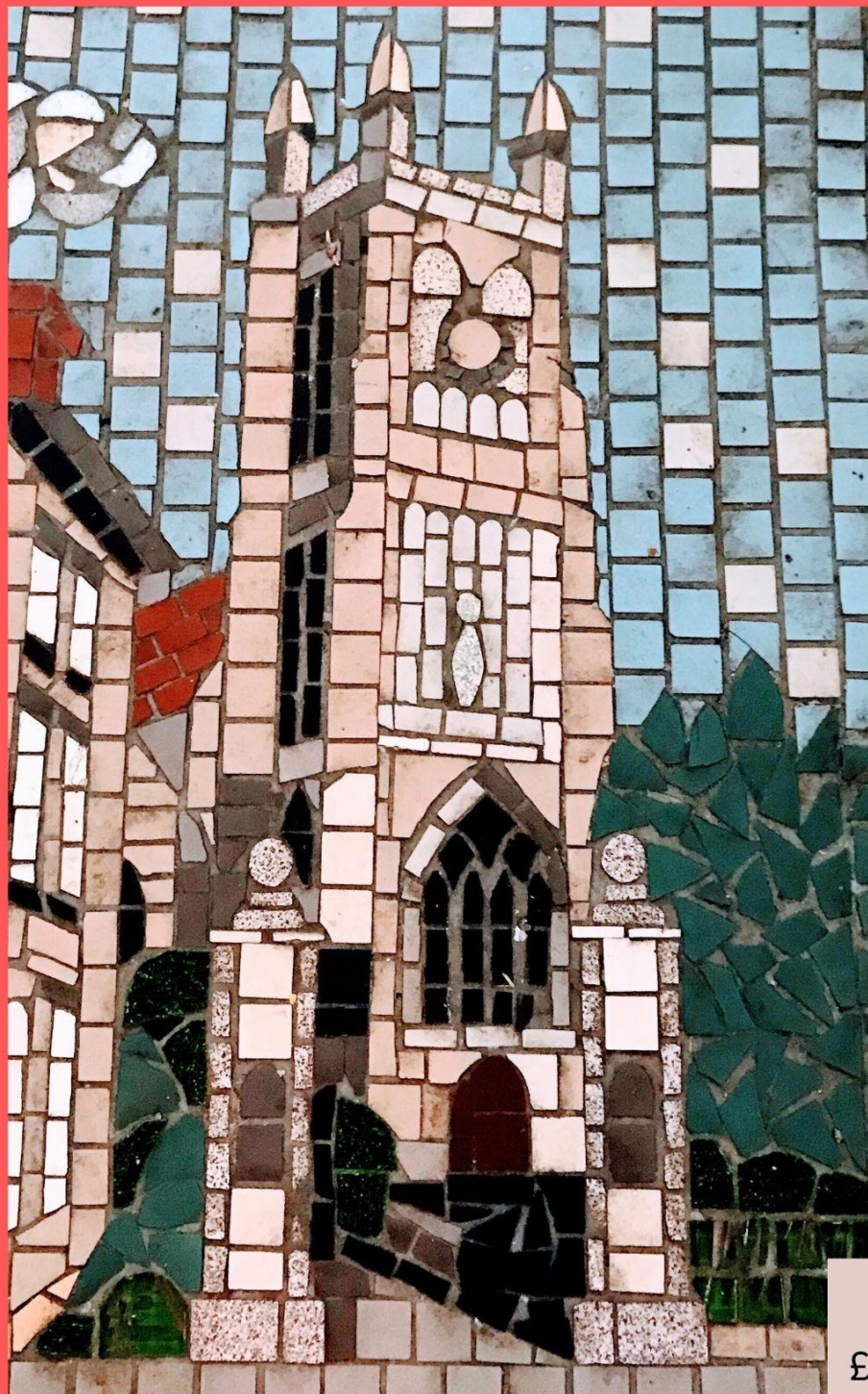


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February 2025

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FEBRUARY 2025

A Message from the Editors

Dear Readers

Welcome to our February edition.

Congratulations to Roger Ransome on his BEM, see our memories of Marion Pagett, some lovely photos from the live nativity and our usual interesting articles for your perusal.

From Valerie and Judith (editors)

Front Cover: theme for 2025

'In and around St James'

Photo by Judith from the mosaic in St James.

.

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**DEADLINE FOR MARCH 2025 ISSUE
IS SUNDAY 16th FEBRUARY 2025**

Revd David Vonberg writes.....



Dear Friends,

Welcome to February!

In the Birmingham Museum Art gallery we can discover this painting by Benjamin Williams with the title "February Fill Dyke". It depicts a rural scene in the midst of a wet and dismal day. Its title comes from a saying "**February fill dyke**, be it black or be it white", referring to the way the dykes traditionally fill with either water or snow in this month. Although the painting was hardly noticed when it was initially displayed, it has since then become very popular and a much-loved painting. The dank and water covered fields in the foreground give way to a cheerful cottage, obviously inhabited because smoke is rising from the chimney and behind that the Parish Church with its solid tower. All this is flanked by a sky touched with gold, suggesting the sunset perhaps.

I wonder why the picture speaks to so many people. It is after all an ordinary rural scene; nothing special, you may say? Perhaps it is because of its very ordinariness that people can relate to it. It encourages them to

ponder on what can give people hope and security in the midst of their lives at times.

We think about those three subjects. At its best a home is a symbol of relationship, of warmth and succour from the storms of daily living, a place to rest. The *Guardian* newspaper has been running a series of articles where people have described what home is for them. For most it wasn't so much the house they lived in, but the place where they felt they could be true to themselves. I wonder what that word "home" means to you? Where do you find relationship, and where you can be true to yourself?

The church, at its best is a symbol of continuity - I suggest that this building has been there for centuries. It is also a continuing and silent reminder that there is more to life than the day to day. A place and a people offering strength in times of joy in birth and marriage, as well as in times of sadness, in death. A place in which the deep truths of the Christian faith of birth and death, forgiveness and resurrection have been celebrated for hundreds of years.

Philip Larkin wrote a poem called "Church going" in which he goes into a church in a cynical frame of mind, but as he looks around, he stops and thinks. The last verse reads: "A serious house on serious earth it is, in whose blent air all our compulsions meet, Are recognised, and robed as destinies. And that much can never be obsolete, Since someone will forever be surprising A hunger in himself to be more serious, and gravitate with it to this ground...."

I wonder what your local parish church means to you? How would the nature of the town or village be changed if it just wasn't there anymore?

And thirdly the sunset. A symbol of our dependence on the regularity of day and night. At this time of the year, as the days begin to draw out, and daylight becomes stronger we can look forward to warmer days. I wonder how often I take it for granted that when the sun sets in the west, that it will rise in the east giving us hope. In the memorable words of *Scarlet O'hara* "Tomorrow is another day!"

From the dismalness of the foreground we move to the hope of home, to hope in God's loving purposes and to the source light and heat. I need to notice these and give thanks - even on a dark February day!



This year's Lent study is called "Difference"

difference.
The power of faith
in a conflicted world

It is a course set up by the Church of England on the theme of difference and how we work with that in our faith and in our contemporary world

There will be five themes:

- 1 God's call
- 2 Crossing divides
- 3 Navigating disagreement
- 4 Practising forgiveness
- 5 Risking hope

This will take place by Zoom on Thursday evenings beginning on 13th, 20th 27th March, and 3rd and 10th April. Each evening starting 7.30pm and lasting about an hour to an hour and a half.

For further details see David Vonberg.



IMPORTANT UPDATE ON ST JAMES HEATING Good news!!

The work to install the new boilers will begin on 3rd March. Communion services will be shortened until the church is warmer and Choral Evensong has been cancelled. Service of the Word will be in The Parish Centre.

A MESSAGE FROM ANN KING.....



I am intending to start Very Light Lent Lunches on Fridays, starting on 7th March, in the Parish Centre. This will be a simple meal, homemade soup and a roll. I will not be able to produce all the soup or do the serving on the day, so I need plenty of people to volunteer!! Many hands make light work!!

I really do feel that the Lent Lunches are very worthwhile.

SO PLEASE VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED.



Quiz & Hot Supper



St James Parish Centre



February 22nd

7pm



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February Thoughts from the Benefice Office...

by Clare White



How wonderful to see so many snowdrops. It gives me hope for spring. I dislike winter and it's long nights so much.



Born in spring means that I love that time of year the most, so where can I find inspiration at this dark time of year?

Without wishing to dream my life away this time of year means planning for the months ahead, planting tomato seeds,

organising holidays and fair weather adventures.

Steve and I are hoping to do a pilgrimage this year, we plan to walk the Archangels Way, on North Dartmoor, it's about 35 miles, visiting 12 of Devon's oldest churches and chapels.

I'm currently writing this from isolation which is making me desperate to escape to nature.

The Latin for pilgrimage is peregrinatio, meaning a long meandering journey for the love of God, much like my faith. But I hope we don't get lost along the way or confused as often happens as a questioning Christian.

Our walking adventures have a goal, mine is usually to keep up with Steve and complete the walk!

A more serious outcome though is to experience fabulous views and to fill my soul with nature's splendour, God moments often happen when I'm out in the beauty of the earth.

Steve and I enjoy walks together they are usually a time to chat or just to stay quiet and think.

Taking a pilgrimage for me will be a time to go from church to church and think of the people who have wandered this way throughout the centuries, many hoping for healing, reconnecting with God or finding a place of protection and safety. My focus will be on God's love and guidance through my life.

"No wrong path" from Unfurling by Ian Adams

There is no wrong path except the path taken with regret without love in anger or from fear. It's how we take the path we choose. How we breathe into each step, loose and free, and look up with expectancy; how we greet each fellow traveller we meet; and leave no record of our passing there bar the aroma of just extinguished prayer.



A message from Revd Jane.

Dear friends,

At the beginning of this new year, we look forward to a new season of ministry, in the Ewelme benefice, and all that it holds. With mixed emotions, I write to say that this is also time for a new season of ministry for me. After 6 1/2 years of ordained ministry among you and several years previously at Saint James, I shall be leaving at the end of January. Thank you to each of you for the privilege of serving you, in times of great joy and sadness and for everything we have shared. You are a wonderful community, and I count my blessings to have been part of it.

My last service in the benefice will be on the 26th of January. The details of my new post are still to be finalised, but I'm not moving from my home in Cam. I hope I will see many of you out and about. With thanks, love, prayers and every blessing for the future.

In the middle of a gale on Sunday 26th January Revd Jane celebrated her last service in the Benefice which was Holy Communion in St Giles, Uley. The service was meant to be in St James but without any heating the church has become so cold, especially as the weather outside has been very cold too. So for everyone's comfort we went to St Giles as this is heated.

After the service we gathered with a glass of wine or a cup of coffee plus cake of course and first Tony spoke about Jane's time in the Benefice and how although the priests move on generally Readers and Associate Priests are among us for a long time, so we really get to know them well. Then there was a presentation from St Giles and one from St James and to round off Rev Juliet proposed a toast to Jane. Jane spoke of her journey with us, finally being priested, having come out from 'behind the pillar' (Juliet had talked about that in her sermon), and do what God was calling her to do! Thank you Jane for all you have done in the Benefice.



Bellringing *by Philip Pope*



We are fortunate in Dursley tower to have had a number of ringers with a very long-term commitment to the tower. Several of us have been ringing here for somewhere around fifty years! It was recently stated that we are undergoing a period of change with age and health starting to make itself felt. We have, of course, lost some real stalwarts in fairly recent years. We have been lucky enough to pull in some ready-made ringers from time to time but we really need to ensure that we are training up new recruits to carry forward into the future.

Recruiting new ringers to the tower has always been challenging. It would seem that bellringing is probably not seen as 'cool' amongst the young and it's an art that is best started as soon as physically appropriate. However, it often arouses the curiosity of those of a slightly more mature outlook and we are fortunate to have attracted the attentions of four ladies (perhaps soon to be five) ranging in age from 23 to ?? who would like to know more.

Now, ringing does take a fair bit of time to master the basics and it often happens that people do get frustrated and give up if they feel they are not making the progress they expect but so far it seems we have a fairly determined group. Just learning to physically ring the bell on your own can take well over three months of regular practice and that is just the start of things.

Those living within earshot of the church may hear one or two bells ringing individually from 6.45 on a Thursday evening before the main practice. We have three members of our local band who are happy to teach learners and others from outside who can fill in when required. One to one tuition is a necessity to begin with. Some of us are quite inexperienced at this so are learning to teach as we do it.

When our ladies are able to ring on their own and be able to follow another bell accurately then they will be invited to join us for Sunday service ringing. As I write some of them are very close to achieving this so we are hoping that our numbers will be swelled in the near future.

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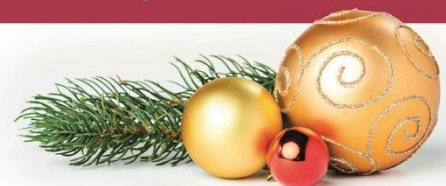
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Greenfinch

Great Garden Birdwatch 2025

I have been preparing to take part in this event for the first time ever, and I feel quite excited about what the results may be. This is an annual count of British garden birds observed during the period of a single hour over three days in January. It is promoted by the RSPB. Many sources including the Royal Horticultural society and the National Trust recommend wrapping up warm, and going outside into the garden or the park, and observing wildlife to help with wellbeing. Doing the bird watch sounds perfect!

In a Nutshell, taking part involves:



Choosing an hour to Sit and observe that



Record only birds that land in our patch



Record the highest highest number land any one time

After the hour, you are invited to submit your observations on-line or by post to the RSPB. The idea is to do only one-hour long observation from one location, so it would be possible to do more than one observation, provided it's from another location.

Because birds tend to need us more in winter, especially if the weather is cold, they will visit our gardens looking for food and shelter. This can make it easier to count them.

The birdwatch happens around the same date, every year. By doing this, it helps us to look back over the years and see if things have changed.

The results can help organisations like the RSPB observe what species are doing well, and those that maybe aren't. Alarmingly, they say that British bird species including Song Thrush, Skylark, Lapwing

House Sparrow and greenfinch are seriously declining. Many others besides!

The RSPB State of Nature study suggests that intensive farming practices such as the increased use of pesticides is a main cause for the decline. The charity feels that there have been new environmental land-management schemes which is a step in the right direction, to help farmland wildlife.

The RSPB also say that other causes of garden bird decline include disease, and this is something that we can help prevent. Bird feeders and bird baths are wonderful things, but they can harbour pests and diseases for birds if they're not cleaned regularly. The RSPB recommends cleaning feeders at least once a week, and bird baths twice a week. The advice is to do this outdoors, using a bucket and mild detergent such as washing up liquid or even a specialist detergent, and some sort of brush such as a bottle brush. It is also important to wear gloves to protect yourself too.

I'm just off outside to check the feeders are ready for my garden birdwatch in the morning! Even if you don't take part in this event, please enjoy watching the beautiful birds near you too.

Best wishes from Gill
Eco Church Team
Member



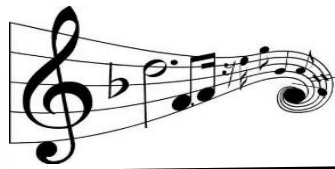
If you would like to join and support
St James Eco Church group, please email

Gill.mather@btinternet.com

Everyone Welcome 😊

Reference:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch>



MUSIC NOTES

The Royal College of Organists launching “Play the Organ Year” and their website informs us that

“Play the Organ Year is designed to inspire a year-long effort by the whole organ-playing community, not just to increase the number of people learning to play the organ, but also the number enjoying live and recorded organ music.

We firmly believe that the best way to achieve both these objectives is to get as many people as possible not just hearing and seeing the instrument but playing it!

The organ is a magnificent instrument unlike any other – powerful, versatile, visceral and enormous fun to play. At the heart of Play the Organ Year will be an attempt to open this experience to as many people as possible - to encourage them to take a step towards the organ, to lay hands on it wherever possible, and to discover for the first time the unique and thrilling experience of playing this remarkable instrument”.

I hope that the RCO appeal will have some results as a previous attempt at “Play the Organ Year” managed to do very little to encourage possible players at parish level.

As and when our lovely church building becomes less like a deep freezer, the organ will be available for budding organists to try.

February Music

Sunday 2nd

10am

Little Organ Mass

The heavens are telling the Glory of God – Haydn

Sunday 9th

10am

Stanford in C

The Spirit of the Lord – Elgar

THE LIVE NATIVITY ON 4th JANUARY 2025





Our thanks to Barbie Davies for matsterminding, producing, and directing the Live nativity again this year. Excellent as always.
Photos by Steve White ©



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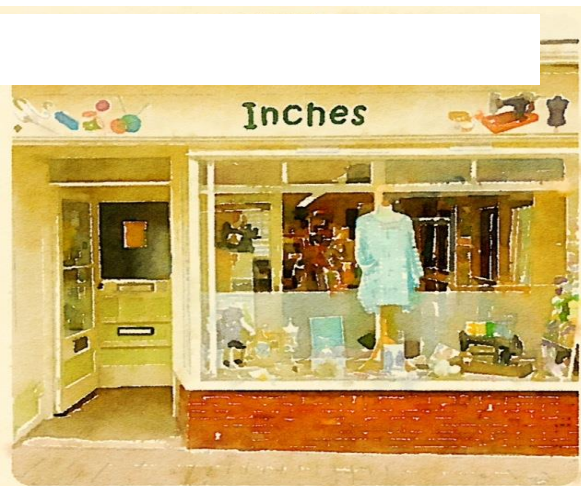
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ST JAMES FREE BOOK STALL



Clive Orchard says..... 2025 has started with a blast.

The first two weeks of the year saw many new faces coming into the church for the first time and hundreds of books donated. Everyone enjoys the fact that they really are free and that there are no catches and have freely donated nearly £450 already.

We now have well over 3,000 books and, if the trend continues, this could begin to overwhelm the small band of volunteers. Please give this some thought and consider if you could give a half an hour of your time occasionally. No regular rota, no lifting, just taking books out of boxes on Fridays at 4.00pm or putting them back in boxes on Saturdays at 12.00pm - and you won't even notice the cold!!

February Acrostic by *Sally Hayward*



Further we
Enter into the year 2025, new
Beginnings
Recalling past years; making
Usual resolutions we ought to keep
And we can
Remember
Yesterday, last week, last month and last year



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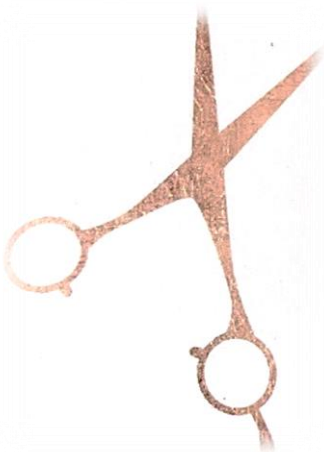


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February 2025

(Joining Zoom details on Ewelme Benefice website)

Sunday 2nd February – The Presentation of Christ

10am Parish Holy Communion at St James

Tuesday 4th February

10am Staff meeting

Wednesday 5th February

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 6th February

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

Sunday 9th February – 4th Sunday of Epiphany

10am Holy Communion at St James

Wednesday 12th February

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 13th February

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

Friday 14th February

12pm Wedding team meeting

Sunday 16th February – 3 Sundays before Lent

8am Said Holy Communion at St James

10am Service of the Word in the Parish Centre

Wednesday 19th February

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 20th February

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

Saturday 22nd February

10-3pm Joint PCC Away Day at North Nibley Village Hall

7.00pm Quiz in the Parish Centre.

Sunday 23rd February – 2 Sundays before Lent

10am Benefice Holy Communion at St Giles

Wednesday 26th February

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 27th February

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James



Joyce Lombarde says.....

While performing the usual post-Christmas sort-out I came across this heartfelt plea, which obviously stumped me at the last line, so I'm offering a small prize for the one who can come up with the best way to finish off the rhyme. Answers please to Clare online.

A Chorister's Plea

To save us from the shiv'ring shakes
A small donation do I make.
In choir we sit, 'neath organ loft,
Which blesseth us with music soft
AND LOUD, (windy draught as well
As Nigel presses button; SWELL')
Please help us in our hour of need
? ? ? ? ? ? ?



Looks like this pilgrim needs warming up!!

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I am very grateful to Sue Gibson, one of the newer recruits to the choir, to put her thinking cap on about what inspires her.

Do you have a favourite author or book?

It would be C J Sansom who wrote the Shardlake Series. Evocative of Tudor life, as lived by a 'crookback' lawyer investigating and preventing crimes actual and potential against the throne. Discusses the intolerance of other religions, new scientific thinking and the hardships of Tudor life in general.

What are you reading at present?

"Alchemy" by S J Paris. This is similar to C J Sansom. This author describes an ex communicated Italian monk who embraces new scientific thinking and is employed by the English spymaster Walsingham.

Is there a book you feel you should have read? Hilary Mantell's "Wolf Hall", I couldn't get past the first few turgid chapters.

Is there a song or piece of music you turn to, to cheer you up?

It would have to be "Summertime" from Porgy and Bess sung by Ella Fitzgerald.

Do you have a favourite piece of music?

Grieg's Piano Concerto in A Minor. As a child my mother took me to the Sunday afternoon concerts at the Albert Hall. My love of classical music was awakened here.

Do you play a musical instrument. If not what would you like to have learnt.

I learnt to play the violin and recorder as a child. I would have loved to learn the piano. Unfortunately, teaching was restricted to those students who had access to a piano at home.

What is your favourite film?

"Les Miserables". Why? Wonderful music, the hope for a better future despite the cruel evidence of experience.

Do you have a favourite play?

"Porgy and Bess". Again the triumph of hope and love amidst adversity. Wonderful music.

What about a favourite television series?

"Porridge". The humorous antics of small wins against the system and the supportive relationship between the 'old lag' and the newbie. The power of laughter despite difficult circumstances.

If there was one painting you could own, what would it be and what is special for you about it?

"Starry Night" by Vincent Van Gogh. I love his work. It is powerful and uplifting. His inability to see red has resulted in the most extraordinary use of colour. I have a print of Starry Night in the dining area at home, as we have sat and had coffee, at one of the tables depicted in the painting of a café in Arles.

Do you have special building which means a lot to you and if so, why?

The Palladium. I have many warm and loving childhood memories of my Grandparents taking me to see the Pantomime there. My Grandmother always told the story of me boasting that I could sing and dance like the characters on stage, however, I couldn't fly. That became a family in-joke. If anyone was becoming boastful someone would shout 'can you fly'.

Is there a place where you have felt happiest?

Here in Dursley. Why? I have **time**. As a retiree, I no longer feel driven by the pressures of balancing career and family. I am able to simply be whilst being able to spend time with my family, pursue my own interests and become a more supportive member of my community.

You are having a fantasy dinner party for five – who would you invite?

My cousin has recently explored our ancestry. Apparently, we are descended from a Lincoln's Inn lawyer back in the 1800's who had five daughters. I would love to meet them and hear about their lives. Apparently, four daughters married well and the 5th daughter married a cobbler whose business was adjacent to The Old Vic in London. Guess which daughter is my Great, Great, Great Grandmother.

Press release issued: 31 December 2024

Congratulations to Dr Roger Ransome a Tireless bat conservationist celebrated in King's New Years Honours

A University of Bristol alumnus and honorary research fellow has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in recognition of services to bat conservation spanning more than six decades

Dr Roger Ransome is world-renowned for his commitment to preserving the welfare of bats, which he first started studying at Cheltenham Grammar School, aged 15.

His passion for the threatened mammals, and wildlife in general, led him to study Zoology at the University of Bristol from 1958. He also gained a PhD from Bristol for his published research in the field in 1979.

Professionally he was first a biology teacher and went on to become Head of Science at Rednock School in Dursley. Roger's bat studies continued with senior student volunteers at the school and in 1990 he was made an Honorary Research Fellow at the University, where his ecological data was used by numerous PhD students to investigate many other areas of bat biology.

Roger, aged 84, who still lives in Dursley, said: "I am delighted to be recognised in this way, but of course one person doesn't get this award on their own. My wife Anne has been a bat widow for many years, putting up with all the time and effort it takes. And of course the many fellow researchers who I've worked with have been equally instrumental, including many of my other relations. Our grandson provided excellent IT support. It's a true team effort and this is very nice news."

His love of bats was sparked by a talk given by a French teacher, who was a keen naturalist, when he attended Cheltenham Grammar School. Whilst a pupil there, he started studying the greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) in Gloucestershire, cycling to Woodchester Mansion, where they roosted.

Greater horseshoe bats are threatened and iconic British mammals with some of the most sophisticated echolocation strategies of any animal. Roger designed and



Dr Roger Ransome standing in front of Woodchester Mansion at dusk, holding a bat detector to hear the bat's ultrasonic calls. Image: Gareth Jones



Image shows a greater horseshoe bat at Woodchester Mansion. Image: Gareth Jones

organised annual field research on this species continuously for more than 66 years, which recently resulted in a Guinness World Record for the longest running study on a wild mammal population by an individual worldwide. He has ringed more than 15,000 bats over this time and followed their survival and reproductive success.

Roger started ringing hibernating bats in old stone mines around Nailsworth. From 1959, his summer research began at nearby Woodchester Mansion, a Victorian Gothic building. The attics of this unfinished house host maternity roosts of greater horseshoe bats, amongst other bat species, each summer and hibernating ones use its cellars in winter. The site has provided invaluable resources for bat biologists and for informing the public about the remarkable features and conservation of bats.

Working closely with the Woodchester Mansion Trust, he has helped ensure the bats living in the Mansion are protected. Roger assisted with the establishment of an exhibition room that includes screens linked to infra-red cameras in the roost, where members of the public can watch and learn about the daily activity of bats.

His wealth of data about greater horseshoe bats ranges from hibernation, reproductive success, pup growth and population regulation leading to many discoveries about physiology and behaviour.

Recognised globally as a leading bat expert, Roger has attended many international conferences, and has published more than 50 scientific papers and two books.

Thanks to his endeavours, there is a record of the birth dates, survival, pedigrees and lifetime reproductive success of all bats born at Woodchester Mansion since 1993 and this data is used to understand morphological and genetic factors that promote Darwinian fitness in a wild population.

Gareth Jones, Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Bristol, who has collaborated with Roger over many years, said: "Roger's achievements are unique and peerless, and his dedication, commitment and drive have resulted in impacts ranging from conservation to the advancement of science, driven by a passion for discovery and the natural world.

"My research at the University has benefitted enormously from collaboration with Roger for some 40 years. We have studied the genetics of bats at Woodchester Mansion and together produced publications in some of the world's leading science journals, deepening our understanding of social behaviour, and more recently identifying

genetic features that help explain how bats can live for such a long time – one bat in Roger’s study population reached the grand age of 29.”

Father-of-two Roger, who now has four grandchildren and three great grandchildren, added: “My fascination with bats and desire to protect them will never die. Bats are the world’s best example of how animals co-operate, so they present lessons for us all. I’m hugely grateful to University of Bristol colleagues, experts from all over the world, as well as my whole family for always being so supportive of this vital work. This honour is the icing on the cake – thank you.”

BEYOND THE HORIZON. *Jennifer Kendrick*



“Home is home when I can write ‘I love you’ in the dust”. This was a comment my beloved father-in-law made mischievously to me one day when I had only recently been introduced to the Kendrick family. His slight frame and quiet demeanour belied the strength of character, charisma and wicked sense of humour I got to know and love.

Born in 1895 he had lied about his age and joined the army at the beginning of WW1, subsequently surviving twice being severely injured and earning recognition for leadership and bravery. I just knew him as the most gentle, kind and caring, fun-loving human being, a curly pipe permanently between his teeth, and the sweet smell of tobacco in his wake a sort of comfort blanket for me as I tried desperately to adjust to the formidable household.

His wife on the other hand, was intimidating, reminding me of a galleon in full sail and a powerful voice to match, so it was no surprise to learn she was a professional opera singer.

The fact that I was a trained nurse currently staffing in Casualty held no sway for her, as my household skills were based on survival. Strict rules and regulations in Hospital gave way at home to the clean enough to be healthy mantra, that in no way met her exact standards for her son’s future family life! She was a tour de force!

It was a rocky ride, but in time we settled into a comfortable, caring relationship and when she was widowed, we had a granny flat built on to our cottage which worked really well!

Life became more difficult in her 80s when her body failed her and, though sound of mind, she needed full-time care. The nursing home did their best but no end-of-life plan existed to help us navigate these

uncharted waters. She did not want to live like that and it was heart breaking to see her shrivel up, just longing for a peaceful passing!

When a chronic ulcer could not be healed, she had a below knee amputation under local anaesthetic as her heart was already failing and breathing difficult! She lived on with courage but no dignity and there was nothing we could do except watch and wait! I prayed constantly that she be allowed to die!

My father-in-law, despite the massive assaults from war wounds, was, years before, blessed by a sudden, unexpected heart attack in his late 60s, which was a kind end to his fulfilling life for which we, the family, were truly thankful.

As people live longer, I am concerned about the NHS, current political deliberations and legal arguments and the very stark Assisted Dying Bill is not helpful! There is no single answer for such a complicated and personal situation, but, no matter who we are, we should have choice when independence is threatened and stress about the final days blinds all common sense. An understanding about possible solutions where everybody is equal and total trust abounds should be the aim.

It is a tall order, but I pray that it becomes normal practice for any spoken, proven or written wishes to be honoured for those who have expressed a desire to die in peace in a particular place at a particular time, or are simply ready to die. Life will go on, and we must go on too, to meet the far horizon, with the comfort of care, knowing that death is a normal progression and we have done the very best to make it acceptable for everybody.

My very recent, sudden and unexpected debilitating illness has given me new incitement!

After exhausting my efforts at simple home remedies, I sought help and was told by a medical professional there was no cure and nothing to be done as it was "just the virus and could take two months for any improvement". Not much comfort! I felt defeated. I came home and cried.

My many friends have been a tower of strength in so many different ways and I am already much better and looking forward to each day, ready for a challenge or adventure, assured there is more living to do now and beyond the far horizon.

MEMORIES OF MARION PAGETT 02.08.1937 to 28.12.2024

by Judith Staddon

On Wednesday 22nd January we gathered at Westerleigh Crematorium to say farewell to Marion who was a long-standing member of St Mark's Church. Revd Ian conducted a lovely service.

At St Mark's she always worked quietly and tirelessly helping to keep it going until 2020 and lockdown and her failing health stopped her. Looking back for a photo of Marion I remembered that she used to write the St Mark's page for the magazine right up



Marion is pictured here celebrating her 80th Birthday in 2017 in the usual St Mark's tradition with celebration cake and wine



Marion and David celebrating their 40th Wedding Anniversary in 2004 at St Mark's

until the end of 2018, only giving

up because she had run out of fresh ideas. She was on St Mark's Committee for many years. She could always be guaranteed to roll up her sleeves to do teas and then wash up afterwards, and would help out wherever she

could. She donated a new tea urn and organised a surprise party for Philip and I, to thank us for all that we did at the church!! Clare always remembers Marion and Janet doing the flowers on all the window ledges for special occasions.

Memories by Marion's sister Daphne.

Marion was born on the 2nd August 1937 to parents Richard and Gladys Jackson. They lived at 121 Woodmancote, and one year later on 3rd September 1938 another baby arrived, Ivor Charles.

Life in the 30's, and later on during the war years, was hard, but Marion's father was a keen gardener and grew all their own vegetables. He also kept a ferret, which he would place in a brown sack, take up into the woods and let it down a rabbit hole. Rabbit stew was always on the menu. In July 1944 another baby arrived named Daphne Mary.

A recent photo just found of Marion, her mother, Ivor and Daphne in the summer of 1945 at Weston-super-Mare. This would have been the first time the children would have been to the seaside on Sunday

School outings travelling on the Dursley Donkey, the train out of Dursley.

Marion worked, first, at the Grocery Store, which was at the bottom of Rosebery Road, and then she went to the local Printing Firm Baileys which was in Kingshill Road, doing bookbinding and such.

When Marion was 18 brother Ivor, who was 17, left home to join the RAF. We know she missed her brother very much, as they had grown up together and were close.

As the years passed no boyfriends came on the scene but family holidays were now possible, and Beer in South Devon became a firm favourite. Then in 1963 when Marion was 26 she went on a blind date with David Pagett from Wotton-under-Edge and in September 1964 they were married in St. James Parish Church and moved to live in a cottage they had purchased in Fortfields Dursley. In February 1966 their first child Kevin was born and in January 1971 Martin came along.



The Story continues with some words from Martin.

I remember when growing up in the 70's Mum volunteered at the Oxfam shop and was always involved in the church. She and her Mum would do the flowers at St Mark's.

Mum became involved with the Mothers' Union and the Children's Society where she typed the minutes from the meetings.

Mum would always be up for fund raisers at St Mark's and also did open gardens at our house where my brother and myself were in charge of the barbecue!!

She loved her garden and always had a lovely display of flowers that she grew herself and there were pots everywhere you look!!

My father's sight finally failed, and he became totally blind with Mum looking after him and his needs.

She was very independent, strong willed and somewhat stubborn but I think this 'get on with it' attitude helped her overcome three bouts of cancer which she managed to deal with during her later years.

When I finally became a Dad, my Mum was overjoyed to become a Grandma to Emily and then Jack and they loved going to see her where they baked cakes and helped her in the garden, watering and weeding the numerous pots!! They also explored the local woods where Mum used to play when she was their age. When I raised my concerns of a woman of her age (mid 80's) falling down, she merely said 'Well I'll just have to get back up again'.



Canon Richard Morgan tells us.....

February 2nd is the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, also the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the last event of the celebrations of Jesus' Nativity.

With its siting in the temple at Jerusalem and its description of Mary and Jesus fulfilling the Law of Moses' requirements for children and mothers, it, like much of Luke's accounts of Jesus' infancy, stresses Jesus' Jewishness, his taking on and fulfilling God's promises in our Old Testament, showing God's faithfulness to his promises and relationship with his people. That is an encouragement to us to trust in God too.

The faithful and expectant Simeon and Anna are illustrations of this, and examples to us of devotion, faith and hope. They are elderly; Mary is a young adult; Jesus is a baby. God's care for all ages is thus illustrated by this story.

There is a fine hymn about it by John Ellerton, who also wrote 'The day, thou gavest, Lord, is ended' and several other well-known hymns. [It's number 157 in our present hymn book, which gives a tune, the Old 120th, i.e. what was the tune of Psalm 120 in the Metrical Psalters]. I think 'Hail to the Lord who comes,' is a fine piece of poetry, and gives useful thoughts on various aspects of the event, so I commend it to you. It dwells on Jesus' humility shown in this story – another aspect of most of Luke's birth stories.

And from this it leads on to Jesus coming as our ransom. The presentation of the first-born included a sacrifice, which could be seen as an offering to bring God's mercy, though it was no doubt also a thank offering. Jesus came to give himself, even to death on the cross, as a sacrifice to reconcile us with God, as a sort of payment that frees us from evil. So the Presentation completes Christmas and points us forward to Lent, Passiontide and Easter. And, as the temple was the place of God's presence for the Old Testament, Jesus' self-giving enables us to be present with God as God's beloved children.

So here is the hymn. I hope it's helpful.

1. Hail to the Lord who comes,
Comes to his temple gate!
Not with his Angel host,
Not in his kingly state;
No shouts proclaim him nigh,
No crowds his coming wait.
2. But borne upon the throne
Of Mary's gentle breast,
Watched by her duteous love,
In her fond arms at rest;
Thus to his Father's house
He comes, the heavenly Guest.
3. There Joseph at her side
In reverent wonder stands;
And, filled with holy joy,
Old Simeon in his hands
Takes up the promised Child,
The glory of all lands.
4. Hail to the great First-born
Whose ransom price they pay!
The Son before all worlds,
The Child of man today,
That he might ransom us
Who still in bondage lay.
5. Light of all the earth,
Thy children wait for thee!
Come to thy temples here,
That we, from sin set free,
Before thy Father's face
May all presented be!

John Ellerton 1826-93

DAC Secretary urges parishes to speak out on Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme ending

Published: Friday November 29, 2024

Adam Klups, DAC Secretary and Care of Churches and DAC Team Leader has asked parishes to urgently consider writing to the DCMS Secretary of State and their local MPs, to express concern over the possible loss of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, known in short as LPWGS, gives grants to places of worship that covers the VAT on repairs or alterations over £1000.

It is currently set to run only until the end of March 2025.

Adam said: "At present the extension of this vital scheme does not feel secure and both colleagues at Church House, Westminster and my team have been pursuing additional advocacy. I am aware that some of you contacted your MPs as well as Lisa Nandy, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport about this matter. Thank you!

"Earlier this month, the BBC picked up the story. Please see [here](#).

"If you have not yet done so, as a matter of urgency, please consider writing to both DCMS Secretary of State: 1st Floor, 100 Parliament Street, London SW1A 2BQ (ku.vog.smcd@seiriugne) and your MP, to express your concern about the possible loss of this vital grant scheme. You can find your MP's email address [here](#).

"Historic Religious Buildings Alliance (HRBA) colleagues have prepared a useful guide on what to put in your letter or email:

1. In your subject line, put 'Attn: the Secretary of State (LPWGS)', or something similar. Make sure you say at the beginning why you are writing – to ask for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme to be extended beyond March 2025.
2. If you have concrete experience of the Scheme, then in just one or two paragraphs explain what your project is/was for, and why the VAT refund is/was important. If the building is used for community activities, or is important to local people in other ways, say something about this.



3. Do say if your work was funded by gifts and donations. Also mention if it involves action in response to climate change, or other environmental benefits. Also consider being explicit that you are grateful that government provides the scheme.
4. Send your email to The Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and your MP.

"Many thanks for your support."

Celebrating grandparents and grandchildren this month with Faithful Generations

"I deeply believe that the precious relationships between grandparents and grandchildren have profound and lasting effects. My grandma had (and still has long after her death) a huge influence on my faith. I know that she prayed for me every day of my life, and the faith that she modelled was inspirational," Kate Stacey, Diocesan Collaborative Ministry Lead: Lifelong Learning.



Events and training

More details for all these events at [**gloucester.anglican.org/events**](https://gloucester.anglican.org/events)

Faithful generations event Cathedral Green, Gloucester Cathedral, 1 February, 12pm to 5pm - Book now for this fun and creative afternoon where grandparents and grandchildren can explore Christian faith and spirituality together. There will be prayer spaces, story, activities, dance, interactive worship and more.

[**https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/faithful-generations-event/**](https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/faithful-generations-event/)

Faithful Generations 'What can a Grandparent do?' workshop Church Centre, St Andrew's Church, Station Road, Churchdown GL3 2JT, 11 February - Becky Sedgewick, author of *Grandparenting for Faith*, leads this workshop, teaching how to understand the importance of strong intergenerational relationships and how to share and demonstrate faith meaningfully.

[**https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/faithful-generations-workshop**](https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/faithful-generations-workshop)

Have your say Visit Facebook [**f/Diocese.of.Gloucester**](https://www.facebook.com/Diocese.of.Gloucester), email Katherine at [**kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk**](mailto:kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk), follow us on Twitter [**@glosdioc**](https://twitter.com/glosdioc), view videos on YouTube [**Diocese of Gloucester**](https://www.youtube.com/DioceseofGloucester) or visit our website [**Gloucester.anglican.org**](https://www.gloucester.anglican.org).

Message from Bishop Rachel, 21 January 2025

Published: Tuesday January 21, 2025

On 20th of January, in his inauguration speech, 78-year-old President Trump stated that the golden age of America was beginning. There is much that could be said about that speech and the theology reflected within it, but those confident words in the present moment about the certainty of the future seemed in such contrast to the scenes of people wandering along pathways through mountains of rubble in Gaza. Earlier this week as I watched poignant scenes of Israeli hostages reunited with families, and crowds greeting the release of Palestinian prisoners, there was no sense of a bright new future.



It is poignant that next week there will be numerous events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD). The theme this year is 'For a Better Future'. 80 years on from the day of liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the shocking events of the Holocaust continue to impact lives and shape people's views of the world. The horrific attacks on southern Israel on 7 October 2023 and the detestable anti-Jewish actions on people and property, not least in this country, are seen and experienced against the history of the Holocaust. At the same time, Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank live the present in the context of the events of 1948.

That question of how we perceive, live and shape 'a better future' carrying the realities of the past, is such a pertinent one, not only for individuals, communities, nations and peoples but also for us as a Church. What might the holding together of deep repentance, thanksgiving and hope truly look like as we play our part in shaping the future, rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ through whom there will break 'a yet more glorious day', even golden, as the kingdom of God is one day brought to completion.

I am delighted that in the coming days there will be a diocesan focus on the role of the grandparent generation in relation to children and young people. How can the older generation actively nurture and support faith and hope in children and young people in the present which will profoundly impact the future?

The 'Faithful Generations' event at the Cathedral on Saturday 1 February takes place on the eve of Candlemas when we focus on two old and faithful servants of God (Luke 2:22-38). When Simeon holds the young Christ child in his arms, his words stand in stark contrast to those of the new President of America. Simeon's words in the present moment deeply acknowledge his confidence in God's unchanging faithfulness in the past as he recognises Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of God's past promises and humbly proclaims the baby as the light for all people. Here in Christ is God's generosity and love for the world, which offers us a sure and lasting hope as we engage with the pain and joy of the present, facing the reality of the past with both thanksgiving and repentance, and as we play our part in shaping the future locally, nationally and globally.

This week, particularly as we mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, I am praying my favourite collect with an ever-greater sense of thanksgiving, sorrow and hope:

Almighty God,
in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

+ Rachel

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Years Mind February

- 1st Colin Staight
3rd Ruth Pulsford 2003, Ronald George Sandalls 2006
4th Ruth Brain 2009
5th Alma Exell 1987, Edward Rowles 2004, Jean Harney 2001
6th Richard Mann, Donald Sugar 2003
8th Margaret Siveyer 2018
9th Jean Gough 2015, Jack Johnson 2016, Ian Unsworth 2022
11th Doris Read
14th Paul Ewer 2015, David Ind 2024
15th Kath Snow 1999, Douglas Bennett, Barbara Fouweather 2012
20th Margaret Simpson
22nd Hilda Waterson 2019
23rd Phyllis Trapp 2007, Beatrice Bailey 2017
24th Dick Wright 2001, Mike Easey 2020
25th Betty Jenkins 2009
26th Wilfred Harding, Peter Horsfall Packer 2007,
Greta Chappell 2015, Winifred Farr 2018
27th David Benjamin 2017, Ursula Bray 2024

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS.



FUNERALS:

We share our thoughts and prayers with the families of those who mourn the loss of those they love.

Thanksgiving for Chris Raffle's life on 7th January 2025 at St James.
Marion Pagett's funeral 22nd January 2025 at Westerleigh crematorium.

FLOWER ROTA

Feb.9 & 16

High Altar Sarah Hodge

Tanner chapel Glenys Muir

Lady Chapel Sandra Longstreth

Feb 23 & March 2

High Altar Ann Orchard

Tanner Chapel Jennie Leighton

Lady Chapel Clare White



If anyone would like to come onto the rota Ann Orchard would be delighted!!

100 CLUB

Sarah says that subs are now overdue.

Many thanks for your support!

**Please pay David Wood,
Sarah Hodge, or Philip Staddon.**

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