

FEBRUARY 2023

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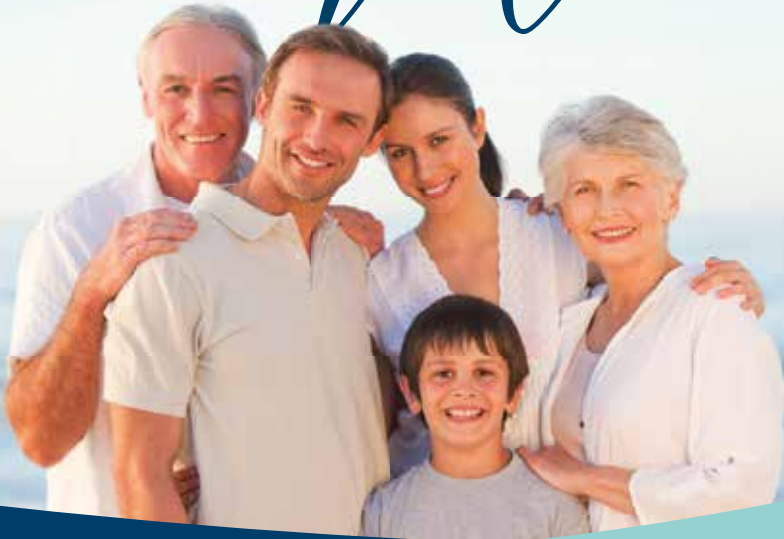


Lymington Parish News



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Lymington Parish News

St Thomas' and All Saints' Churches



St Thomas' Church
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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, including copies of the *Parish News* and *Weekly News Sheet*:

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.

Parish Administrator: Mrs Suzie Napleton
office@lymingtonchurch.org 01590 676194

Contacts

Vicar:	<i>Vacancy</i>
Churchwarden:	Mr Chris Stroud, c.m.stroud@btinternet.com 01590 674677
Assistant Churchwardens:	Mrs Maureen Harris, 01590 674458 Mr Malcolm Ward, 01590 679651
LLM Emeritus:	Mr Malcolm Ward, 01590 679651
Organist & Choir Director:	<i>Vacant</i>
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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; for regular columnists, the date is the 13th.

Editor and Advertising:

Nigel Mussett, nigelmussett@gmail.com 07531 179544

Subscriptions: Susan Canter-Visscher 01590 679666

MONTHLY EVENTS

Zoom Details – Prayer [1]

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

+ 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 (Term time only)
Wednesday:	10.00am	Poetry Corner - STH (2nd Wednesday of the month in STC)
	11.00am	Wednesday Communion
Thursday:	10.00am	Vistas Café - STH
	2.00-4.00pm	Warm Hub—STH
Saturday:	9.00am	Prayers for the parish - STC

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Sun 5		THIRD BEFORE LENT
		Services as usual
Wed 8	11.00am	Wednesday Communion
	3.15pm	Messy Church - Lymington Infants' School

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Sun 12		SECOND BEFORE LENT Services as usual
Wed 15	11.00am	Wednesday Communion
Sun 19		SUNDAY BEFORE LENT Services as usual
Wed 22	11.00am	Ash Wednesday. Holy Communion
Sun 26		LENT 1 Services as usual

MARCH EVENTS

Sun 5		LENT 2 Services as usual including Evensong
	4.00pm	



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

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Matthew Bull + Amy Wilshire + Thomas Monks
Ollie Lindsay + Edith Lumley



**This month's cover: "Past Three O'clock,
On a cold and frosty morning..."**

Photo: Nigel Mussett



Messy Church is piloting a new venue in 2023!

By the time this magazine comes out we will have held our first service at Lymington Infants' School.

We shall be holding monthly services on the third Wednesday of the month starting at 3.15p.m. (although the February session will be on the second Wednesday due to Half Term).

It is not just for children from the school. ALL children, whatever their ages and schools, will be welcome provided they are accompanied by a parent or other adult carer.

The usual Messy Church fare will be on offer — Bible stories, songs, prayers, refreshments, craft... and fun!

*We would welcome new volunteers to help with Messy Church services.
Anyone interested should contact Andy Clapper:*

andy.clapper@btinternet.com

Churchwardens' Notes

On 29 January we said 'Farewell' to Martin Penrose after almost twenty-five years as our Organist and Choirmaster. Martin will be deeply missed, both by the choir and the congregations who have appreciated his dedicated musical leadership at all our sung worship, weddings and funerals, not least through the long, locked down, on-line period. We thank both Martin and Mo, a choir member, and wish them both well, as they continue using their talents in other spheres.

Sadly, we said 'Goodbye' to two members of our congregation who died recently: Derek Mills, long-serving altar server who led the Home Communion Team, and Shelah Payne whose contribution to our prayer life has been greatly valued. Both were always approachable, ready to listen and encourage.

Meanwhile, church members who have more recently joined us are already cheerfully adding their names to various rotas and our Vacancy Team has worked hard to produce the Parish Profile well on time. Advertisements for a new incumbent will be published four times this month and the PCC has already selected Chris Stroud and Marion Lewis to represent us on the interview panel.

So many people have asked that famous question, 'Are we nearly there yet?' The answer as ever is: 'We are up to speed and making good time'! The vacancy period, with all the patience needed and hard work it entailed, is definitely a time for 'growing'. We are reminded very strongly of our necessary dependence on God. Please continue to pray, using the parish prayer or words of your own, acknowledging that the Lord knows the plans he has for us (Jeremiah 29.11).

We are fortunate to have three retired clergy, Rosie, Richard and Ron, along with our hospital chaplain Linda, to preside at our four weekly services and at funerals. Meanwhile, the Messy Church Team last month embarked on a new initiative by taking this wonderful young family-centred worship to our CoFE Infants' School on the third Wednesday of each month. All children are welcome with parent or carer for refreshments, activities, Bible stories - and fun!

Being allowed to close the nave windows this winter has been a great relief – not least with management of our energy bills. The Energy Team has given much time researching ways to reduce bills yet further. Please be patient; these efforts, and our diligent door-closing also contribute to reduced energy use, so helping to fulfil our Eco Church pledge.

Candlemas commemorates the presentation of Jesus at the Temple and refers to him as the light of all people. We look forward to the signs of Spring in our churchyard. A Lent course is planned and sessions will be held on Sunday afternoons. A good time to listen, reflect and share. All are welcome!

Maureen Harris, Assistant Churchwarden



THE ORGANIST PIPES UP!

DOWN!

As I write, I am in my last few weeks as organist and choir director of St Thomas' Church and I have been looking back on twenty-five very happy years in Lymington.

When Mo and I arrived in the parish in 1998, we had three young girls. Mo was in her early 30s and I was just shy of my 40th birthday. We are now both rather older with three grown-up children and two grandchildren. In that time I reckon I have played for approximately 3,000 Sunday services, taken over 1,000 choir practices and played for literally hundreds of funerals, weddings and occasional services. In my first dozen or so years I played for the 9.30a.m. Eucharist, 11a.m. Matins and Evensong every week.

I have been so lucky to be supported by very loyal choristers – nearly 100 over the years, and three members of the initial choir when I arrived are still singing with us. I have also been lucky enough to work with two wonderfully supportive vicars, a variety of assistant clergy, curates, retired priests and lay ministers, plus other talented musicians.

As you will know, we have never lived in Lymington and so my work as organist has involved a fair bit of travel. Mo and I did a rough calculation and we reckon I have travelled over 120,000 miles playing the organ at St Thomas'. Quite a frightening statistic, particularly when one considers the current cost of fuel and travel of all sorts!

Just before Christmas, we were sad to hear of the death of dear Kate Richards who was instrumental in my appointment to the post of organist and choir director; Kate was so supportive of us both when we arrived as 'newbies' in Lymington. I am glad that I am still just in post to play for her thanksgiving service.

And now it's time for Mo and me to move on to new challenges. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the support she has given me over the years (clerical, page-turning, organising parties, remembering birthdays and pulling out the odd stop). She has sung in my two church choirs for 43 years and I couldn't have done it all without her.

Martin Penrose

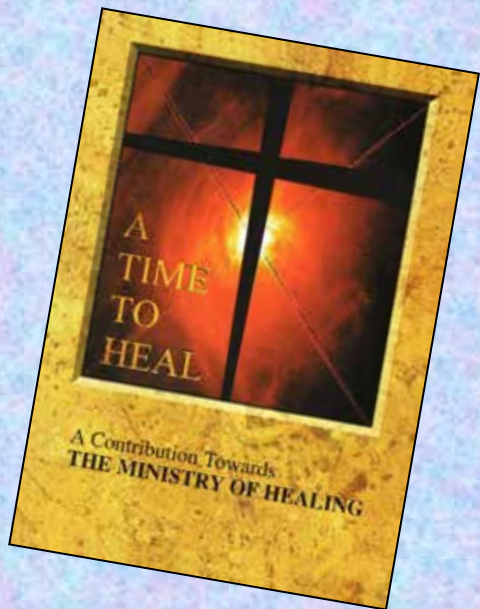
The healing work of Christ today

After Easter we shall be resuming services of 'Holy Communion with Healing' at the 9.15 services. These took place regularly before Covid and were much valued. We're planning a series of sermons on healing, but also taking this opportunity in *LPN* to remind readers about the healing work of Christ today.

Healing is central to the Church's life. Jesus healed people and expected his followers to do the same. He taught that healing and salvation are connected. In addition, we see that it is part of God's character to heal: there are several striking examples of healing in the Old Testament, for example, that of Naaman, who was healed of leprosy. We read of healing in the book of Acts where the apostles healed in Jesus' name, and all through church history God has continued to heal people. There was a time when many thought that stories of healing were confined to the first century, but that gradually changed, so much so that the 1988 Lambeth Conference declared that 'the ministry of healing should be a regular part of the ministry of every congregation.'

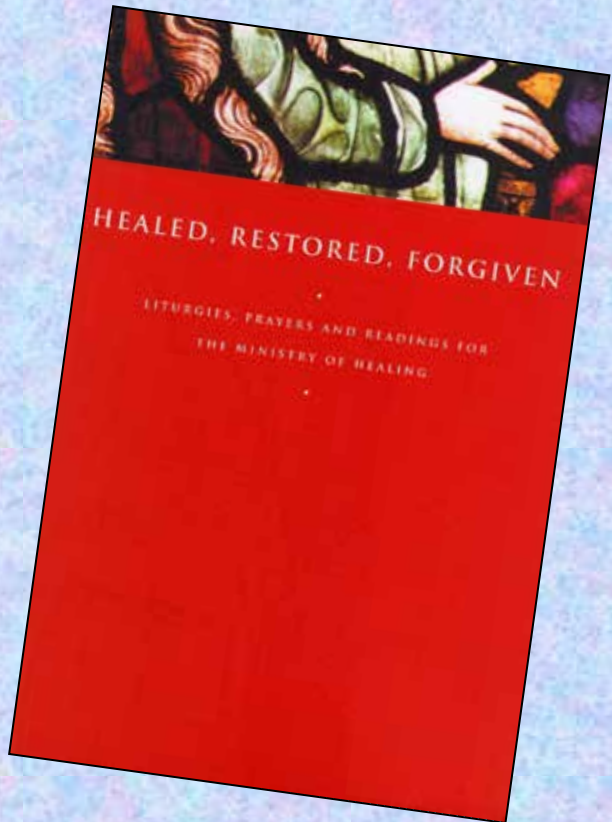
One helpful definition of healing is this: 'Christian healing is Jesus Christ meeting me at my point of need.' God's will is for us to be whole people in body, mind and spirit. Our relationship with God is healed when we come to know Jesus and his salvation. We may also find physical healing and emotional healing. The ministry of reconciliation, involving confession, is also a form of healing.

When God heals – in whatever way – the Kingdom of God is breaking into our present world of time and space. In that God's Kingdom will only be fulfilled in the life of the age to come, all healings now experienced within the Church are anticipations of the final healing of resurrection life. That is why we sometimes do not see God's healing in the way we hope for. Death can – and must – be part of the healing journey.



So today we might see the Church's ministry of healing as a spiritual ministry working alongside medicine and psychology. As Christians we serve people by using God's gifts of pastoral care, prayer and the sacraments. We want to help people to find a deeper understanding of God's presence with them and to discover the particular wholeness that is God's will for them.

The way in which God's healing is mediated can vary according to church tradition. Back in November a few of us went to a deanery service of healing where people could receive anointing with holy oil, light a candle and pray for someone, or to share their need for healing briefly and have hands laid on them. At St Thomas' we lift people to God in our weekly intercessions, and when we have special services people who wish to be prayed for are invited to the communion rail after the sermon to receive prayer for themselves or for someone else.



There are many mysteries around healing. Why are some healed and others do not appear to be? But even Jesus did not heal everyone, and we will all die eventually, just as Jairus' daughter and Lazarus did, some time after Jesus raised them to life. We know that God gives gifts of healing to his Church and our task is to use them in our church community to glorify God and to bring greater healing and wholeness to others.

Rosie Ward

Obituary

SHELAH PAYNE

12 August 1930 – 14 January 2023



Our nearly indestructible mother died peacefully in the Royal Bournemouth Hospital on 14 January having suffered a severe stroke a few days before. We would like to thank all those who asked after her during those days, and who kept her in their thoughts and prayers, and all those who have sent their sympathies since. We are so grateful to her wonderful neighbours who looked out for her so loyally that they contacted us straightaway. My brother, sister and I were able to sit with her in the hospital from the moment she arrived there.

Shelah Hudson was born in Maidenhead in 1930 where she lived until her marriage to our father, Cyril Payne, in 1955 when, after his ordination, they went to their first parish, Southall, in the west London suburbs. They moved to Christchurch in 1958 where Cyril was a Curate at the Priory and Priest-in-Charge of St Mary's Church on the Somerford estate. In 1963 they moved to Otterbourne, near Winchester, where they spent another twelve happy years, and in 1975 Cyril was asked to become Vicar of Milford-on-Sea. They retired in 1990, all the way to Lymington, first to Oaklands where they lived for 23 years, and since 2013 Shelah lived at The Cloisters. Helen and Ian were born in Somerford, Sarah was born in Otterbourne, and Cyril died on 27 December 2014, surrounded by his family. She had two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, with a third on the way.

Those are the facts. What they do not tell is everything else. Our mother was a dyed-in-the-wool vicar's wife. His job was her job. She dedicated her life to others, but somehow she also found time for us. She was slow to anger, remarkably non-judgemental, and always tried to think of others. She was loving, friendly and welcoming to all, not because she felt she had to be, but because that was who she was. She loved talking and she loved being with people, but never had to be the centre of attention. The church and the church community were critical to her sense of well-being. We don't really need to tell anyone of the importance of the church to her; you will all know. What it meant for her children was that we never worried about her as she grew older: we knew she had a fulfilling, active life, supported by her friends, her Christian faith, and the community. It ranged from her weekly house prayer group (whose selected passages we continued in the hospital), through her participation in the church, to cups of tea and coffee with friends and her one-eyed aiming at the 'coche' on the pétanque pitch. People stopped to say hello to her whenever they saw her, and she appreciated it all.

So we are grateful for her long and good life, her endless love, and we thank everyone reading this for helping make it precisely that – a very good life.

Helen, Ian & Sarah Payne

- + -

***A Service of Thanksgiving for Shelah's life will be held at
St Thomas' Church on Friday 17 February at 2.30p.m.***



Following COP26 in Glasgow, COP27 was held in Egypt in November 2022. It was judged a success by some, and a disappointment by many.

A new agreement on loss and damage was hailed an ‘historic moment’, even though little was agreed beyond that, such as where the money will come from. But for those who have paid the heaviest price for climate change so far, just to have an agreement was a step forward. But many saw the COP as a missed opportunity, with no commitment to emissions peaking before 2025 (as the science tells us is necessary), no follow-through on the phasing down of coal, and few increased targets from countries to lower their emissions.

A notable feature of COP27 was the presence of fossil fuel lobbyists and their influence was reflected in the final text. In addition, many African countries were keen to use the COP as a platform to promote new oil and gas initiatives in their own countries. It is still technically possible to keep the increase in global temperature below 1.5°C, but it is not looking likely, and with every report the future of the planet looks bleaker.

COP15 UN Biodiversity Summit

Yes, there were 2 COPs last year! The second one was in December in Montreal. It had been regarded as a ‘last chance’ to halt biodiversity loss and put nature on a path to recovery. A key outcome was an agreement to protect a third of the planet for nature by 2030. There will also be targets for protecting vital ecosystems such as rainforests and wetlands, and the rights of indigenous peoples.

In both these areas, talk is relatively easy, but it’s action that counts. Please pray that our government sticks to its own climate targets and that governments around the world take action to lower emissions and protect nature. And let’s continue to play our own part.

Rosie Ward

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

2-6 December 2022

A record number of seventy Christmas trees were decorated in support of this year's Festival, helping to attract a larger number of visitors than ever. Throughout the five days of the Festival, several talented groups provided a varied and enjoyable programme of musical interludes while the refreshments and Christmas Sales Table once again proved popular supporting attractions. The Friends of St Thomas' Church are very grateful to all visitors and sponsors for their support this year, a regular event now in the Lymington town calendar.



The South Aisle.



The Choir and Sanctuary.



Andriy and Milana decorated the 'Peace for Ukraine' tree.



The Christmas Sales Table had plenty to offer.



Three of the many music groups who provided very lively performances during the Festival.

Below: Many of the trees were for sale and ingenious ways were devised on how to transport them back home.

Photos:
Daphne Johnson and Nigel Mussett



St Thomas' Christmas Day Lunch



At the end of October it was decided that St Thomas' Church would try and arrange another Christmas Day Lunch for Senior Citizens who would otherwise be on their own at Christmas. In 2021 the event attracted 27 guests under challenging circumstances owing to Covid restrictions and the fact that planning had only begun on 5 December. We hoped that this year things would be easier with more time to plan and no Covid restrictions, and so it proved.

The key factor in arranging this event is having a good, experienced cook/caterer who is willing to give up most of their Christmas Day. We were extremely fortunate again this year in that Mikki Willford, who cooks for the Monday Lunch Club at St Thomas', was willing to support us again with her family also working in the kitchen.

This year some of the supermarkets were not so generous as they had been in the past probably owing to their increasing costs and requests for donations from other charities. Nevertheless, we were delighted to host 43 Senior Citizens who would otherwise have been on their own to enjoy the Christmas Day lunch that had been arranged for them in St Thomas' Hall.

Once the guests had been welcomed they were served a glass of Buck's Fizz, wine or orange juice and nibbles consisting of a mince pie, canapé, crisps and nuts. At 12.30 The Mayor of Lymington, Councillor James Hoare, arrived with presents of chocolates from the Town Council for all. He then went round the tables speaking to guests.

After Rosie Ward had said Grace the traditional main course of roast turkey and all the trimmings was served, followed by Christmas pudding and custard.

After the meal the guests were entertained by Tess Kazim who told fascinating stories and encouraged the guests to tell some of their own. This was followed by a "Singalong" with Mike Crofts and his guitar, with all joining in with the carols and more modern songs. At 3p.m. we watched the King's Speech live on a screen set up at the back of the Hall and after a few more songs, guests finally departed as the light faded by 4p.m.

Our thanks go particularly to Mikki Willford and her family for the excellent meal they produced and also to all the helpers who together made this event such a success with so many laughing, happy people enjoying themselves in the company of others rather than spending a Christmas on their own.

Nigel Lang

Christmas Day Lunch



The amazing cooks – Mikki and her helpers.



Storyteller Tess Kazim.

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A GARDEN

The joys of a garden or parkland in my life cannot be overestimated. During the pandemic our garden was a godsend to Martin and me: a place to sit, read, listen to the trickling of our pond, playing Scrabble or just having a place to think and a space for contemplation. We love watching and interacting with the many animal and human visitors, and love it when an extensive black beetle hotel comes alive every autumn with newly hatched beetles drying out and flying off — we had fourteen this year.

But a garden is a lot of work, needing constant care and attention by the gardener. There is always something to do throughout the year – looking after and feeding the plants, pruning, moving plants around, however dominant, to other places in the garden to change the feel, or changes in the use of the space or even giving them to another gardener. One can get excited about introducing new plants and working out the best position for them, sometimes realising that they are dominating or overpowering an area and so gently moving them to a better position where they can thrive without causing damage to other plants around. As peoples' lives change so does a garden's purpose. It's so sad to see a garden that has been left and become overgrown, stagnant and something that becomes irrelevant to its surroundings.

Over the centuries St Thomas' has been a place where leaders have been the amazing gardeners of the church. The church throughout this time has evolved, for example, from the old rented box pews extending right up to the high altar and the servants upstairs, to the Victorian pews, and now to moveable chairs, meaning that our worship space is more flexible. Through these, and many other changes, it has carried on being a relevant place for visitors and locals to come in and sit quietly, read, listen and have space for contemplation.

St Thomas' is going through many changes at present. It won't be the same as it was before. The effects of those changes will be different for each person – just as when you move plants in a garden you have to take care of those that are left growing where they were.

Martin and I hope that in our short time at St Thomas', relative to the long history of the church, we have helped to make it a better place. Change, however difficult or worrying, must happen and we both know that as the church carries on evolving it will continue to be a thriving, relevant place of worship and care.

Mo Penrose

OUR CHURCHYARD BUTTERFLIES

Simon Quincey has a specialist knowledge of butterflies and has kindly responded to a request to write about these welcome visitors to our churchyard.

Even though the churchyard has been closed to burials for decades, it continues to be a very special place not just because it is a haven of tranquility, appreciated by many, but also because of its size.

The sustainable management of the churchyard for the benefit of wildlife was a requirement of the Eco Church scheme and this has spurred on efforts to record all its wildlife, given much impetus by Peter Salisbury and the Churchwardens of the time. Managing the churchyard for wildlife has to start with knowing what is already there. Because it's such a large area (almost three acres) this has been a time-consuming task, though helped initially by some previous efforts at systematically recording the species of trees, flowers, grasses, mosses and lichens.

It's all about the caterpillars

Of course, very much tied up with the churchyard flora are the insects and of these the easiest to spot and identify are the butterflies. Starting at the time of the Eco Church application, these have been recorded along Butterfly Conservation guidelines and the records are then independently



Painted Lady

checked and logged on a national digital database. The guidelines we use are similar to the Great Garden Birdwatch: that is, we count the maximum number visible at one particular time to avoid 'double-counting'. Butterflies are trickier to count as they make themselves inconspicuous on cool, sunless or windy days, and so we pick a day paying close attention to the weather forecast.

Hampshire is a particularly good county for its variety of species, largely down to its wide range of habitats, but also thanks to some conservation-minded landowners. The churchyard will only ever have a tiny percentage of what can be seen across the county as a whole, though we have records of Small Copper and Holly Blue - two of the prettiest species - as well as the more common garden species.



Peacock



Gatekeeper



Brimstone
on Bramble

Many species are spotted readily enough flitting from plant to plant as they seek nectar from the flowers of bramble, weeds and garden plants, most famously *Buddleja*, the Butterfly Bush. However, the flitting may or may not be random. Although a few species will select by colour (for instance, Brimstones go exclusively for purple or mauve flowers), many others will select from a wide variety of nectar sources, using brambles and even ragwort - the Gatekeeper goes for that one. But selecting plants for the churchyard to cater for the nectaring preferences during the adult stage of the butterfly life cycle is the easy bit!

As every primary schoolchild knows, butterflies, along with many insects, go through a remarkable life cycle of four stages: **egg** - **larva** (caterpillar) - **pupa** (chrysalis) - **adult**. The pupa slowly hardens off as the butterfly develops from the gloop within. On the principle of 'we are what we eat', caterpillars are as picky as teenagers in their choice of food. They have just the one chance to eat what they will need in order to transition to what can be a very brief adulthood. So the adult will only lay her eggs on the plants which will meet the caterpillar's nutritional needs, and the caterpillar will only eat that particular food plant.



Burnet moth
larvae on
Ragwort

Inconveniently for the churchyard management team, the species of food plant for even our most common butterfly caterpillars would not necessarily be what one would want, other things being equal! Orange-tip and Green-veined White, for example, feed on Garlic Mustard; Peacock, Comma, Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell all feed on Common Nettle, while the Common Blue butterfly feeds on Bird's-foot-trefoil. Other butterfly caterpillars, such as the Gatekeeper, Ringlet and Meadow Brown, use just a few grass species, a tricky subject area of identification about which I know very little!



So we're getting to the point where we can see what flowers we need and what weeds we must put up with to encourage even the most common butterfly species and their caterpillars. Oh that it were that simple! For a start, the nettles and brambles should really be in sunlight during the middle of the day, and although the caterpillars which use grasses as their food plant exhibit a bit of flexibility the nettle-eating species like Peacock and Comma are as inflexible as anyone on the latest dieting 'fad'. That is, Common Nettle and nothing but Common Nettle!

And then there's the whole vexed area of Ivy in the churchyard. The caterpillar of one of our prettiest and more common butterflies, the Holly Blue, eats Ivy in its second brood. So there's a nice balance to be found between tolerating enough Ivy to keep the hungry Holly Blue caterpillars satisfied and maintaining a modicum of tidiness. In fact, striking a balance between formal tidiness with some managed untidiness for the benefit of wildlife is not a bad philosophy for the churchyard, as it is perhaps for our own gardens.



Speckled Wood on Ivy



Bird's-foot-trefoil

To try and conclude on a slightly more upbeat note, the Bird's-foot-trefoil ticks the boxes of not only being the food plant of the Common Blue caterpillar but also of having really pretty yellow flowers (yes, technically it's a weed and no doubt dyed-in-the-wool gardeners will refuse to give it house-room). Trying to get it established, however, can be hard work.



**Small Tortoiseshell
on Ragwort**

Perhaps the most striking thing I have learnt is that if you can nudge everything in the right direction (that is, in the direction favouring wildlife diversity), it can all fall beautifully into place. So removing grass clippings after mowing, for instance, rather than leaving them *in situ* as a mulch, is beneficial because over the years soil fertility is gradually reduced and this in turn discourages the growth of coarse grasses which, if left unchecked, will always out-compete wild flowers and the less vigorous grasses. Just as a garden is never quite complete, so the task of managing the churchyard beneficial to wildlife may always be seen as 'work-in-progress'.

Simon Quincey. Photos: Nigel Mussett.

Jesus declares his purposes

In nearly two dozen places in the four Gospels, Jesus states the purpose of his life's work and mission in sentences beginning with the words "I am not come to ... but to ...", or simply, "I am come to ...". During 2023 we shall be looking at ten of these passages.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matthew 5.17)

Jesus' phrase "the law or the prophets" was in his day shorthand for what we know today as the Old Testament. Something in the background must have prompted this fairly emphatic statement: perhaps it was a misunderstanding of Jesus' message, or a controversy surrounding his person.

In the Old Testament, there appear elaborate rituals by which the people could express their penitence and receive God's forgiveness ("the law"). The Old Testament is also full of reproaches, generation by generation, for the people's idolatries and unfaithfulnesses towards the living God who had brought them out of slavery in the land of Egypt ("the prophets").

The cycle of idolatry, repentance and forgiveness: idolatry, repentance and forgiveness, remained unbroken throughout the Old Testament. The last book of all, the Book of Malachi, even accuses the priests themselves of slackness and insincerity — and yet they were the ones whose ritual activities were supposed to represent the people's repentance for their collective unfaithfulnesses!

What "the law and the prophets" needed was a way out of the repetitive round of ritual followed by betrayal of the purposes of this ritual. They needed not abolition (or "destruction"), but fulfilment. What Jesus says in this single sentence is worked out in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

St Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles, "By him (i.e. Jesus) all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13.39). St Paul acknowledges that Jesus achieved his declared purpose.

St John in his Gospel puts it in even fewer words, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1.17)

William Cummings



*The gist of this story was sent to me
by a colleague from Sussex last December - Editor.*

We received about four inches of snow overnight and...

- 8.00 a.m. It was bright and sunny outside and so I decided to build a snowman.
- 8.10 a.m. My neighbour, an ardent feminist, came out and asked why wasn't I building a snow woman.
- 8.15 a.m. So, I then began to build a snow woman alongside the snowman.
- 8.17 a.m. Another feminist passed by and complained about the appearance of the snow woman's chest, saying that it objectified women everywhere.
- 8.20 a.m. Then the gay couple down the road came by and remarked that it could have been two snowmen instead.
- 8.22 a.m. Not to be outdone, the transgender man/woman/person from across the way appeared and asked why I didn't just make one snow person with detachable parts.
- 8.25 a.m. Who should walk past but a group of vegans who complained about the use of carrots to represent the noses I was in the process of adding. They claimed that carrots, being vegetables and important food products, were being stigmatized and their self-identity as a species was being compromised.
- 8.28 a.m. Several passers-by commented that I was a racist because the snow couple were both white.
- 8.30 a.m. So I quickly nipped into the kitchen for some food colouring to make the snow woman a darker colour so as to be seen as being racially inclusive.
- 8.35 a.m. I was then accused of using a black face on the snow woman I had darkened.
- 8.37 a.m. The Middle Eastern gentleman living opposite immediately came across and demanded that the face of my snow woman be covered.

- 8.55 a.m. The police arrived saying that several of the local inhabitants had complained and that they were obliged to take action. They said that I risked prosecution if I did not destroy both my figures forthwith.
- 9.20 a.m. The Racial Equality Officer from the Council appeared and threatened me with eviction.
- 9.45 a.m. A TV news team drove up and asked if I knew the difference between a snowman and a snow woman. I simply replied "Snowballs!" and was immediately branded 'Sexist'.
- 12noon On the mid-day News I was presented as a suspected terrorist, racist, homophobic offender, bent on stirring up trouble during the period of bad weather.
I was asked if I had any accomplices and after I had mentioned that my children had joined in the fun, being the first fall of snow they had seen for years, Social Services were soon on my doorstep taking them into custody.
- 12.30 p.m. A group of seasoned protesters had assembled having been offended by everything and were waving placards demanding my arrest.
- 2.00 p.m. My boss at work had got wind of the incident and telephoned to say that I had been dismissed because of the negative impact the mounting coverage on social media might have on the firm.
- 2.05 p.m. I pour myself a drink and cry because all I wanted to do was to build a snowman with my children!

* * *

There is no moral to this story other than to show what the world has become because of a bunch of snowflakes.

At the same time as I received the above story from Sussex, I read in my copy of the Royal Society of Biology's *Science Policy Newsletter* of 2 December 2022, that "The WHO [World Health Organisation] has recommended Monkeypox now be known as mpox in the wake of reports of racist and stigmatizing language surrounding the name of the disease." Who were the WHO trying to kid? Left speechless, I wondered what's now going to happen to the likes of 'Chickenpox', 'German Measles', 'Swine Fever' and 'Strep Throat'. *Nigel Mussett, FRSB.*

PRAYER THOUGHTS

ALONE WITH MY GOD

Be O Lord,
A bright flame before me.
Be a guiding star above me;
Be a smooth path below me;
A kindly shepherd behind me;
Today, tonight, and forever.

Alone with none but you, my God,
I journey on my way.
What need I fear, when you are near,
O Lord of night and day?
More safe am I within your hand
Than if a holy multitude did round me stand.
Amen.

*Based on a prayer from
6th century Irish Abbott:
St Columba of Iona (521-597)*

Malcolm Ward

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~
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Or

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