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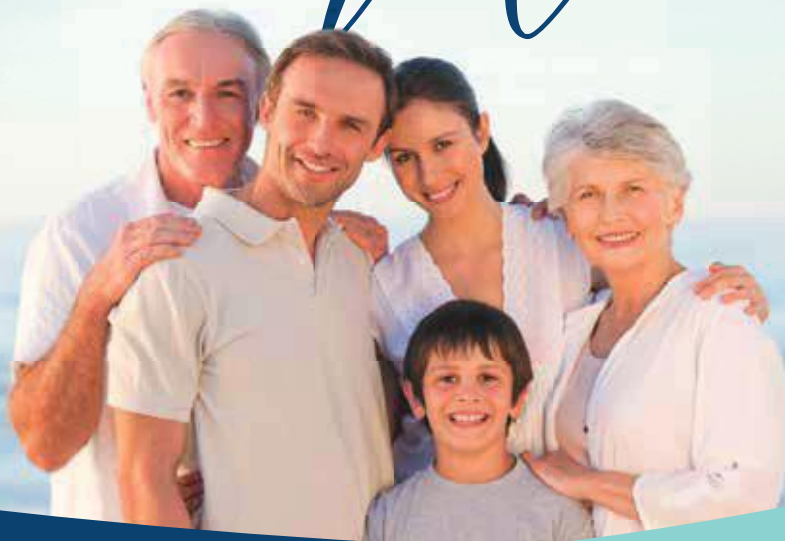


# *Lymington* *Parish News*



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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](http://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 Suzie Napleton

*[office@lymingtonchurch.org](mailto:office@lymingtonchurch.org)*    01590 676194

### *Contacts*

<b>Vicar:</b>	The Revd Canon Peter Salisbury (day off Friday) <i><a href="mailto:peter@lymingtonchurch.org">peter@lymingtonchurch.org</a></i> 01590 673847
<b>Churchwardens:</b>	Mr David Bridges, 01590 678732 Mrs Maureen Harris, 01590 674458
<b>LLM Emeritus:</b>	Mr Malcolm Ward, 01590 679651
<b>Organist &amp; Choir Director:</b>	Mr Martin Penrose, ARCO, LTCL, <i><a href="mailto:penrosemusic@aol.com">penrosemusic@aol.com</a></i> 02380 864439
<b>Verger:</b>	Ms Helen Pocklington <i><a href="mailto:helenpocklington@hotmail.co.uk">helenpocklington@hotmail.co.uk</a></i> 01590 673750
<b>Tower Secretary:</b>	Mr Larry Stace, 01590 682417

### *Magazine*

**Publication date:** 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Please submit copy to the Editor by the 6<sup>th</sup> of the previous month; for regular columnists, the date is the 13<sup>th</sup>.

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## THE VICAR'S LETTER

*Dear Friends,*

What a marvellous Easter celebration we had this year! The dawn service was attended by forty people and we were treated not only to the first Communion of Easter but also the most beautiful sunrise as the sun rose over the sea through a misting of distant cloud which spread red dawn across the sky and reflected deep in the salt marshes. Somehow the chorus of God's created variety of birdlife seemed to sing Alleluia with us!

The later service at St Thomas was set amongst the created beauty of flower arrangements that picked up the sunshine and resurrection in the air and projected celebration into our worship.

And what a celebration we had, with the church allowed to be full for the first time in years, and people thronging to join in with the angels and archangels as we sang the well-known Easter hymns and shared the joy of being together to praise the risen Jesus.

All through Holy Week we'd been wrapping ourselves in the pattern of Transitions: the Ending, the Wilderness, the New beginning. There in that great thanksgiving we all experienced the New beginning which is offered to each one of us through the resurrection of Jesus, which we have all accepted and in which we live, and yet also need this annual reminder that God is making all things new, and we are part of that great work of renewal.

Then as Easter drew to its twilight close we gathered once more, Ron's considered tones guiding us through Choral Evensong, the music and singing sublime, the journey complete.

Such a profound experience of Easter is due to many circumstances, not least the contrast with recent years of restriction. However, chief among all those circumstances is the joyful coming together of many, many people, each taking on their role with commitment and energy, each contributing a small piece to the glorious whole. If you start the list: the music, the singing, the cleaning, the decorating, the cooking, the welcoming... then you realise it might not really have an ending. The deepest Easter experience is a resurrection experience which takes in everyone, and everyone is thereby changed.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

*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:

<b>Sunday:</b>	<b>8.00am</b>	<b>Early Communion</b>
	<b>9.15am</b>	<b>Choral Communion</b>
	<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Life &amp; Soul Informal Service</b>
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
<b>Wednesday:</b>	10.00am	Poetry Corner - STH (2nd Wednesday on Zoom)
	<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
Thursday:	10.00am	Vistas Café - STH
Saturday:	9.00am	Zoom Prayer for the work of the parish [1]

## MAY EVENTS

<b>Sun 1</b>		<b>EASTER 3</b>
		<b>Services as usual including</b>
	<b>3.00pm</b>	<b>Baptism of Autumn</b>
Sat 7	7.00pm	Lymington Choral Society Concert - STC

## MAY EVENTS

<b>Sun 8</b>		<b>EASTER 4</b> <b>Services as usual</b>
Sat 14	9.00am	Flower Club Plant Sale outside St Thomas' Church (till 1.00pm)
<b>Sun 15</b>		<b>EASTER 5</b> <b>Services as usual including</b>
	9.00am	<b>Messy Church - STH</b>
<b>Sun 22</b>		<b>EASTER 6</b> <b>Services as usual</b>
<b>Sun 29</b>		<b>EASTER 7</b> <b>Services as usual</b>

## JUNE EVENTS

<b>Sun 5</b>	<b>PENTECOST</b> <b>Services as usual</b>
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### COVER PICTURE

The ornamental lamp stand shown on the cover of this month's copy of the magazine was first erected outside the Town Hall in the High Street to commemorate the introduction of gas street lighting to Lymington in 1832. The stands were provided by Admiral Sir Harry Neale of Walhampton and the lamps themselves by his brother, George (later Sir George) Burrard.

When this Town Hall was demolished in 1858 the commemorative lamp stand was resited outside the entrance to St Thomas' Church, its position well illustrated in the photograph on the centre page of a funeral cortège in St Thomas Street, probably taken around the time of the First World War—notice the Antipodian soldier in the slouch hat in the left foreground. At a later date the lamp post was moved again to its present position outside the Royal Lymington Yacht Club and restored, albeit to a different design to that of the original.

A stone also recording the event was incorporated into the boundary wall outside the church and, although low down at pavement level and encrusted with lichen, it is still legible. It is also illustrated on the centre page and reads: *To commemorate the lighting of the town by gas on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1832, the column being provided by Admiral Sir Harry Burrard Neale Bt, G.C.B.*



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

Athena Robertson  
Holden Lavis + Star Brown  
Mason Church + Ruby Richardson

Cover picture: Commemorative Lamp Post outside the Royal Lympington Yacht Club in Bath Road. See the feature and further photographs elsewhere in the magazine. *Photo: Nigel Mussett*

Readers may be interested to learn that the Crown Anemone, illustrated on the cover of the March magazine, has indeed flowered again in April this year down at The Haven.



St Thomas' Church  
Lympington

**Sunday 15 May**

Join us in St Thomas' Hall at  
9.00am for  
Food, Bible stories, songs and  
messy fun.

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

Info and updates at [www.lympingtonchurch.org/messy-church](http://www.lympingtonchurch.org/messy-church)



# Churchwardens' Notes

Prayers, we learn, are rarely answered either when or how we imagine. None of us could have imagined that prayers for new Churchwardens would be answered just two days before the APCM when Chris Stroud and Maureen (Mo) Penrose felt moved to step forward. Now elected, they will lead our parish through the vacancy and head the selection process for our future incumbent. David and I will continue to support them until the end of July; their role is not completely official until the Archdeacon's Visitation on 22 June. Our prayers will continue for them as they lead the selection team, and also for the PCC continuing with its responsibilities through the vacancy.

Easter this year was truly uplifting: the Dawn Walk, Easter Day Service and the wonderful Choral Evensong seemed more than special, not least for welcoming a full church! The previous day our hall was full of families enjoying Messy Church Easter activities - thanks to our active organising team.

Suzie Napleton, our new Parish Administrator, without doubt another answer to prayer, is still smiling as she settles in and is gradually piecing together the multifaceted nature of the parish involvements. As agreed, Gill (now retired) will for a while visit periodically to clarify a variety of aspects of the job overall – a double blessing!

It won't be long before scaffolding is erected at the church's east end in preparation for important renovation work. The results will be well worth any small inconvenience we may experience.

Our adaptation through all the recent smaller changes cannot but contribute towards preparing us for an even greater change ahead. Peter's Holy Week 'Transition' talks led us through Endings, Wilderness and New Beginnings, and underlined our need to accept stages of life's changes with the inevitable associated challenges, and to grow through them. Our farewell to Peter and Sarah in July will of course be sad as they have become a part of us and we shall miss them both so very much. However, their combined ministry over the past seventeen years has helped us to grow in various ways in preparation for this very challenging time ahead. Enabled and encouraged, we shall be able to support each other prayerfully, and especially those who lead us for the next stage of our journey together. May we continue to keep our eyes firmly on our Lord as we travel the months from July.

*Maureen Harris*



## OUR NEW CHURCHWARDENS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES

### Mo Penrose



I have been attending St Thomas for over 24 years. During this time I have helped in the Sunday School, sung in the choir, been on the PCC and Deanery Synod. In my previous Church I started and ran a large Sunday School, was in the choir, where I met Martin, my husband, and was also on the PCC and Deanery Synod. I used to be a secondary teacher, rising to be appointed assistant headteacher. In addition, I was a pastoral lead in schools including supporting NQTs as they started their teaching career.

In 2015 I gained an MA in Christian Liturgy and in 2021 I was given the BCM in Pastoral Care. I now share my time working as a call handler with the NHS, lecturing/speaking and being chaplain to two RAF cadet units in the New Forest. I look forward, with slight trepidation, to becoming a Churchwarden during the interregnum.

### Chris Stroud

My wife Jane and I moved to this area from Dulwich in 2010, initially living in Milford on Sea and then moving to Lymington in 2016. I am one of the servers at the 9.15 Sunday service and am also one of the team which produces the material for the house groups. I was previously a server at St Stephen's Church in South Dulwich and served twice there on the PCC, once during an Interregnum.



Now retired, my career was in the banking industry, being a financial markets dealer for about 20 years and a risk management specialist for a further ten. The latter work honed my analytical and project/process management skills.

Jane and I enjoy spending time walking in the countryside and have completed about 250km of the Camino de Santiago (French section); the Camino is an ongoing project! We are current members at Lymington Town Sailing Club and I enjoy most types of music and playing the guitar.

I look forward to working with Mo Penrose and the current Churchwardens, Maureen Harris and David Bridges, to ensure a smooth transition to the time when Mo and I formally take over the role on 31 July. I will do my utmost to ensure that the forthcoming Interregnum is negotiated as efficiently and painlessly as possible to the satisfaction of all parishioners.

## Suzie Napleton — our new Parish Administrator

*Suzie writes:*

I moved to the area five years ago and, my bookkeeping job having come to an end, a good friend told me that St Thomas' was looking for a new Parish Administrator. I applied, had two interviews and was offered the position! I am a little daunted by the varied nature of the job and hope that I can do my predecessor justice; hers are definitely big boots to fill. I am so grateful to Gill for continuing to come to the office regularly and for the support of everyone who has been in to see me. If you have not been to the office recently, do pop in to say 'Hello' and also to meet Colin, the retired guide dog, who is keeping me company, although his snoring can be a little off-putting. I will do my very best to continue Gill's good work but please bear with me whilst I find my feet.



The Leprosy Mission is appealing for funds for the Anandaban Research Centre which is outdated, cramped and suffered damage in the earthquakes that devastated Nepal in 2015.

A pioneering method of ulcer care has been developed which has cut healing times from months to weeks. TLM is seeking help to deliver medical miracles to Nepal this Easter by giving a gift to rebuild this place of hope. Every gift of up to £500,000 this Easter will be doubled by a generous supporter who shares your vision of a world free from leprosy.

*A gift of £18 doubled to £36 will provide 5,000 bricks for rebuilding the Centre.*

*£52 doubled to £105 will provide 15 bags of cement to begin the rebuild.*

*£323 doubled to £646 will pay for the new ulcer treatment to help patients to heal faster.*

**If you feel you would like to help, please send your donations to:  
The Leprosy Mission, Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, PETERBOROUGH PE2 5GZ**



# THE ORGANIST PIPES UP!

The tragic war in Ukraine has quite unexpectedly led me to discover some new organ music written by a musician living and working in Lithuania.

**MEDITATION ON UKRAINIAN SONG**  
**"HOMELAND"**  
 "Рідний край"  
 (Rodynnyy krayu)  
 Op. 84

Suggested registration:  
 Great: Flute 8 (tremulant)  
 Choir: Soft swell 8 (tremulant)  
 Swell: Strings 8  
 Pedals: Flutes 16 and 8

Vidas Pinkevicius (2022)  
 Secrets of Organ Playing  
[www.organduo.lt](http://www.organduo.lt)  
 GI

**Adagio**

Organ  
 Sw 7  
*p* legato

Pedals  
*p*

7

13

19

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Dr Vidas Pinkevicius, who is Professor of Organ at Vilnius University, has written a number of attractive pieces based on Ukrainian folk songs in response to the current Russian invasion. His meditation on the folk song 'Homeland' was spotted on line by my wife Maureen, and was written at the beginning of March this year. It was made available free of charge on his website on the basis that organists played it as much as possible to help highlight the plight of the Ukrainian people.

I performed it as part of my contribution to the Peace Concert organised by Christians Together in Lymington, which was held in St Thomas' on Saturday 26 March, and it was well received. The following week (Passion Sunday) I played another of his Ukrainian pieces

'Goodbye Ridnesenke Village' before the 9.15a.m. service, as I thought its haunting melody rather suited the occasion.

There is not a lot of biographical information available about Dr Pinkevicius, but I have been able to find out that he graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre with a Master's degree in organ performance and obtained a doctorate following a period of study in the United States. He specialises in teaching improvisation and also regularly gives organ duet recitals with his wife, Dr A Motuzaite-Pinkeviciene.

*Martin Penrose*

## Times and Tides - 2

This month we publish another two of Wendy Stickley's poems, one of which appears in her most recent collection entitled *Times and Tides* now on sale at £7.00 (£8.50 by post) direct from Wendy by emailing: [dropintheocean555@gmail.com](mailto:dropintheocean555@gmail.com). All proceeds go to support the Oakhaven Hospice.

### Why?

'Be brave and ask for help,' they say.  
He summoned courage, asked for help.  
Gently persistent, courteously,  
he asked and asked, then asked some more.  
But he encountered such deaf ears.

Until he was reduced to tears,  
he was sidelined, passed from one 'service'  
to another, and then back again.  
Why cause such pain? Why can't  
they guess the desperation levels  
in each plea for help? Why  
wait for a grown man to cry?

### Peace

A luminous day, light-filled, air-stilled,  
draws me to the marshes.  
Grasses, teasels, reeds, all  
twinned in motionless water.  
Herons poise, elegantly mirrored;  
skeins of geese skim past cloud-wisps —  
a double image, above and below.  
Light-catching gossamer threads  
float lazily. Eyes close,  
sun warms, mind drifts hazily.  
Fresh seaweed fragrances salt air.  
I dare to unwind. Silence-seeking,  
I sit on the shore  
wanting nothing more  
than peace.



# The Ten Commandments

“Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” (Exodus 20.13-16).

Although egregious breaches of the Sixth to Ninth Commandments — from billionaires on private islands to teenage youths with knives — surface today with uncomfortable frequency, it is hardly necessary, in a humble parish magazine, to urge respectable readers to observe commandments which, whether formally or not, have been printed on our consciences since early childhood.

Also dating back to earliest childhood, however — the earliest childhood of the whole literate human race — are these four Commandments. The fact that they receive instinctive assent, going back some 5000 years or more, indicates that much of humanity has been consistent ever since late Neolithic times. All generations are in agreement about the gross offences into which some individuals fall, and the need to flag up these offences in order to warn against them.

Very early on, as the human race in western Eurasia began to move from hunting and gathering to a settled agricultural existence, the sparse populations found it necessary to generate codes of laws which would help to make life in society comfortable, or even possible. There are examples among the Babylonians, the Greeks and even in the Psalms.

“Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle: or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?” are the questions with which Psalm 15 begins. In his verse 3, the author of Psalm 24 asks, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord: or who shall rise up in his holy place?” Both follow their double questions with their own answers.

In Psalm 15, where the double question kicks off the whole Psalm, it is difficult to count the number of answers. Some seem to repeat each other, but counting some repetitions as the same answer, the number of ‘commandments’ could come out as ten.

In Psalm 24 the Psalmist crams four answers into his verse 4, the verse following his double question: “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart: and hath not lift up his mind unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbour.”

It is tempting to see in these answers poetical allusions to the last five of the Ten Commandments — the four quoted above and the March magazine’s “Thou shalt not covet.”

*William Cummings*





**Above: Stone outside St Thomas' Church commemorating the gas lighting.**

**Below: Funeral cortège at St Thomas' Church with the commemorative lamp stand.**

*From an image courtesy of St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery.*





## OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ!

### *Christian essays inspired by the New Forest*

#### **4. The wild animals**

A red stag has a way of suddenly being seen as we pass by: a magnificent, regal sight. A fallow herd is surpassing in gentle beauty as we see them grazing in a field in the evening light. A little roe, on her own or perhaps with her twins, delicate on their feet, not frightened but trusting, can easily be found in a Forest churchyard. A lucky sight is the tiny muntjac or a Chinese Water Deer. Finally, if we are not too far from Beaulieu, we can catch sight of a sika and her friends. Those are the deer, the biggest wild animals. There are so many more. Think of the smaller mammals, many of them only coming out at night. Examples are squirrels, voles, shrews, foxes, hares, rabbits and now the pine marten too.

The birds, what of them? Where do we begin? Let us take the example of just one Forest speciality, the nightjar, he who churrs mysteriously through the night in late spring and lives in open places where many moths are to be found. There is something about nightjars. They inspire awe and almost fear as we stand quietly on

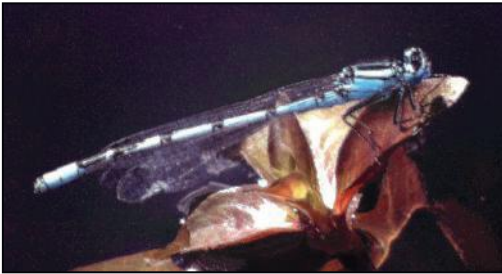
the edge of their territory and watch them hunt on the wing, often at knee height. Yet they are at the same time quite funny, amusing in their aerobatics and in the various ways in which they end a 'churr', anything between a sudden stop and a slow sputter like a small engine running out of petrol.



The snakes and lizards; well, we have already thought a little about them. As for the snakes, you will be fortunate to find one. Just admire it and leave it alone. Reflect that Genesis says that the serpent was the most subtle, not the most wicked, of the animals in Eden.



The insects and spiders are without parallel in the Forest for variety in shape, size, colour and sheer abundance, especially near the streams.



The frogs and toads, the newts, the fish, the huge number of water dwellers and amphibians, what of them? We can only wonder at their beauty and variety.



One of the most interesting writers on all these things is the well-known W. H. Hudson who wrote with great charm about the Forest wildlife as he knew it in the early twentieth century. *Hampshire Days* is one of his best known works, a classic, in fact. It is written in an easy, accessible style which belies Hudson's vast knowledge and acute faculty of observation.

To single out two relevant points: first we can only gasp in envy at the abundance of everything at that time, the sheer cornucopia of species. Secondly, we squirm at the attitudes of the public then displayed. Those vary from utter indifference at best to mindless persecution at worst. Education and wealth were no help. All classes were the same and Hudson spares none of them. If only we could combine modern attitudes with the fauna as it then was. But we are in today's sad case because that is not possible. One chink of light does, however, appear surprisingly often and it places solemn responsibility on those who love the Forest. It is this: in countless places we read of the demise or near extinction of something once common, except - it is said time and again - in the New Forest where it flourishes.



For the Christian there is much to contemplate and pray for. God's rainbow covenant was not made with Noah and family, nor was it made with all humanity. It was an expression of eternal divine favour for all the living things that had been saved by the Ark. The church is often seen as the ark of salvation, but for whom and for what? Read Isaiah's eleventh chapter and Paul's eighth chapter to the Romans again, with new eyes. Perhaps you prefer to pray quietly, without words. Then do so within sight of the window in the north transept of St Mary's Church South Baddesley (*right*). Find there a colourful and sensitive depiction of the great truth of the incarnation of God in Christ. This is shown humbly and without any pretension, as befits the simple country church of St Mary the Virgin. Our infant Lord and his mother are surrounded by five doves, a hare, a deer, a lamb and a red squirrel.

Remember the biblical doves. After the Flood it was a dove which brought to Noah, still in the Ark, evidence of new life in



the trees of the world. At Christ's baptism it was a dove that symbolised the descent of the Spirit of God to his Son. Remember the Lamb of God too, the victim who becomes victor. Call to mind the long tradition of the hare being very wise. See the deer as gentleness itself and the squirrel as representing all the Forest animals. Do not forget the thirsty, hunted deer in the psalm as a figure of the troubled soul longing for the living God. This deer has found him. Then let your eye pass over the beautiful foliage in the window till it rests on the leaves of the great oaks outside. In that way you travel from the Forest to the Bible and then back to the Forest again.

**Gordon Wynne**

# **BROCKENHURST MUSIC SOCIETY**

## **2022 Season**

**We're very excited to launch our 2022 Season, our 75th anniversary. Details of our concerts are shown below, all given by young highly talented professional musicians and held at St Saviour's Church, Brockenhurst at 7.30p.m.**

Tickets are £15 from [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) (booking fee applies), or from Pot Pourri in Brockenhurst or Sway Deli, or at the door. Season tickets are also available at £65. For more information please see our website: [www.brockenhurstmusicsociety.co.uk](http://www.brockenhurstmusicsociety.co.uk)

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### **Monday 9 May—Anything Goes: A Venetian Salon.**

Gala Concert for our 75th season. Le Salon Musical presents an immersive show of music and theatre recreating a Salon of the 1930s and featuring virtuoso piano, violin and tenor performances plus poetry, including music from Vivaldi to Cole Porter and poetry of Ezra Pound, James Joyce and Dante Alighieri.

### **Monday 13 June Indira Grier (cello) and Daniel Lehardt (piano).**

Both are international performers and prize winners, playing works by Beethoven and Brahms.

### **Monday 11 July - Mithras Trio.**

Formed in 2017 at The Guildhall School, currently in the prestigious BBC New Generation Artists scheme and regular Radio 3 broadcasters, playing works by McDowall, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky.

### **Monday 8 August - James Gilbert (clarinet) with piano accompanist.**

Royal Academy of Music scholar, solo and chamber recitalist for the Leeds International Concert Season and at the BBC Proms, playing works by Clara Schumann, Stanford, Brahms, Bridge, Ireland and Elgar.

### **Monday 12 September - Antonina Suhanova (piano).**

International performer and Guildhall School graduate originally from Latvia, playing works by Mozart, Brahms, Berg and Prokofiev.

## The Feast of St Philip & St James - 1 May

'Pip and Jim' we used to call them irreverently at theological college as we celebrated May Day each year! About James we know nothing beyond the fact that he is listed as one of the twelve disciples and that he was the son of one Alphaeus (Alfie's boy?). There are eight individuals named James in the New Testament and a good way to give oneself a headache is to try to disentangle them. Clearly this one is not to be confused with James, the brother of John and son of Zebedee - an altogether bigger fish! The latter is 'James the Great'. Today's James is 'James the Less' - a much more Christian title! But enough of May Day games...!

Philip on the other hand we meet four times in St John's Gospel. His first appearance is when Jesus 'finds' him. Jesus' first words to Philip are his first and last words to all his disciples: 'Follow me'. Philip then 'finds' Nathanael - but the first thing he says to his friend is not 'Jesus has found me' but 'We have found Jesus'. So who finds who? John the Gospel writer, who always delights in saying many things at once, leaves us to wonder. To the sceptic Nathanael, who, no matter how long ago he was born, is a child of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Philip's response is not to argue with him but to suggest that he meet Jesus and make up his own mind. Is that not the nature of evangelism - not to browbeat by argument but to broker a meeting: that was John the Baptist's method. 'Look at the Lamb of God' he said - and then cleared off (John 1.36).

Philip's second appearance is on the occasion of the feeding of the five thousand (John 6.1-14). Philip doubts whether they can afford to feed such a crowd and confronts Jesus with his doubts. That's the right thing to do with doubts.

His third appearance in the Gospel is when some Greeks approach him with their request to see and meet with Jesus. Why Philip? Presumably because, quite simply, he is approachable. St John's Gospel (4.9) famously observed that 'the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans' - nor, if they could help it, with any others beyond their own number. Philip, it seems, was exceptional. Traditional boundaries did not bother him. He is at ease with those who live in the light of stories other than his own. Philip gets on with Gentiles and so it is to him they turn with an appeal Jesus has been waiting to hear - the cry of the world to see and hear him (John 12.20-23).

The Greeks ask to see Jesus. Philip asks, on his fourth appearance in St John's Gospel, what he supposes is a different request. 'Show us the Father' he demands. He has yet to learn, as do we, that that is exactly what Jesus is doing all the time.

*"Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in him,  
But his heart is restless too until it finds its rest in us."*

**Ron Swan**



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so that we may accomplish your purpose.

Anoint us with your spirit of love  
that we might bring good news to the oppressed,  
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and proclaim release for the captives.

Give us a new urgency and commitment  
to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless,  
and visit those who live in isolation.

Help us to reach out to those  
who no one else will touch,  
to accept the unacceptable,  
and to embrace the enemy.

Surround us with your love,  
fill us with your grace,  
and strengthen us for your service.

Empower us to respond  
to the call of Jesus –  
to deny ourselves,  
to take up our crosses,  
and to follow.

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Amen.

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