee team for which she would always produce something home-made, usually scones; and a willing helper, even in her eighties. Audrey represented St Mary's on the Welcoming Team at St Albans, even until fairly recently and was always a quiet, helpful presence at bazaars or in the shop - which many will remember as part of the fundraising activities relating to the Renewal Project.

In addition to practical activity, Audrey was an immensely caring person, ringing other members of the congregation to see how they were, even when not so well herself. She was, for a good number of years, a keen member of the Mothers' Union and was very kind to young mums with young children.

Audrey's daughters told me she was immensely appreciative of all that was being done to ensure the life of the church for future generations. She recognised that children and families need to worship too and to be made welcome. A woman who moved with the times, Audrey could see that the Church needed to do so too.

Bright, intelligent, questioning and faithful - Audrey was one of those people all churches need: regular in worship, diligent in prayer, questioning in faith, fervent in hope - a fine woman of faith.

The Box

Sent in by Nick Tibbles

The story goes that some time ago a mother punished her 5-year-old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper; money was tight and she became more upset that the child had used the paper to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree. Nevertheless the little girl brought the gift box to her mother the next morning and said, "This is for you".

The mother was embarrassed by her earlier over-reaction, but her anger flared again when she opened the box and found it was empty. She spoke to her daughter in a harsh manner, "Don't you know, young lady, that when you give someone a present there is supposed to be something inside the package?"

Her daughter had tears in her eyes and said, "Oh, it's not empty! I blew kisses in it until it was full." The mother was crushed. She fell on her knees and put her arms round the little girl, and she begged her forgiveness for her thoughtless anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later, and it is told that the mother kept the gold box by her bed for all the years of her life. Whenever she was discouraged or faced difficult problems, she would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given a golden box full of unconditional love and kisses from our children, families and friends. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

Some Helpful Definitions

Michael Baker (tongue in cheek)

Aumbry:	Forgetting what one was going to say
Canonry:	A place to store artillery
Chantry:	A place to store choirs
Diaconal:	Slanting
Episcope:	Medical device
Maniple:	The male bosom
Novice:	Innocence
Oblation:	Making something oblong
Pericope:	Checking clerical vestments
Prebendary:	Bowing before everyone else
Predestination:	Getting off a train too early
Pulpit:	A place of torture
Roman Collar:	Penitential device once used by the Inquisition
Thurible:	Able to use Elizabethan English correctly
Vestry:	A place to store underwear

Christmas in an Indian Village

Contributed by Brenda Bell

After my mother's Canadian cousin, Fr Tony Millege SJ died earlier this year at the age of 90, after many years of devoted service to the people of India, I received an account by his brother Frank, describing Christmas 1965 when



Frank, a major in the Canadian Army, was serving in a UN peacekeeping force in India and was granted Christmas leave. Tony had been to a Jesuit school and college in Canada, before going out to Darjeeling to finish his studies. He was ordained in 1958. At this time he was Parish Priest of Bhimbhar. This account is shortened and edited from Frank's detailed one.

Bhimbhar was situated several hundred yards from a good highway in the tea-growing Himalayan foothills. The village itself was just a collection of scattered thatched houses in a high meadow, but the parish extended for miles around. The 2,500 parishioners were simple and delightful people. The church and a convent for a small community of nuns were half built. [Tony was later to add a school and lastly accommodation for himself.] Four sisters, all of whom are Indian and had arrived less than a week before, gave me a hearty welcome and then I met the two other Christmas guests, Fr Mike Ducey of the USA and a local religious, Brother Vincent, who were there to help out during the Christmas rush. Tony has two local lads with him, who hope to be accepted for the priesthood.

I had already gathered that Christmas Eve was expected to be a big day and it was. It started at six which was just about dawn, when I served Tony's Mass for the first time since his ordination. After a good Christmas breakfast of sausages, ham and eggs, Tony and I scooted into Bagdora and Siliguri on his Libretta to visit the market and collect a pass I needed; almost everyone we passed raised their hands in an attitude of prayer, for a scooter was a rare sight. When we got back to the mission, things were in full swing. The itinerant stall keepers had already arrived and were setting up shop around the perimeter of our field. The privileged chap was one selling religious artefacts; he was allowed to come fairly close to the church. The rest, mainly sellers of food, nuts and firewood, set up their shelters at a respectful distance.

By late afternoon, the first of the parishioners had started to arrive, mostly on foot over the fields from miles around, but some in bullock carts, which were parked in orderly fashion in another part of the field.

I was itching to make myself useful, but the main job was being done by the priests, who were hearing confessions in relays. The nuns were decorating the altar, taking some uncalled for risks on rickety bamboo ladders and rickety chairs, and so I undertook to do the high rigging for them. This turned out to be quite a job as they were not satisfied by half measures. Our decorating was confined to the sanctuary, a sort of thatched mud-floored patio. The church itself was an area of mud marked off by rails, almost completely without walls, also roofed with thatch. Using large pieces of cloth the sisters succeeded in covering the laced bamboo and grass reredos and concocted a star with draped cloth. They wanted colour to enliven the large expanse of white, but as there were no flowers there yet and few trees, all very small, Tony produced a large box of used Christmas cards, which gave lots of colour. The effect was excellent.

We four sat down to a late dinner by the light of a pressure lamp. It was very cold and damp with a mist that made the outside lights ghostly. We could hear the multitude assembling seated on the church floor backs to the altar, to watch a series of sketches, songs and dances on a brick stage. Tony's two lads went out just before midnight to bring the entertainment to a close before Tony began to 'sing' High Mass (the Milleges have no ear for music), all of it in Hindi. A small choir that the nuns organised sang sweetly; the altar boys were brown-skinned little cherubs with the blackest of eyes and hair, wore red cassocks and carried little oil lamps. Pressure lamps for readers had to be pumped, when needed, by members of the congregation. Over 500 communions were distributed - to Christians - and some Hindus, prompted by their neighbours to say "Amen". Most wore

their best; the women were colourful in saris and shawls, the men were mostly in white trousers and shirts, with blankets round their shoulders.

After this service Tony celebrated a third Mass in Latin and English for me and the family before we sat down at a table decorated by the nuns for hot drinks, rolls and bread and jam. They had put a beautifully decorated box by Tony's place, containing simple gifts for everyone. Meanwhile a drummer started a steady rhythm and the congregation began dancing in the field by the light of lamps and flares - and continued to until dawn.

On Christmas Day, Tony and I walked round the tea plantations to a village to meet his Catechist who showed me their neat and cosy home and how they cooked on an open fire near one wall, by squatting on the mud floor. In the evening, they were invited to an established mission at Gayaganga [where Tony later became priest] for a feast of roast duck. There were seventeen guests; I was guest of honour. The wine flowed and they lapsed into carol singing with great gusto, Tony beating time with his pipe, then to relating amusing stories of their experiences.

St Mary's in the Past

1924

The Revd Newton began his 'Vicar's Notes' with justification of the need for the Diocesan Quota and details of how it was spent. The Rickmansworth Deanery, in those days larger than today, was asked to contribute £240 a year, which amounted to a penny [in old money] per communicant per week. However St Mary's contributions had been nowhere near enough and the Church Council had made up their minds to 'face and solve' that. The heating scheme first favoured had proved too expensive and cheaper alternatives were being sought.

The Vicar's proposal for a first Midnight Mass had met with approval and so he outlined further details. He was at pains to acquaint the congregation with 'the art of English ceremonial' and had arranged a lantern lecture in the Ebury Hall a fortnight before Christmas to do so and recommended two books about it. There were also to be congregational practices of the music for some weeks beforehand.

"Thus we will take our share, small though it be, of restoring to the world the art and beauty of public worship" much of which, he said, had become 'tawdry and decadent', for "The English Church has something to give to the world and the world needs this something".

He advised readers to prepare for the Midnight Mass as they would a morning Communion service by not eating for at least the preceding 5 hours, and after that to rest - sleep if they could - until it was time to get up for the service. Afterwards, he recommended something to eat - 'breakfast' - before returning to bed. They should also follow 'the *Prayer Book* direction and 'signify names to the curate [ie Vicar] at least by sometime the previous day'.

1974

All that survives for December in our archives is a Christian Action Christmas card catalogue in which the cheapest cards cost 35p for 12 and the dearest 72p for 10.

Nature Notes

Angela Hall

The end of summer brought a prolonged crop of field mushrooms and fruit and nuts of all sorts are plentiful this year, including holly berries. The smells of autumn, wet leaves mingled with the occasional whiff of fungus or fox, linger in the woods and lanes but the glorious colours have been disappointing this year perhaps because of the mildness and lack of frost.

Birds that had been almost in hiding whilst renewing their plumage have now re-emerged in the garden. We have one male house sparrow coming regularly to the bird feeder and one male chaffinch, the latter in much more subdued plumage. Even our resident robin was rarely seen or heard for a while but is now back, along with a regular supply of blue tits, great tits and even a coal tit. A great spotted woodpecker comes frequently to the moribund pear tree in the garden, and a small flock of migrating blackbirds, feeding on the hawthorn berries, caused a stir when confronted by the outraged residents.

Out in the fields there is already a substantial patina of green autumn sown corn, and a flock of forty or fifty golden plovers can be seen wheeling around or resting on the ground. There should be lapwings as well but I didn't see any in this area last year. Their numbers are down. I'm not sure if anyone knows why. Another bird whose numbers have dropped is the starling. This has been blamed, like so much, on intensive agriculture but now there is a new theory. Apparently some fifty million prescriptions a year are written for the anti-depressant Prozac and much of this is excreted, unchanged, into the sewage system and could contaminate worms on which the starlings feed, causing poor appetite and loss of libido and thus reduced reproduction and stamina. If this is true, surely other bird species could be affected and possibly other drugs could be causing environmental damage?

Grey squirrels do not seem quite so numerous this year. I have read of black ones, melanistic variants of the same species, being seen in Hertfordshire, and a friend's son has spotted one near Cambridge, and so it seems that they are to be found at the other end of the county. It would be interesting to see one.

Now for the good news. Researchers report that this has been an exceptionally good year for seabirds such as shags, fulmars and kittiwakes breeding around the Scottish coast, many of which

had been in decline for twenty years. This is attributed to slightly cooler sea temperatures which are thought to favour sand eels on which these birds feed, and warmer springs. We hear so much about declining numbers and degraded habitats, so it is good to come across something positive for a change.



Shag

The Red Cross Needs You!

Sue Hillier

Can you spare a couple of hours a week helping at the Red Cross Centre in Croxley Green (by the library in Barton Way)?

Volunteers are required to join a small friendly team to help to loan out mobility aids - wheelchairs, commodes, bath seats etc. No experience is necessary as full training will be given. The loan service is run by volunteers and we are open Monday to Friday 10am to 12.30pm and Monday and Thursday evenings between 7pm and 8pm.

If you can help, or need further information, give Sue Hillier a ring (779580) or contact Penelope Ells (07568109051).

LINK

Subscriptions for 2015

Annual subscriptions for LINK are due in January. Enclosed with this issue is an order form but if your magazine is delivered your distributor will collect the money so you do not need to fill in a form. Please do sign up for the year; it helps us know how many copies to print and also means there is less loose money lying around. The annual subscription is still £6.00 (£13.00 by post).

The electronic, full-colour version of LINK was introduced two years ago so if you want to really appreciate the photos why not sign up to receive LINK

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You can, of course, subscribe to both versions.

See Round

The Diocesan publication *See Round* will go fully digital from January 2015 so there will be no printed copies. As yet we have no details of how to sign up but we hope to be able to include information in the January LINK.

January 2015 LINK

Copy deadline:	Thursday 4 December
Publication date:	Sunday 28 December

We are very pleased to receive contributions of interest to members of the Church and the local community. Copy should reach a member of the LINK Committee* by the above copy date, preferably by email (please leave the formatting to us) at link@stmarysrickmansworth.org.uk, but we can accept handwritten copy. We may have to edit for space or other reasons and tight deadlines do not always allow for discussion of changes with authors. We like good quality photographs with enough contrast to reproduce well in black and white. Please note that opinions expressed in LINK are not necessarily those of the Editors of *LINK* or St Mary's Church.

*Please see back cover for phone numbers.

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	Methodist Council Sec.	Petra Hedges	222715
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CONTINUED ON BACK OF COVER

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