

MARCH 2022

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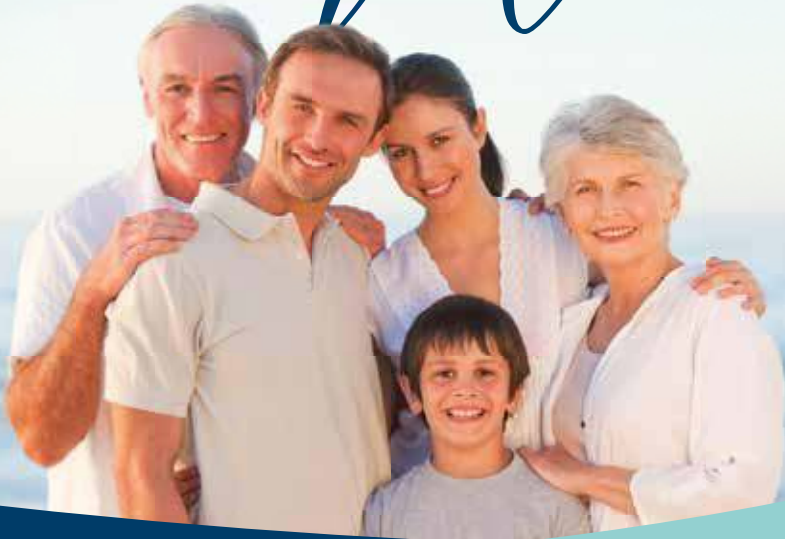


Lymington Parish News



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Lymington Parish News

St Thomas' and All Saints' Churches



St Thomas' Church
St Thomas Street
Lymington
SO41 9ND

All Saints' Church
All Saints Road
Lymington
SO41 8FD



Services

For details of Sunday and midweek services, please see the Diary inside.

Enquiries

There is a great deal of information to be found on our website:

www.lymingtonchurch.org

To enquire about weddings, baptisms, funerals, church and hall bookings please contact our **Parish Office** which is open at St Thomas' Church, Monday to Friday, 9.30a.m.—11.30a.m.

You can 'Meet the Vicar' by appointment on Tuesday evenings.

Administrator: Mrs Gill Maunder:

office@lymingtonchurch.org 01590 676194

Contacts

Vicar: The Revd Canon Peter Salisbury (day off Friday)
peter@lymingtonchurch.org 01590 673847

Churchwardens: Mr David Bridges, 01590 678732
 Mrs Maureen Harris, 01590 674458

LLM Emeritus: Mr Malcolm Ward, 01590 679651

Organist & Choir Director: Mr Martin Penrose, ARCO, LTCL,
penrosemusic@aol.com 02380 864439

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Tower Secretary: Mr Larry Stace, 01590 682417

Magazine

Publication date: 1st of each month. Please submit copy to the Editor by the 6th of the previous month.

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THE VICAR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

March this year begins almost immediately with Ash Wednesday and our long Lenten preparations. The Lent Course this year is looking at the big picture of the Bible story, following the Bible Society's "Bible Series".

It's fascinating to observe the changes in the way we have approached the Bible over the years. Previously we thought nothing of picking snippets from all over the Bible to illustrate the week's theme. It meant that we rarely heard Bible passages in their original context.

At Christmas we'd be forgiven for assuming that Isaiah's main pre-occupation was the coming Messiah, whereas in context we realise that he is far more interested in themes of exile, justice and mercy.

The more recent "big picture" approach is not only seen in churches as we tackle month-long themes, but also in our schools. Our church Infants' School, for example, has a large wall frieze in the assembly hall which shows the story of the Bible from creation through to the New Jerusalem. In addition, we have now done away with looking at a different "Christian value" week by week, each one illustrated by an appropriate Bible passage. Instead, we have a two-year cycle of readings which take us through first the Old, and then the New, Testaments so that the children can learn how it all fits together.

Of course we still make important excursions as we address the major dates of the Christian calendar, including Ash Wednesday, Mothering Sunday and the events of Holy Week.

Normally as a church we have invited a visiting speaker to lead us through Holy Week each year, bringing insights from a wide variety of people. However, this year, as it will be my final Holy Week in the parish, I have decided to lead it myself for the first time since 2006!

The theme will be "Transitions" and will be examining the many transitions we see in the Bible story, from Eden to Patmos, and also in our own lives as we live through ever-accelerating change.

The one thing that WON'T change is the love that God has for each one of us; Alleluia! (my final Alleluia before Lent!)

With best wishes,

Peter

MONTHLY EVENTS

Zoom Details – Prayer (1)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89529902640>
pwd=QVQxTGxjODdwV3ROT1gxM2NWUjN0dz09
or from a landline phone: 0203 481 5240; Meeting ID: 895 2990 2640:
Passcode: 2020

Zoom Details – Social (2)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85117060907>
pwd=SThHqWROTGRxSVROMEVVZlprTFJvdz09
or from a landline phone: 0203 481 5240; Meeting ID: 851 1706 0907:
Passcode: coffee

+ St Thomas' Church is open daily for visitors and private prayer +

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS:

Sunday:	8.00am	Early Communion
	9.15am	Choral Communion
	11.00am	Life & Soul Informal Service
Monday to Friday:	9.00am	Zoom Morning Prayer [1]
Monday:	12 noon	Monday Lunch - STH
Tuesday:	10.00am	Toddler Group - STH
	11.00am	Zoom <i>TakeTime</i> Ignatian Meditation [1]
	5.00pm	Meet the Vicar
Wednesday:	10.00am	Poetry Corner - STH (2nd Wednesday by Zoom)
	11.00am	Holy Communion
Thursday:	10.00am	Vistas Café - STH
Saturday:	9.00am	Prayer for the work of the parish [1]

MARCH EVENTS

Wed 2	ASH WEDNESDAY
11.00am	Communion with Ashing

MARCH EVENTS

Sun 6

LENT 1

Services as usual, including

3.00pm Evensong for Lent

4.00pm Lent Course - STH

Sun 13

LENT 2

Services as usual

3.00pm Baptism of Mason

4.00pm Lent Course - STH

Sat 19

7.30pm Hampshire County Youth Orchestra and Choir

Spring Concert - STC

Sun 20

LENT 3

Services as usual including

9.00am Messy Church - STH

4.00pm Lent Course - STH

Thu 24

7.30pm PCC Meeting - STC

Sat 26

CLOCKS GO FORWARD TONIGHT!

Sun 27

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Services as usual including

11.00am Life & Soul with The Robins Choir

4.00pm Lent Course - STH

Wed 30

7.30pm Annual Parochial Church Meeting - STC

APRIL EVENTS

Sun 3

PASSION SUNDAY

Services as usual

3.00pm Baptism of Ruby

4.00pm Lent Course - STH

Electoral Roll Revision and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

If you are not already on our Electoral Roll, please contact the Parish Office for an application form which should be completed **by Wednesday 15 March**.

The Electoral Roll indicates parish membership and everyone on the Roll has the opportunity to take part in the proceedings of the APCM on 30 March.

If you are not sure whether or not you are already on the Electoral Roll, please check with the Parish Office. Please help by ensuring that your name is on our list. Thank you.

Gill Maunder, Electoral Roll Officer



*We should like to wish
Happy March Birthday to...*

Edward Herbert
Evie Strehlau + Sidney Davis

*This month's cover: Crown Anemone, **Anemone coronaria**, a Mediterranean plant in flower on the sea wall at The Haven, Lymington, March 2021. Will it appear again in 2022?*

Photo: Kate Mussett

Sunday 20 March



St Thomas' Church
Lymington

**Celebrating
Small**



**Join us in St Thomas Hall for breakfast from 9:00a.m.
followed by Bible stories, songs and messy fun.**

Info and updates at www.lymingtonchurch.org/messy-church

Churchwardens' Notes

Uplifted by lengthening days and spring flowers, we were, thanks to both our choir and the easing of restrictions, also heartened by a long-awaited Evensong at Candlemas last month. Now we anticipate the end of a need for facemasks in our large airy church, though provision for those who still feel vulnerable will still be met. Smiles of greeting within church will be seen again, perhaps most importantly by those special people who are new to our parish and have so far been denied the usual paths of welcome. We hope that before long the faces of those who join in worship on line each week will also be seen and appreciated. Sunday refreshments is now a well established event in our hall and is always a cheerful occasion; our thanks to Marion and the teams who provide this.

One place where we are sure of a smile is the church office. Gill, our very approachable and exceptionally efficient Parish Administrator for the past sixteen years, is retiring and will be deeply missed. Always helpful regardless of how busy the day, Gill has a great understanding of how the church operates – and most of us as well! We all benefit, even indirectly, from her genuine wish to serve and I for one am very grateful for her help and support. Please pray for the selection process to find and appoint Gill's successor and for the transfer period.

An old Chinese proverb says, 'There is only one thing that doesn't change and that is that everything changes'. Change may not always be welcome but often contributes to our ability to adapt. We are all aware of the changes for our parish which lie ahead when first Gill and then Peter retire. Facing that positively we might remind ourselves of the strengths in our development as a church community enabled by Peter throughout his ministry with us, as well as the need for a continued sense of purpose as we actively support each other. All advice regarding management of an interregnum underlines prayer as key to a successful passage through that period. May we all do our best to remain focused on Jesus - His wishes for, and His blessing on, our passage through to the selection of a new incumbent, along with our continuing, developing mission in this parish.

The Lent Course is under way and is to be recommended. Four sessions remain and all are welcome. Further preparation for Easter involves the annual church 'spring clean'. All willing hands, male or female, are welcome to join in, even for a short while and refreshments will be provided.

As I prepare to step down at the APCM it is with a feeling of appreciation for all the support and encouragement I've received over three years, along with an awareness of the enormous and wide-ranging contributions made by many others to the running of our parish. May I encourage you to continue supporting each other in actions, words and prayers as we continue together, seeking yet further ways of developing our service to God in this community.

Maureen Harris



THE ORGANIST PIPES UP!

I consider myself very lucky to have a two manual and pedal electronic practice organ in my front room – but there's an organist in Winchester who has a four keyboard instrument, with a console modelled on the one in York Minster.

Richard McVeigh is a musician, IT consultant and former assistant organist at Winchester Cathedral, who runs a website called 'Beauty in Sound' on which he broadcasts on-line recitals given by some of the world's top organists - recorded in the dining room of his Winchester house.

The instrument he has constructed uses a computer-based system called 'Hauptwerk' to produce the sound, which is heard via eight speakers and a sub-woofer (a speaker specially designed to produce very low sounds). A number of different instruments can be played by using various sampled sound sets.

Richard was organ scholar at York Minster and was so impressed by the console of the Harrison organ there that he chose to have his own 137 stop console modelled on it. A firm in Devon custom built it for him and it features removable stop knobs so the specification can be altered to suit whichever instrument he has chosen to play.

He now plans to have an annexe built to house the organ; it currently takes up quite a lot of the room where his wife and young family eat their meals.

I saw and heard it during a Zoom presentation he gave to the Winchester and District Association of Organists, but it can be found on YouTube. His channel has some 80,000 regular listeners and so far there have been 4.4 million views of the various recordings that have been featured. Quite something for an instrument in a family house!

Martin Penrose

The Reredos at All Saints' Church Woodside

Reredos: an ornamental screen covering the wall at the back of an altar.

Oxford English Dictionary

All Saints' Church is fortunate to have a number of wonderful stone carvings as part of its fabric. That these exist is very much down to the enthusiasm of Mr Henry Romaine-Walker (1854-1940), the church's architect. He was the son of a vicar and he not only designed numerous houses, undertook ecclesiastical builds and oversaw restorations, but was also known as an illustrator and artist. Indeed, the building's lovely stone carvings, inside and out, are noted in the 1974 English Heritage Grade II listing description as being "of a very high order". The most notable of all the carvings, however, is the reredos.



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH. (LOOKING EAST).

From Bostock and Hapgood 1912.

When All Saints' Church was consecrated in 1910, there was no reredos, just simple oak panelling on the wall behind the altar (*above*). However, in 1937 Mr Romaine-Walker reappears in the All Saints' story as part of a Committee charged with commissioning and installing a stone reredos in the church. Where this initiative started, who provided the funds for the work, and who was on the Committee overseeing the work all remain a mystery. Correspondence from the time shows that the Secretary to the Committee was J. L. Estrange Mackie Esq. whose address was The Connaught Club, London W2.

The Committee commissioned Peter de Wispelaere of Bruges, a master sculptor in woodcarvings, marblework and stone, to carry out the work. The correspondence we have stems from 1938 when the Committee and de Wispelaere exchanged letters about his drawings for the figures. Some of the comments

expressed at the time were:

"... they would like a figure more suited to the 'Gothic' character of the Reredos."

"The drawings of St Thomas and St Mark look to be older than they need to be and they would like a more youthful appearance in these figures."

"The committee feel that St Mark might be made still a little younger looking and, while they like the figure of St Thomas, they are not quite sure that it does not make him look too young."



By the end of March 1938, after many more suggestions being made concerning the appearance of the saints, the design had been finalised and the Committee had agreed on which saints would feature in the reredos, what they should look like, and that their names had to be carved on their bases. The eleven figure carvings on the reredos (*illustrated above*) depict:

The four Archangels: 1- St Gabriel; 2- St Michael; 3- St Uriel;
4- St Raphael.

Three saints on Jesus's right hand: 5- St Bede; 6- St Agatha; 7- St Mark;
8- the central figure of Jesus.

Three saints on Jesus's left hand: 9- St Thomas; 10- St Monica;
11- St Nicholas.

Why these six saints were chosen to stand either side of Jesus remains a mystery. Three may feature as they are the names of the neighbouring churches but as for the other three, suggestions would be gratefully received. The reredos, which is made from Caen stone, was despatched in nine wooden crates by sea to Southampton in April 1938 and erected in All Saints' the following month. The Bishop of Southampton dedicated the reredos on 2 June 1938.

For nearly 83 years, the reredos has stood proudly behind the altar and been much admired. Following the refurbishment work in the summer of 2021, it was decided that, like the Nave, the reredos would benefit from some TLC, not only to clean away years of dust, spiders and bat droppings, but also to repair some of the joints that were beginning to show their age. In November 2021, a team from Hoare Banks came and carried out the work. The stonework and the saints, which are cast rather than carved, scrubbed up amazingly well and the whole edifice has been successfully stabilised. It is a joy to see the reredos once again looking so stunning and providing a wonderful backdrop to the Chapel.

After Note: In May 1938, whilst Mr Wispelaere was in Lymington working at All Saints' Church, the Vicar, the Revd Montague Bethune, asked him to carve heads representing St Thomas the Apostle and St Swithin onto the small bosses at the ends of the stone arch above the newly installed doors between the Narthex and the Nave at St Thomas'. Do look out for them: St Swithin is on the right as you enter!

Jonathan Cook



The carved heads of St Thomas The Apostle (*left*) and St Swithin (*right*) at the entrance to St Thomas' Church.

Peace

Peace in the look of a mother's face
As she gazes into the eyes of her
New born.



Peace in the
Eye of a
Hurricane.



Peace is entering
The Solent
After crossing
Bournemouth Bay
On a breezy day
with a flood tide.



Peace is walking
Through a beechwood
On a calm, sunny
Autumn day,
The only sound
The gentle flutter
Of falling leaves.



Peace comes from within us.
We don't understand why.
But
The Peace of God
Passes all understanding.
To give us true peace
We have to ask God.



Sylvia Pepin



Least we forget: a little bit of family history

My daughter Rosie works in the British Embassy in Tunis and last Armistice Day she was asked to lay a wreath at one of the nearby CWGC cemeteries. We were reminded that the brother of an uncle had been a casualty of the North Africa Campaign during the Second World War and we were able to trace that he had been buried at Massicault. Realising that this was about two hours' drive from where we were living, we decided to visit.

Rosie and I arrived at the beautifully maintained cemetery. As we entered, the full horror of the number of graves, the ages of the fallen and the reality of the sacrifice made by so many was truly moving. We found the headstone for Mike Radcliffe, my uncle's brother, and then I remembered that another dear friend of

my mother's, called Dennis Monsarrat, was also a casualty in North Africa. We were shown a register of those servicemen who are buried at Massicault and by an extraordinary coincidence we discovered that Dennis was also buried there. Rosie and I were both emotionally shattered as we drove home.

The North Africa campaign began in the autumn of 1942, the aim being to drive out the Axis powers prior to the liberation of Italy. Allied troops landed in Morocco and Algeria in November and at first met with less resistance than was expected. However, Axis resistance soon intensified and it became impossible to continue to push eastwards in order to secure Tunis until early in 1943. The city was finally captured in May of that year.



Dennis Monsarrat was a dispatch rider in the Royal Artillery and died after a motorcycle crash just north west of Tunis at Bizerte in August 1943. He was the younger brother of the author Nicholas Monsarrat (*The Cruel Sea*, *Kappillan of Malta*, etc.) and a prolific

correspondent; he could perhaps also have had a future as an author had he lived.

On my return to Lymington I revisited the archive of letters that my mother had received from Dennis. One such letter was written in 1943 from "The same damned place..." (censorship precluded soldiers from stating where they were at the time of writing). He begins:

Things are slack now: trenches & pits have been dug: camouflage is finished (I had the utmost difficulty in finding the tent at all on the way home last night, but the cause of that is open to query): several tons of timber have been moved, erected, pulled down by the orders of the next visiting senior officer, moved - erected somewhere else, pulled down - & so on. But peace has reigned for two days & we are feeling hopeful.

I feel incredibly healthy - I can feel my chest measurement actively expanding & my shoulders swelling: I am making a somewhat ineffective attempt to grow a moustache...



Lt Dennis Monsarrat RA

Later in the same letter Dennis tellingly wrote,

Sometimes it is impossible to realise there is a war on. We handle unpleasantly efficient instruments of death, but we clean them and look after them and nurse them rather as if they were precious toys. The implication and meaning they have is lost: I think less about handling them than I do of cleaning the wind-screen of the car. The handling of live ammunition impresses my imagination no more than lighting a cigarette. Probably I shall fire them in the same careless unthinking way I strike that match.

Daphne Johnston

The Ten Commandments

2: The Tenth Commandment

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour’s.” (Exodus 20.17)

The full Ten Commandments are still read out in some churches today, especially in Advent or Lent. By the time we have come to the Tenth one, having nine times already patiently repeated the response, “Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law”, our concentration is beginning to flag. Involuntarily we pay less attention to the Tenth Commandment — yet it is the most subtle of them all!

We pass it over because of its out-of-date background. Which of us today owns an ox or an ass?

We pass it over because it appears repetitive. Haven’t we already had the Seventh Commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery”?

After the previous rapid catalogue of delinquencies (murder, adultery, theft, lying) there can’t be much left to repent of. Can’t we take our eye off the last Commandment and relax?

In the New Testament, for ‘covetousness’ the more stark translation ‘lust’ is sometimes used. St James in his Epistle (4.3) writes, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts,” and here unmasks the sanctimonious form of prayer which is really centred upon the individual’s own gratification or ‘covetousness’.

Many people do not know that the popular proverb ‘Money is the root of all evil’ is by St Paul (although what he actually wrote was “The love of money...” I Timothy 6.10). But look what comes immediately before it: “They that will be rich fall into temptation, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.” (I Timothy 6.9).

In Romans 7.7 St Paul looks at the Tenth Commandment in a different way. The one snag about it is that it puts ideas into people’s heads. In fact, the Tenth Commandment is the most psychological of them all, going behind our other sins to their hidden drives and motives. See also, for example, what St Paul says in Colossians 3.5: “covetousness”, which is idolatry”.

It points towards the New Testament in yet another way. Jesus, when ‘updating’ some of the Commandments (Matthew 5.21-28) does the same!

William Cummings



friends of wistaria surgery

Working to benefit the health of Wistaria's patients and others in the community



The Friends of Wistaria Surgery was formed when Wistaria Surgery moved into its new premises about 20 years ago. Since then, considerable funds have been raised by dedicated committee members organizing raffles and social events and from membership subscriptions, generous legacies, and donations, to provide equipment for the surgery, which is not always immediately available from the NHS. We are fortunate to have Dr Anthea MacAlister as our President.

Recently fundraising activities have been suspended and our funds are inevitably dwindling as we have continued to contribute to items and supplies for the surgery in the difficult circumstances created by the coronavirus pandemic. Membership has also dwindled, but members attending the AGM in November 2021 voted to try to continue and resume fundraising later this year, hopefully with an open garden event by kind permission of Daphne Johnston. We are also keen to reinstate our befriending service and have a vacancy on the Committee for a Befriending Coordinator.

If you are one of the 16,000 patients registered with Wistaria Surgery, please consider becoming a member for the small annual sum of £5 to help boost our funds during this difficult period. Membership forms are at <https://friendsofwistariasurgery.weebly.com/membership.html> or you can get in touch to receive an application form by email or post. Just email us at friendswistariasurgery@gmail.com or telephone 07867 229982, leaving your name and number. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dorothy Bishop
Chairman
Friends of Wistaria Surgery

Website: <https://friendsofwistariasurgery.weebly.com/>
Registered Charity No. 1107544



OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ!

Christian essays inspired by the New Forest

The Court of Verderers and the Gospels

This ancient and historic Court exists to regulate and watch over the relationship between the Crown as landowner and the Commoners as those who exercise their rights of common: principally, these days, the rights of common of pasture and mast, pasture including browsing.

Also present, as it were, are the needs and attitudes of the public. On the one hand the public can be ignorant, exploitative and simply overwhelming in numbers. On the other hand the Crown effectively acts only with a mandate from the public; without toleration, and indeed enthusiasm, from many people the Forest would simply cease to exist. Tasteless urban greed would take over.

Every sitting of the Court begins with the call from the Head Agister to all present: "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!". There again we have Norman French, translatable as "Be quiet everyone and listen up!".

Literally it is "Hear! Hear! Hear!". That is what we need to do: to hear, to listen to the Forest and all that it is trying to tell us. There is the essence of the parallel with the gospels. We each have a choice in hearing, to listen or not to listen. In relation to a vital teaching such as the parable of the sower Jesus says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." The way of listening with the heart's ears is vital to any person who would truly appreciate the Forest. It is the same as the way to respond to the message of the gospel. The Christian way can only be truly lived in that fashion. That is why our study of the Forest can inspire a person who wants to follow the Lord.



The Queen's House, Lyndhurst, the seat of New Forest government housing the Verderers' Court and offices of the Verderers and Forestry England.



Badge of the Verderers

Gordon Wynne

AN EDITORIAL JOURNEY

The Editor reflects on the varied editorial tasks which have come his way

The thought occurred to me recently that it is exactly 70 years ago this month that I turned my attention to producing a bi-monthly magazine. I cannot now recall what gave me the idea but I was in my last year at primary school and had only just taken my 11+ examination. The papers were spread over two days and the second day, 6 February, was memorable because it was the day when it was announced that King George VI had died in his sleep at Sandringham and the young Princess Elizabeth had ascended the throne.

Several truly inspirational teachers that year at Edgware Primary, and before that at a Forces school in Germany where my father was stationed 1949–1951, had fostered an interest in history, geography, transport, natural history, the Bible and other unrelated areas. I shared a young boy's passion for establishing collections — stamps, coins, tickets, birds' eggs, butterflies, fossils, beer mats, cigarette packets, matchbox labels — you name it, I'd be more than likely to collect it! Our family had strong connections to the world of heraldry, (there was a family business and my uncle was an artist at the College of Arms) and with the impending Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 with all its pageantry, it was pretty obvious in which direction my interests might be leading. Little wonder, then, that the magazine was entitled *The Shield* and various aspects of all my varied interests provided limitless material for the magazine. I certainly had no literary pretensions. Indeed, it was not until I was twelve that I took much interest in reading and it must be admitted that I was not a particularly good speller. I did, however, love drawing and painting and by 1953 my interests in natural history had switched from birds to flowers while many of the other eclectic mix of interests remained and were subsequently addressed in *The Shield*. The front cover of the early issues featured a serialised crime story, though it was hardly Agatha Christie.



Early issues of *The Shield* and a young Editor on holiday in Cornwall 1952

And so it was that in March 1952 the first issue of *The Shield*, a double-sided broadsheet measuring 9½ x 7 inches, was launched onto the literary world. Each copy was written out, drawn and painted by hand, a time consuming business even with an initial readership of only six, although this rose to eight by the summer. The next and most of the subsequent issues were produced using double-spread sheets taken from a W.H.Smith's exercise book

measuring 8 x 6¼ inches when folded, and the price increased from 1½d to 3d. A close friend in Hampshire assisted from time to time during the holidays in writing up some of the articles and even contributed some items of her own. However, towards the end of the second year in grammar school, the demands of homework were increasing and as a result publication ceased after the twenty-fifth edition of *The Shield* appeared in March 1954. Much had been learned during the course of this creative literary venture, unconsciously laying the foundations for any future enterprises.

The next opportunity soon came in 1959-60 when I was forced to spend nine months in hospital and the Minister of Salisbury Baptist Church, where we were worshipping at the time, suggested I might usefully take on the job of compiling the monthly Church Prayer Letter. This I gladly did for the next eighteen months or so until moving on to university. Hand-written copy from the hospital bed was passed to the wife of the Church Secretary who would type it out and duplicate it on an office Roneo machine prior to distribution. No copies of these remain in the family archive but some copies of the monthly church *Newsletter* do survive and have been deposited in the local study archives at Salisbury Central Library. My father edited this type-written publication for a number of years and at one point I was invited to contribute a series of six 'Nature Notes', primitive forerunners of the more sophisticated series of sixty which were to appear decades later in *Lymington Parish News*.

Fast forward now to 1972 and West Sussex during the early years of my teaching career as a Head of Biology. I ran a Field Society and we joined a wonderful organization called The Association of School Natural History Societies. Formed in about 1947, at its peak it boasted a membership of several hundred schools. In 1972 they needed a new Editor for their annual journal called *The Starfish* and I volunteered my services. The first magazine I produced was typed out on my manual typewriter but by 1973 I had invested in a smart electric machine which gave a much clearer and more even result. Press-on Letraset characters were used for the larger fonts—a slow business. After editing six editions I passed the job on to a colleague from my student practice days at Denstone College. The ASNHS folded a few years later and I deposited all copies of *The Starfish* and other archive material at the Natural History Museum in London where we used to hold our annual exhibition. These were six very rewarding years.



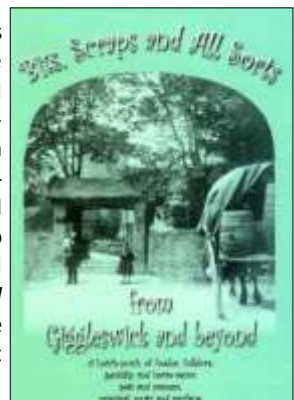
After eight busy years in West Sussex it was time for a change and I was fortunate in being appointed to a comparable post at Giggleswick School in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. In exchanging the South Downs for the rugged Pennines and at the same time being in sight of the spectacular Settle-Carlisle railway line, my passion for both the wild uplands and railways was more than adequately served. Within months of arriving at Giggleswick in 1973 I became involved with the local Civic Society and drew attention to the fact that the centenary of the opening of the line to passenger traffic was coming up in 1976. Inevitably, a Centenary Committee was set up and I was appointed Secretary. Two years of intense activity then followed and one of my tasks was to produce a periodic *Newsletter* which featured news and plans, both local and national, in connection with the centenary. Working closely with British Rail, local councils and many other bodies we helped to make sure that the centenary was celebrated in style on Saturday 1 May 1976. I was granted a day off school in which to enjoy the fun, culminating in a grand banquet in a marquee at Settle station.

At this time I worked very closely with W.R. ('Bill') Mitchell, a famous Yorkshireman who lived in the village and who was Editor of both *The Dalesman* and *Cumbria* magazines. Bill taught me much in the way of editing skills and magazine production. He was a prolific writer, great raconteur, notable speaker and Methodist local preacher. He was an ardent naturalist and authority on the sika deer of Bowland Forest and was also keenly interested in the Settle-Carlisle Railway. We spent many profitable hours using our Lineside Passes exploring hidden aspects of the line, publishing our results as well as fitting in many excursions looking at the wildlife of northern Britain. The *Centenary Newsletter* ran for eight issues and covered the period October 1974 to September 1976 during which the Centenary Committee was in constituted.



For several years I was Secretary of the Yorkshire Branch of the Institute of Biology (now the Royal Society of Biology) and one of the tasks was to edit and produce a periodic *Newsletter* for our hundreds of Branch members. This gave details of the annual symposium and field meetings that we held throughout Yorkshire. The electric typewriter was used to type the draft which was then sent to London for printing and inclusion in the Institute's quarterly journal. On the cover I featured drawings of two species for which Yorkshire is famous, notably the beautiful Bird's-eye Primrose (pictured above) of the high Pennines and an ammonite from the striking Jurassic cliffs along the coast near Whitby.

Nearer to home, in the little village of Giggleswick, I was a member of the ancient church of St Alkelda and became increasingly involved with the work there as I approached retirement in 2002. During my time as Churchwarden I undertook to edit a 138-page little book in 2004 comprising a collection of contributions from parishioners subtitled 'A hotch-potch of fodder, folklore, gentility and horse-sense, past and present, practical, potty and profane'. It was relatively easy to produce using the new computer system and IT programs I had bought and learnt how to use when I retired. *Bits, Scraps and All Sorts* sold well and was great fun to illustrate, too. I have since used some of the items from it in our own parish magazine at Lyminster.



In-between the duties of Churchwarden I undertook a great deal of research into the memorials, windows and churchyard, and also spent some years editing the parish registers for the 19th and 20th centuries of the ancient parish of Giggleswick which up until the early-to mid-nineteenth century had comprised five separate townships. St Alkelda's was the mother church of them all until each village eventually got its own church. The results were finally published in 2015 shortly after I moved to Lymington and comprised a large volume of 508 pages in A4 format, available in both soft and hard back versions and also as a searchable CD-ROM. Three earlier volumes of registers covering 1558-1837 had already been edited by two former pupils of Giggleswick School and published by the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, but as the YAS does not involve itself with registers beyond 1837 (when national registration began) we were keen to publish the records up to the end of the 20th century.



On and off over a period of several years I was also drawn into extensively researching aspects of the Boer War of 1899-1902. The early disastrous battle of Colenso in Natal on 15 December 1899 was noteworthy as being the occasion when the second highest number of Victoria Crosses were won for a single action (the highest being eleven at Rorke's Drift on 22-23 January 1879). In contrast, however, at Colenso, seven VCs were won within the space of a few hours on the same day. One of the recipients was Harry Norton Schofield who had been a pupil at Giggleswick during the 1870s. His medals and various memorabilia were in the famous Michael Ashcroft collection and were eventually put on display at the Imperial War Museum. In the 1990s I had met up with Schofield's son who had a photocopy of his father's war diary and it was this which I transcribed and indexed in an unpublished document in 2002. Research was also conducted into the other six recipients during which time I met two grandsons of two of the other recipients. But nothing of the research was ever published and all of my files were deposited with the National Army Museum, with copies going to various other locations such as regimental museums, archives and libraries around the country.

Finally, on moving to Lymington in 2014 and expecting a quieter life, it was not long before I read that St Thomas' Church needed a person to take over editing *Lymington Parish News* from Helen Hyde. Having seen the church magazine fold at Giggleswick for want of an editor just as we were leaving, I offered my services and took over from Helen in February 2016. I gradually got into the routine of producing a regular parish magazine and enjoyed becoming acquainted with an increasing number of folk at church and within the community at large. Gordon Wynne, a previous Editor of *LPN*, submitted a series of articles on the Lymington branch line but when I suggested that these articles could form the basis of an interesting book, he warmed to the idea and so I helped put the book together, drew him a map of the line and compiled a chronology of events. The 60-page monograph *Change at Brockenhurst* was published in 2018, followed by a reprint two years later. So we must have got something right!

March 25th—The Annunciation of our Lord to Mary

What if Mary had said “No”? What if she’d been too busy; or too conventional; or too afraid? There must have been a hundred ways of getting out of it: “It’s market day”, “I’m not that sort of girl”, “It’s the wrong time of the month”, or “I’ve found favour with God? Well, thank you very much but I’ve got to go on living in this community with these particular neighbours and I’m not sure saying ‘Yes’ to you will find favour with them.”

What if she’d said “No”? Although Christian iconography might suggest otherwise, it is possible that the stranger had knocked on several doors before this one. After all, God’s plans had been thwarted by women and men saying “No” before. Maybe in Mary the barrel was being scraped and God was truly exalting the humble from their low estate. All heaven must have held its breath as God’s almighty plan hung on the ‘yes’ or the ‘no’ of this slip of a girl from Nazareth.

Perhaps there was a contingency plan. After all, you could read the Old Testament that way: not so much the story of God’s constant initiative of love and judgement in human affairs, but God reacting, trying to find another way round human intransigence, coping with our God-given capacity to say “No”. But nothing could change the fact that the Almighty God had tethered himself and his good purposes once and for all to the answers of the beautiful but wilful creatures he had made in his own likeness. There were no short cuts. There are no short cuts. God’s disclosure of himself arises, and can only arise, within that relationship of mutuality, self-offering and saying “Yes” to another that we call love.

Which moves us from sacred story to ordinary day; to the places we inhabit; where we do our weekly shop; where we worry about money; where we grieve and feel guilty over the relative who has had to go into a home; where we over-indulge; where we do shameful things as well as things that surprise us by their generosity. For the story of the Annunciation is not simply a two thousand-year-old fable but a most relevant New Testament story for us today. Just outside the window, just at the end of the road, an angel waits; God waits. The question is not: “What if she’d said ‘No’? (we know she didn’t) but “What if WE say ‘No’”?

Or more importantly: “What if we say ‘Yes’?” For the Annunciation, like the sacrifice of Calvary, is something that happened once for all and can never be repeated. But annunciations and crucifixions and the promptings of grace do take place every ordinary day as God encounters us in the complexities of this world, addresses us, discloses his love to us and longs for us to answer “Yes, Amen”. Excuses, understandable excuses, will form on our lips. But we may still find in the busyness and preoccupations of the week that God, having put a wafer in our hands as a token of his presence one day, is staring into our eyes the next, yearning for us to say “Yes” to him and to cradle and nurture his new life with all its demands and transforming joy.

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PRAYER THOUGHTS

A Sacrificial Lent

It is customary, Lord,
to give something up
during the season of Lent.

What would you have me do without?
I who have so much.
Chocolate? Cream cakes?
Cigarettes? Sweets? Swearing?

The list is endless
and I could give up all those things
for the span of 40 days quite easily,
and almost painlessly.

But what difference would it make
other than making me feel 'holier'
than my friend who makes no such sacrifice?

What would you have me do without?
I who have so much.
Selfishness? Conceit? Envy? Pride?

I fear before I ask,
that the answer might be 'yes',
and the giving up
would be all too real, Lord.

It would be difficult,
painful,
sacrificial,
a real cross to carry for 40 days,
and more?

Based on a prayer from www.faithandworship.com



Malcolm Ward



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