

# *Englefield*

## *Parish News*

December 2025 - January 2026



# The Parish of St Mark's, Englefield

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0118 9303595

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Paula Fenwick      07850 603508  
Torquil Montague-Johnstone      0118 9714536

**Safeguarding Officer:** Lucy Roper      safeguarding@stmarksenglefield.org.uk  
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## Parochial Church Council

**Secretary:** Penny Savage      office@stmarksenglefield.org.uk  
0118 9410808

**Treasurer:** Oliver Bodger      treasurer@stmarksenglefield.org.uk

**Electoral Roll Officer:** Richard Smith      richard@transport-studies.org  
0118 9833258

## Parish Council

**Chairman:** Edward Crookes      edward.crookes@englefield.co.uk  
0118 302504

**Clerk:** Nia Rands      clerk.englefieldpc@outlook.com  
07725 171223

**St Mark's Church website:**      www.stmarksenglefield.org.uk  
**Englefield Parish Council website:**      www.englefieldpc.org.uk

**Front cover:** *Nativity crib scene, image © Canva. Details of Christmas services at St Mark's are on pages 3, 6 and 19 of this issue. With thanks to everyone for their contributions to Englefield Parish News in 2025 and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.*

### Englefield Parish News

Englefield Parish News is published every two months and is distributed free to all households in the parish of Englefield. Contributions welcome, email catherinehaig@gmail.com or hand in to the Village Stores by the 20th of the preceding month.

## From St Mark's House

### Dear friends

I have been absorbed recently in the TV series called 'The Chosen'. It seems very authentic to me. Of course the writers have enlarged the characters that we find in scripture and at times I may be heard to say 'We don't know Matthew was like that!' (I get quickly shushed!). The character of Jesus is such a wonderful combination of human and holy, exactly as we might imagine a 'God-man' would be. He is such an attractive person to be around and to listen to. The way he looks people in the eye and knows their thoughts, he winks, he jokes, and causes miraculous catches of fish and healings. The Son of God sharing human DNA. He knows what it feels like to have a body, to be hungry and tired, to feel pain, love, laughter, deep sadness and suffering.

The well-known Christmas reading from John 1 vs 1-3 says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* Jesus was there in the beginning with God and His Holy Spirit, and all life owes its existence to Him. But instead of remaining apart, He became one of us. He like us began earthly life as a single cell, that divided and divided, developed a nervous system, a head, a body, arms and legs, in the womb of his mother. When Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph (in a brief prequel episode called 'The Shepherd'), there is unsurprisingly the portrayal of pain, blood and baby cries!

*In the beginning  
was the Word*

*Emmanuel  
God with us*

The incarnation means that God's intimacy with people became 'up close and personal'. He became one of *us*, lived alongside *us*, and shared our very fragile, physical existence. He became as we are so He could show us how to live and teach us how to love...and to rescue us from the mess we so often find ourselves in.

Christmas-time often touches some raw nerves in our lives, including loneliness, stress, family tensions or money pressures. Jesus, the Christ-child and God-man is also Emmanuel, 'God with us' in our hopes and fears, joys and disappointments. He knows and understands whatever we are going through and is with us in it... and He longs for us to know Him too.

Let's make room for Him this Christmas.

Your Rector



## Diary dates

Evening Praise: last Sunday of every month, 6pm at Holy Trinity, Theale, next date January 25th (no service in December).

Wednesday 10th December: Let's Talk Theology, 7.30pm, 15 Swallowfield Gardens, Theale, for more information contact Carol Boulter.

Sunday 14th December: St Mark's Carols by Candlelight, 4pm.

Saturday 20th December: outdoor carol singing in the grounds of Holy Trinity Church, Theale, 2 - 3pm.

Sunday 21st December: Carols by Candlelight at Holy Trinity, Theale, 6pm.

Christmas Eve: Nativingle!, a fun re-telling of the Nativity story for the whole family, with Christingles, 4pm at St Mark's Church, see page 6.

Christmas Eve: Midnight service, Holy Trinity, Theale, 11pm.

Christmas Day: family service of celebration with communions and carols, 10.30am at St Mark's.

Wednesday 14th January: Let's Talk Theology, 7.30pm, details as above.

Monday 19th January: St Mark's PCC, 6.30pm.

## Local contacts

Englefield Estate Office 0118 930 2504; [office@englefield.co.uk](mailto:office@englefield.co.uk)  
Englefield Estate Yard 0118 930 2538 [maintenance@englefield.co.uk](mailto:maintenance@englefield.co.uk)  
Englefield Stores & Tea Room 0118 930 2479

[admin@englefieldstoresandtearooms.co.uk](mailto:admin@englefieldstoresandtearooms.co.uk)  
[www.englefieldstoresandtearooms.co.uk/](http://www.englefieldstoresandtearooms.co.uk/)  
<https://www.englefieldvillagehall.co.uk/>  
[info@englefieldvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:info@englefieldvillagehall.co.uk)

Englefield Village Hall 0118 930 4064  
Cobbs Farm Shop 0118 930 2513  
Theale Medical Centre 111.nhs.uk/covid-19 or call 111  
NHS online coronavirus service 0118 322 5111  
Royal Berkshire Hospital 01635 273300  
West Berks Community Hospital 0118 930 2542  
Theale Pharmacy 0118 938 2265  
Lloyds Pharmacy (Calcot) 0118 984 5894  
NHS dentist Dentalcare, Pangbourne 01635 551111 (out of hours 01635 42161)  
West Berkshire Council [www.westberks.gov.uk/](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/)

Englefield Parish Council [www.englefieldpc.org.uk/](http://www.englefieldpc.org.uk/)  
Theale Parish Council [www.thealeparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.thealeparishcouncil.gov.uk)  
Englefield Primary School 0118 930 2337; [www.englefieldprimary.co.uk](http://www.englefieldprimary.co.uk)  
Utility suppliers: Electricity - SEN 0800 072 72; Oil - Ford Fuels 0148 872 829;  
Gas - National Grid 0800 111 999; Water - Thames Water 0800 714 614;  
Drainage - Total Drainage 0118 9421140

## Congratulations

To Lewis Davies and Molly McNickle who were married at St Mark's Church on Saturday 4th October.

To Charlie and Megan Benyon on the birth of Ivo William on Friday 7th November, a grandson for Edward and Jen.

To Englefield Estate on winning a British Council for Offices national award for the refurbishment of the new Estate Office, following its success in the regional awards earlier in the year.

To Mary Parsons who celebrated her 97th birthday recently. Mary has moved from Theale to Friends Place in Calcot where she was treated to a special birthday tea with friends and family, cake, music and dancing.

## Christmas offerings

Collections at the Christmas services at St Mark's this year will be divided between two charities: Faith Christian Group which supports the poor, needy and homeless of Reading; and the Salvation Army, a national charity dedicated to reducing, preventing and helping to end homelessness.





*Bradfield College works completed*

We are pleased to confirm that the Army House Project works on Ashampstead Road have been completed and since the middle of November, the temporary traffic lights have been removed and the road has reopened fully to all traffic, including HGVs.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the local community and all road users for their patience throughout this long and complex project. We recognise that the works — particularly the periods of full closure — caused considerable inconvenience, and we are grateful for the understanding shown during this time. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of our contractors, who worked extremely hard to minimise disruption and keep the road open for as much of the project as possible.

If you live nearby and would like to receive news of events hosted by The Bradfield Society that are open to the local community, you are warmly invited to join as a member by completing the registration prompts on the Society's website.

Forthcoming events include the Bradfield College Carol services on Tuesday 9th December and Wednesday 10th December, tickets can be reserved by clicking on the date you would like to attend.

Next summer, the renowned Greek Play returns to our Greek amphitheatre with performances taking place from Sunday 21st to Wednesday 24th June.

Thank you once again for your cooperation and support.

Bradfield College



## Back for a fifth year

The Englefield Estate Snowman Trail will be back for 2025. Wrap up warm and head out with family and friends and see how many you can find!

The 20 wooden snowmen have been painted by local children, and you can find them in the Englefield Estate woodlands near Mortimer West End, Mortimer, Silchester and Burghfield Common.

This year's trail will be open every day from Thursday 18th December until Monday 5th January.

To help you track down the snowmen, a printable map and an online interactive map will be available on the Englefield Estate website before the trail starts. This can be viewed on your mobile device while you're out and about.

*Rich Edwards, Forestry Manager*



*Save the date!*

The World Day of Prayer is an annual event which creates a global wave of prayer over twenty-four hours beginning in Samoa and ending 146 countries later in American Samoa. The service in 2026 is entitled 'I will give you rest, come' and is based on Matthew chapter 11, verses 28-30. It has been written by Christian women in Nigeria and will be hosted at St Mark's Church. We are part of the group of churches in Burghfield, Mortimer and Sulhamstead who take turns to hold the service each year on the first Friday in March.

So please make a note to join us on Friday 6th March 2026 at 2pm for just one hour to hear the stories of Nigerian Christians, to learn about their faith, culture and history, and to pray for the burdens they carry through life. More details will be found on the posters and provided in the next edition of the Parish News.

*Penny Savage*



## Christmas appeals

Please see the Foodbank Christmas Tree poster on the notice board at St Mark's. This suggests 12 festive treats that can be donated to help spread some joy to vulnerable households in your community. West Berks Foodbank asks that these are delivered to the warehouse by Friday 5th December (or very soon after) so that they can be included in every parcel sent out in time for Christmas.

Mercy in Action, the charity shop in Theale High Street, is fundraising for its work with children, families and communities in the UK and further afield in the Philippines. If you are having a clear out please drop off anything reusable at the Theale store, all contributions for resale or raffle welcome.



## New Archbishop of Canterbury

Bishop Sarah Mullally has been nominated as the next Archbishop of Canterbury and will be officially installed in March 2026. She trained as a nurse before becoming a priest in 2006. She has served as Bishop of London since 2018.



Shortly after the announcement of her nomination she delivered an address at Canterbury Cathedral, reflecting on her calling, the challenges facing the Church, and her hopes for its future.

Rooted in her early vocation as a nurse and shaped by her ministry in London, she spoke of 'washing feet' as a guiding image of Christian service, and of finding hope in the quiet faithfulness of churches, chaplaincies, and communities across the Anglican Communion. She addressed the Church's responsibility in safeguarding, the need to confront power dynamics, and the importance of standing against hatred and antisemitism. She said she would seek to be 'a shepherd who enables everyone's ministry and vocation to flourish', and expressed her desire to nurture confidence in the Gospel. 'Held fast by the Lord's hand,' she concluded, 'please pray for me as I will pray for you.'







## Those Christmas cards...

Even in this digital age, we still send an estimated 900 million to 1 billion Christmas cards in the UK each year. Royal Mail delivers around 150 million.

On average, each person in the UK sends and receives about 17 cards.

This year the final Royal Mail Christmas posting dates are as follows:

Wednesday 17th December: 2nd Class and 2nd Class Signed For

Friday 19th December: Royal Mail Tracked 48

Saturday 20th December: 1st Class and 1st Class Signed For

Sunday 21st December: Royal Mail Tracked 24

Tuesday 23rd December: Special Delivery Guaranteed



## Charity Christmas carol services

The Charlie Waller Trust is holding its annual Bradfield Carol Service on Tuesday 2nd December at the Chapel, Bradfield College, at 7.30pm, featuring carols by Bradfield College and Elstree Chapel Choirs and festive readings from celebrity readers. Tickets £30, available from <https://charliewaller.org/get-involved/our-events/bradfield-carol-service>.

Newbury RDA's Carol Concert is on Thursday 4th December at St Peter

and St Paul's Church, Yattendon, 6.30-8pm, with music from Brockhurst and Marlston School, and guest speaker The Countess of Carnarvon, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Tickets £25, available from <https://newburyrda.co.uk/2025/10/17/carol-service-2025/>.

The PACT family celebration, Carols at the Minster, is on Saturday 6th December at Reading Minster, refreshments and Christmas games from 3pm, main event 4pm to 5.30pm. Tickets £12 adults, £3 children, from <https://www.pactcharity.org/support-us/carols2025/>.



## Christmas at the Stores

We have had a busy autumn with a full Tea room. Our new menu came out and our Winter Warmers of Chilli, Sausage and mash, Pukka Pie and mash has gone a real treat.

It's been great to see lots of you using the food loyalty cards too, ready for the half price breakfast or lunch in January and February.

Christmas Dinners and Afternoon Teas are nearly all booked up, just a few tables left across December. Please give us a call if you wish to book and we can let you know our availability.

The Tea room, arch, Store and outside are now beautifully decorated thanks to Kat and Janice. The glue gun has been on for two weeks now in preparation. The Store has some fantastic Christmas presents, with some lovely bespoke Englefield gifts.



We will be open as usual until Friday 28th November. We will then be open until Monday 22nd December for breakfast, drinks and cake, 10-11.30am with last orders at 11am. We then close for the rest of the day for the Christmas lunches, though there will be takeaway drinks and food in the Store for lunch with use of the marquee for December only. Please note there will be no toilet facilities after 11.30am.



The Tea room will re-open on Monday 12th January and we will run our promotion of half price breakfast and lunches throughout January and February. So please book your table and have your loyalty cards ready to redeem. The Store will close on Tuesday 23rd December and will re-open on Monday 5th January.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all our lovely customers and my awesome team, for another incredible year and making what we do so much fun!

Merry Christmas one and all!

*Liz and the team*

## SDG spring term lecture

A date for your diary: the next Deanery Spiritual Development Group lecture will be on Tuesday 3rd February when Dr Jane Bywater will be speaking on 'The Importance of Palliative Care', in the music auditorium at Bradfield College.



## Englefield Tower news

In December we will be having new bell ropes fitted to all of the eight bells in the tower. The ropes were last replaced during extensive work carried out between 2001 and 2002. During this time the six existing bells were retuned and rehung in a metal frame. Two new bells were kindly gifted by

Sir William and Lady Benyon to mark the new millennium, and were cast by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry.

During 2025 we have had a busy schedule ringing for wedding couples right up to Christmas. There have also been a few visiting bands from local villages who have enjoyed ringing at Englefield, and in August the tower was full with students attending the annual Bradfield Ringing Course.

We practice on Tuesday evenings between 7 and 8 pm. So if you are thinking of taking up a new hobby for next year why not contact us. We are a small group of six regular ringers.

We are looking forward to ringing with our new ropes for the family service on Christmas Day and for the New Year on Sunday 4th January 2026.

*Janine, email: [janinealston@hotmail.com](mailto:janinealston@hotmail.com)*



## 'Just as the angel had said'

I recently have been thinking about writing a book on the advantages of being old. Completely at a loss for ideas I went to a friend who is 12 years my superior for his thoughts on this important subject. We sat in silence for some time, and then he muttered 'free prescriptions' and 'winter fuel payment'.

Disappointed, I told him that I had been hoping for a comprehensive and detailed account, and left uninspired. The following day, my daughter came to see us and in conversation was troubled by their 15 year old son wanting a birthday party in the garden a fortnight hence. Her husband's initial response had been to say he would go on a cycling weekend with their younger son. And so my first real advantage of being old had come into being. 'You didn't have to say no to that unrealistic desire by your 15-year-old son about a party, in spite of his promise of no drugs and whatever else is standard practice for these events'.

It was certainly no party for Mary and Joseph when they arrived in Bethlehem to comply with the Roman census. Whether on donkey or on foot it was a full four-to-seven-day journey from their home in Nazareth. The town was packed and bustling with people renewing family acquaintances, so no room anywhere. Two isolated young people, fearful of the future and the part they were destined to play in God's salvation plan for the world. And nowhere to stay, no comfort or support in the birth of their child, just, we read, the outbuildings where animals were kept, not necessarily dirty but probably not very clean.

I love the details of this story as told by gospel-writer Luke. He was a doctor and a clever man, and yet central to his writing is the account of the shepherds. Uneducated, not to be trusted or be a witness in court, far away from the noise of Bethlehem in fields watching their sheep, it is to them that the angels appear. Not just one or two angels but a whole army of them, enough to fill the sky, all because of this baby, Jesus. Then the shepherds receive the specific instructions to go to Bethlehem to find this new born child. So, it was the unexpected, the shepherds, who came to reassure Joseph and Mary that they were on track and all was actually well. For the shepherds...well they would never stop talking about it because they found 'It was just as the angel had said'.

Maybe that book idea of mine is pretty dull by comparison?

*John Bishop OBE  
[www.rushallfarm.org.uk](http://www.rushallfarm.org.uk)*







## From Englefield Primary School

### 'Sowing the Seeds for a Flourishing Future'

The nights are drawing in and we are all beginning to feel that tingle of excitement for Christmas. We even had a sprinkling of snow to get us all in the spirit. School, as usual, has been busy not only with classroom learning but also competitions and events, from sports to music and everything in between.

On Tuesday 11th November, a team of Y5/6 footballers played in a county competition against five other small schools. Whilst nervous to begin with, they showed great grit and determination. Working together as a team, supported and coached by Mr Fabianczyk and Mrs Hough, they won all their matches! A superb achievement in itself but the invitation to play in the Regional Competition in the new year is another wonderful opportunity. Good luck team!



Year 3 and year 4 took part in the Elstree cross country, putting their all in to cover a whopping 1k each! The team was amazing.

In their English lessons, Year 1 have been performing poetry about mud and spaghetti! This involved playing with mud and spaghetti but not at the same time... Mrs Carney discovered that Year 1 like mud but only when it's wet. Spaghetti is definitely a favourite food, especially when it

'wiggles and wriggles like a yellow worm'.

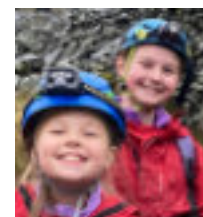
Our Year 2 children have been perfecting their self-portraits after learning about facial proportions. They've explored how to draw themselves accurately and use appropriate colours to represent their features. Freddie reflected, 'It was quite hard - we had to draw a lot of lines. But it was fun. Mine was quite good and small.'



In our Year 3 and 4 class, the children have been learning how to build electrical circuits and discovering that a circuit must be complete for the bulb to light up. Arlo shared, 'I thought it was fun and good to know - we need electricity in everyday life.' Louis added, 'We also tested different materials between the crocodile clips to see if they could complete the circuit. Some didn't, and they're called insulators. The ones that did are called conductors.'

Our foundation stage children have been very busy bees. They have been learning about using their senses and ventured out into the garden to put their sense of smell to work. They used their sense of taste too when they made and tried pumpkin soup. Lorenzo said, 'I kind of liked what it tasted like, I didn't like the colour but I still had half because it tasted nice.'

In the classroom they have been sharing their favourite books. Arabella said, 'The mermaid book is my favourite. I like that there are goats in the book too and the goats can fly! There are also fairies!' In art, they made Pudsey Bear using paper plates. Eleanor said, 'It was a little bit hard but it looked so good. I really, really wanted to keep it.'



Years 5 and 6 have just recently returned from their adventures in Rhos y Gwaliau in North Wales. They climbed a mountain, journeyed down into a slate mine, canoed across the lake and went gorge-walking - some amazing adventures which they will remember for many years. It was so good to see them challenging themselves and feeling that sense of pride in their achievements.

Our choir did a sterling job singing at the Junior Music Festival at the Hexagon in Reading. They sang in a choir of 450 voices which was an amazing experience for them all.

Christmas is in the air with all the craft going on in the school. The foundation children have been getting in to the spirit of Christmas by making their very own ornaments, while Years 5 and 6 have been drawing Christmas themed pictures using pen.



As the term draws to a close, the sun will set on my time as Head teacher of Englefield CE Primary School. I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everybody who has supported me during my time here: to the staff and governors at Englefield who keep the cogs turning, the children who make me smile every day, and to the parents and local community who so frequently come together in support of our wonderful school and its pupils. I will retire with so many fond and cherished memories of my time at Englefield.

*Hilary Latimer, Head teacher*

*A big thank you to the children at Englefield School for the Christmas drawings in the pages of this issue.*





## Run up to Christmas at Five A Day

**Garden:** Throughout September and October, we harvested lots of fruit, cabbage, leeks, squash, pumpkins, beans, quince and medlars. Our poor quince tree had a broken branch and we had to wait until the fruit was harvested before chopping it off. The plum trees have been pruned as well so we are looking forward to lots of fruit again next year. Produce sold well again both from the garden and the gazebo at Englefield Garden Centre which is topped up regularly.

**Thyme Together:** Run by the wonderful Katie, the morning group which started at the end of August is growing and the new raised beds have been built with a hard standing base to accommodate wheelchair users. The afternoon group is working hard and are planning their garden area and off site visits for 2026. Thyme Together continue to run their free sessions on Thursdays – 10am to 12pm and 1pm to 3pm. For details please contact Ali on [ali@fiveaday.org.uk](mailto:ali@fiveaday.org.uk) or 07555 184343.

**Volunteers:** We have welcomed five new volunteers over the September/October period and one volunteer has moved on.

**Schools and uniformed groups:** A number of secondary schools visited over a week in October, the Old Fire Station nursery also visited and will continue to do so each month in the run up to Christmas. We look forward to the Ella's Explorers visits resuming in the garden in the New Year.

**Workshops and events:** After a hiatus we resumed our Pumpkintastic carving session on Saturday 25th October and everyone had a great time choosing their design and getting their hands sticky carving and hollowing out their pumpkins. Our wreath-making sessions are quickly filling up and we are making plans for next year's workshops. If you can think of anything you might like to see take place at the garden please email [5adayevents@gmail.com](mailto:5adayevents@gmail.com) with suggestions and we will do our best to think how to set up a session. We are looking for volunteers who may be able to support us at weekends to help at the sessions. You could have some very useful talents/skills to offer! Everybody is good at something!



**Corporate groups:** These last two months we have been privileged to welcome two corporate groups to the garden; Newbury Building Society and Vodafone brought teams and we look forward to welcoming them again next year. We are so grateful for all their hard work.

Finally, if you shop online (especially for Christmas) please consider using Easyfundraising to help us raise funds for Five a Day. It costs you absolutely



nothing and all you have to do is join and nominate Five a Day Garden as your favourite cause. When you use the site for your purchases, if the seller you are using is on the site, we get a percentage of your spend. We have already raised over £200 this year from people who have signed up. Here is a link to the site explaining how it works. [https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/how-it-works/t=cro1/?efr\\_source=website&efr\\_medium=easyfundraising&efr\\_campaign=header-navigation](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/how-it-works/t=cro1/?efr_source=website&efr_medium=easyfundraising&efr_campaign=header-navigation)

If you are interested in any of the items mentioned, volunteering or know of a business who supports staff volunteering please email [info@fiveaday.org.uk](mailto:info@fiveaday.org.uk) or call 07555 184343. Please leave a contact number where you can be reached. You can also visit our website at [Fiveaday.org.uk](http://Fiveaday.org.uk), follow us on Facebook and find us on Instagram on Five A Day Garden!

Happy Christmas from everyone at Five A Day Garden!

*Wendy Cadman*

*Five A Day Management team member and trustee*

## Christmas at Cobbs

This year, we've made it easier than ever to plan your Christmas feast with our new online ordering system. Browse and secure everything you need! From award-winning free-range turkeys and grass-fed dry-aged beef to whole wheels (or slices!) of Stilton and Brie, speciality meats, festive sides, and homemade desserts.

If you prefer the traditional way, you're still welcome to pop in and place your orders in person with a member of our butchery or deli team. They'll be happy to offer advice and help tailor your order to suit your celebrations.

The closing date for Christmas orders is Sunday 14th December.

Get into the festive spirit with our Set Christmas Menu. From November 24th to December 21st, our talented chefs will be serving up a special Christmas menu designed to bring joy to every table.

Whether you're catching up with an old friend, gathering the family, or planning something a little bigger, our menu has been crafted to suit every occasion and every appetite. Festive pricing is two courses for £28.95. three courses for £35.95. Book via the link on our website.

*The team at Cobbs*



| Sunday  | Sidesperson                  | First reading    | Gospel           | Prayers          | Sacristan      | Server           | Creche                           | Cleaners                         |
|---|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| November 30th<br>Advent Sunday                | Richard Benyon               | Aldo Guiducci    | Dinah Perkins    | Saffy O'Sullivan | Sue Smith      | Torquil MJ       | Saffy O'Sullivan<br>Meryl Bonser | Catherine and Peter Haig         |
| December 7th<br>2nd Sunday of Advent<br>BCP   | Liz Marillier                | Peter Haig       | Kahlen Spaulding | BCP              | Penny Savage   | Denny Hollands   | Liz McKean                       | Pete and Carole Ford             |
| December 14th<br>3rd Sunday of Advent         | Pauline and<br>Graham Harvey | John Rothery     | Meryl Bonser     | Peter Haig       | Catherine Haig | Paula Fenwick    | Saffy O'Sullivan                 | Graham and Pauline Harvey        |
| December 21st<br>4th Sunday of Advent         | Penny Savage                 | Mike Kimber      | Harry Benyon     | Richard Benyon   | Penny Norris   | Peter Haig       | Denny Hollands                   | Penny Norris<br>Saffy O'Sullivan |
| December 25th<br>CHRISTMAS DAY                | Paula Fenwick                | Paul Myles       | Richard Benyon   | Denny Hollands   | Denny Hollands | Penny Savage     |                                  | Anji Higgins                     |
| December 28th<br>1st Sunday of Christmas      | Torquil MJ                   | Meryl Bonser     | Lorraine Dehn    | Paula Fenwick    | Sue Smith      | Saffy O'Sullivan | Meryl Bonser                     | Peter and Catherine Haig         |
| January 4th<br>Epiphany BCP                   | Linda Price                  | Jean Rothery     | Graham Harvey    | BCP              | Penny Savage   | Torquil MJ       | Liz McKean                       | Liz McKean                       |
| January 11th<br>1st Sunday of Epiphany        | Peter Haig                   | Torquil MJ       | Ronan O'Sullivan | Penny Savage     | Penny Norris   | Denny Hollands   | Saffy O'Sullivan                 | Graham and Pauline Harvey        |
| January 18th<br>2nd Sunday of Epiphany        | Liz Marillier                | John Rothery     | James Meade      | Linda Price      | Catherine Haig | Paula Fenwick    | Denny Hollands                   | Penny Norris<br>Saffy O'Sullivan |
| January 25th<br>3rd Sunday of Epiphany        | Pauline and<br>Graham Harvey | Kahlen Spaulding | Carole Ford      | Catherine Haig   | Denny Hollands | Peter Haig       | Meryl Bonser                     | Anji Higgins                     |
| February 1st<br>4th Sunday of Epiphany<br>BCP | Richard Benyon               | Saffy O'Sullivan | Linda Price      | BCP              | Sue Smith      | Saffy O'Sullivan | Liz McKean                       | Liz McKean                       |
| February 8th<br>2nd Sunday before Lent        | Liz Marillier                | Harry Benyon     | Aldo Guiducci    | Peter Haig       | Penny Savage   | Penny Savage     | Saffy O'Sullivan                 | Peter and Catherine Haig         |
| February 15th<br>Sunday next before Lent      | Penny Savage                 | Denny Hollands   | Peter Haig       | Saffy O'Sullivan | Penny Norris   | Torquil MJ       | Denny Hollands                   | Graham and Pauline Harvey        |

*Bible readings will be emailed to readers beforehand. If you swap duties, please email catherinehaig@gmail.com and the churchwardens (paulapaloalto@yahoo.co.uk and torquilmj@newburyweb.net). An up-to-date version of this rota, including any swaps, can be found under the Resources tab on the church website.*



## *A child's picture of an Englefield Christmas*

Christmas now seems a season of some great divide, between delight and desolation, excess and moderation, between communion and isolation. Christmas somehow can be a time now of division. In Christmas long ago there seemed less of a divide, almost one could say, more wholesome. There was in the village a common experience, but each of us will have differing memories and images; mine were of long ago and very particular.

The village Christmas seemed to just gently descend and wrap itself around us. As Advent came, the children in the village who were in the church choir, could feel the change. There were carols we liked to sing, and Arthur Clayden played the church organ with joy, and it seemed to us some merriment. At this time, we would walk the hedgerows for holly. As we walked, we often looked skyward, looking for grey-green snow clouds, so we could slide down Beeches Hill. And, 'Is it really cold enough to freeze?' so we could skate on the lake in the park; this would then really feel as though Christmas was here.

As Christmas and winter closed in on the village, a tractor came and brought wood to burn, to warm all the cottages, as all the homes had open fires. Throughout the year the fires warmed living rooms, but as Christmas was a special time there would be a fire in the front room; this was often the only time that this room was heated. And then a special log would be selected, the Yule log, to heat the front room on Christmas Day. Then we had a Christmas tree that had come from the wood, close by Common Hill; the tree would be placed in the front room, with lights, and there was the special blue light, and there were the same decorations.

In the church, just before Christmas Day there was a carol service where almost the whole village came to sing with some joy all the favourite carols; many of these were somehow of the village. On a bright winter's Christmas Day, as the light shone through those clear west windows of the church, we were singing 'O the rising of the sun and the running of the deer'; this was the Englefield carol.

Then back to the fire in the front room where under the tree there were presents, most my father had made, toiling late on winter nights in the carpenter's shop in the estate yard, carving a rocking horse and making a farm, a garage. Then late in the afternoon my family walked down the street to my grandparents, to a cottage in North Street, where we would go into the front room. That front room was a step back to another time; there were pictures of sailing ships and Lord Nelson. And in that room, there was, as in St Mark's Church, a peaceful empty quietness. Then walking back home on one Christmas night there was snow, being blown horizontally through the winding lanes; this is where on a summer afternoon there were yellowhammer hedges and skylark fields, where were those birds, one wondered, on such a cold winter's night.

Englefield estate was generous at Christmas; they provided all the cottages with logs to warm all on cold winter days, and a Christmas tree, and so much more, a sense of comfortable sanctuary; we belonged. But there was another treat at Christmas that

held only terror for me, a party in the long gallery of Englefield house for all the children. There was entertainment, a magician, a ventriloquist, and then, then to my horror we had to climb alone the steps onto the stage, to receive a present; this held only terror for me. It was such relief to go home to that warm front room.

Of all the enduring memories and images of Christmas in Englefield, there is one that is always with me. I was collecting holly one Christmas; I cycled up Common Hill to the lonely lane leading towards Bradfield, to where I knew there was a lone holly tree where there were always berries. On approaching the tree on that cold steel-grey day, there was just a moment when I felt no longer alone. All the trees in the wood and the close by hedgerow seemed to come alive; all round there was the still movement of life. I felt no longer separate from that life; there was a communion. There was no longer a division, just a quiet empty aliveness. As in the quietness of the church, and the front room in North Street, there was a wholeness. So that Christmas moment there was no division; it was in a way holy.

*Robert Lamperd*

### *Advent & Christmas*

**at St Mark's, Englefield**

#### **November 30th - Advent Sunday**

We light the first advent candle on the wreath. Do join us for a glass of sherry after the service courtesy of the Churchwardens

#### **December 14th 4pm**

##### **Candlelit Lessons & Carols**

With our school choir and Daniel Nicholls' choir including a World Premiere of a new song by Daniel! Followed by mince pies and mulled wine

#### **December 24th 4pm - Nativingle!**

An opportunity to be part of a fun re-telling of the Nativity, rounded off with the awe and wonder of Christingles. Bring the whole family and come dressed as a nativity character

#### **December 25th 10.30 - Christmas Day**

Communion for all the family

**We look forward to welcoming you!**

\* \* \* \* \*

## Volunteer car driver schemes

This information was commissioned by Rev Julia Myles who wanted to make the congregation aware of this volunteer service to medical appointments.

It covers the main area around Englefield. However, there are a number of other volunteer driver schemes further afield in Newbury, Kintbury, Lambourn and beyond. Below is a list of local schemes, the purpose of which is to drive people to medical and dental appointments. The driver takes the person to their appointment and will wait a reasonable amount of time for them to be seen by medical staff and then bring them home.

Using a taxi can be very costly. The cost of the volunteer schemes varies, in some cases free of charge and in other cases a nominal amount is charged. The drivers are all volunteers giving something back to the community. (There is a shortage of drivers so volunteers are very welcome.) The local schemes are listed below.

**Important:** First you need to register by ringing up the group covering your area. When you know you need a lift to your medical/dental appointment, you ring the office giving as much notice as possible. Advise them whether you have a wheelchair or need to take a helper as well.

### 1. Standby Volunteer Group

**Contact:** Theale Medical Centre, Englefield Road, Theale RG7 5AS

**Phone:** 0118 9306419 **Email:** [jrcaddy44@gmail.com](mailto:jrcaddy44@gmail.com)

**Office open:** Monday & Wednesday 10am to 12noon

**Area covered:** Bradfield, Theale, Stanford Dingley, Englefield & Calcot

### 2. Pangbourne & District Volunteer Centre

**Contact:** Jane Rowberry, The Village Hall, Station Road, Pangbourne RG8 7DY

**Office open:** Monday to Friday 9.30am to 11am **Phone:** 0118 9844586

**Area covered:** Pangbourne, Basildon, Ashampstead, Tidmarsh & Sulham, Whitchurch & Whitchurch Hill, Purley & Tilehurst (Denefield Ward only)

### 3. Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau

**Contact:** Gilbert Bedford, c/o The Post Office, Recreation Road, Burghfield Common, RG7 3EN

**Office open:** Monday to Friday 9.30am to 11.30am.

**Area covered:** Burghfield & Mortimer, Sulhamstead, Ufton, Silchester and surrounding area

### 4. Thatcham Volunteer Bureau

**Contact:** Marigold Jacques, 20 Gilbert Court, Bath Road, Thatcham. RG18 3AG

**Phone:** 01635 862306 **Office open:** Monday to Friday 10am to 12noon

**Area covered:** Thatcham and District, Cold Ash, Cookham & vicinity

### 5. Chapel Row Community Service Group

**Contact:** Georgina Cardy, Chapel Row

**Phone:** 0118 9713334 **Office open:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9.30am to 11.30am

**Area Covered:** Bucklebury, Woolhampton, Midgham, Brimpton & Beenham, Lower Padworth

### 6. Carebus Transport Group

**Contact:** [hookings@carebus.org](mailto:hookings@carebus.org) **Phone:** 0118 9304 837 or 07871 350010

**Office open:** 24/7 messages can be left by email or phoning the mobile number.

**Areas Covered:** Aldworth, Ashampstead, Basildon, Beenham, Bradfield, Bucklebury, Calcot, Chapel Row, Englefield, Purley, Fords Farm, Holybrook, Pangbourne, Stanford Dingley, Streatley, Sulham, Theale, Tidmarsh, Tutts Clump, Woolhampton, Yattendon

They can provide wheelchair accessible cars as well.

Unlike the previous posts this is a company and they charge 70p per mile. They are more expensive, but are still cheaper than a taxi. To find out more you will need to contact them direct for costs. They also provide small buses for groups wishing to visit somewhere for a day's outing.

*Clive Rumble*

## Thoughts for the week

These reflections are from the short commentaries compiled by Aldo Guiducci each week on the readings in church. They are all available, week by week, on the pew sheets and on the church website.



**'The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation ... God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.'**  
(Colossians 1 v 15, 19)

The identity of Jesus is of crucial importance. Is he just a remarkably insightful man, or something more? Paul is emphatic that Jesus is nothing less than God himself, come in the flesh. The truth that Jesus is fully man and fully God is fundamental to the Good News: only a human being could stand in our place as our representative, and only God could undergo the agony of the cross to satisfy justice without an innocent third party being punished (which would be monstrously unjust). This is just the tip of the iceberg, with many books written about the mystery of the Incarnation, and it is important to realise that we do not have to understand the truth exhaustively to accept it. Paul's letter to the church at Colossae is clear that Jesus is both a physical human being and at the same time the perfect image of God, the firstborn (ie inheritor) of all creation, indwelt by all the fullness of God. Nothing and nobody in all the cosmos is greater than him, and it is he who is our rescuer.



## An Estate Village

The estate village as a type goes largely unrecognised by social historians and where mention is given at all it is largely confined to the supposed iniquities of enclosure and tied cottages. But the 19th century estate village is very much the rural counterpart to the more celebrated creations of the industrial philanthropists like Salt, Lever and Cadbury. Indeed, modern Englefield is contemporary with Salt's Saltaire and pre-dates Lever's Port Sunlight and Cadbury's Bourneville by more than 20 years.

Englefield village is the creation of two men, both called Richard Benyon, who shared the 19th century more or less equally between them. The first of these inherited Englefield in 1796 but it was only in 1802 that he finally settled in Englefield House, selling Gidea, the Essex estate bought by his grandfather 'Governor' Benyon on his return from India in 1744. Although he did build the row of houses (which he labelled the 'New Village') along the straight piece of road beyond the Timber Yard, most of his efforts went into laying the 'groundwork' for the project, part of which was that straight piece of road itself, the old road having meandered along the line that is now formed by the wall at the back of the gardens of these houses.

Much of this groundwork consisted of demolition rather than building for it was he who between 1802 and 1821 had most of the old village removed from where it stood along the road running from the church down to the Three Daggers Inn just in front of where the Old Rectory now stands. This was the first stage of a grand plan that also saw the road up Common Hill (then called Blyth's Hill) extended at both ends to link Theale with Bradfield in about 1802 and the new Pangbourne Road built in 1825. This groundwork was completed in 1854, the year of his death, with 'New Road' from the chalkpit to Bradfield although the road wasn't opened until the following year.

Together these roads encircled the village and enabled his successor to close the old route between Theale and Bradfield that had run through the old village, past St Mark's church, under the archway at the back of Englefield House and across the Old Park. This left Englefield in a cul de sac with no through traffic; '*...something retreated from an unacceptable present*' as Leslie North writing in the *Reading Chronicle* in August 1980 described it. The next Richard Benyon was thus free to get on with completing the new village undisturbed by passing traffic. By contrast the Nuneham Courtenay estate nearby in Oxfordshire also had the village removed and rebuilt elsewhere in the previous century but in this case the new village street became the main road to Oxford! The Nuneham Courtenay estate was unexpectedly inherited in 1904 by Sir William Harcourt, the man who some 20 years earlier when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer had introduced Death Duties (Inheritance Tax, as it's now called). Walking round his new and somewhat dilapidated estate with his Agent, he commented, '*I seem to have inherited a bankrupt estate*', to which the Agent's reply is said to have been, '*And whose fault do you think that is, Sir William?*'.

The successor to Englefield on the death of Richard Benyon in 1854 was Richard Fellowes, son of his predecessor's sister Emma and W H Fellowes. He took the name Benyon on inheriting and so became the fourth Richard Benyon in sequence. He it was who, profiting from his predecessor's groundwork, gave us the village much as it is today. The few houses, already 100 years or more old, along what became the new village street remained, although some were altered and one or two completely rebuilt, while other new ones were built. The last to be built, or rather rebuilt, in Richard Fellowes Benyon's time was Wimbleton's Cottages where the old three were replaced by two new ones in 1892, five years before his death. At about the same time the old pair standing opposite the entrance to the Estate Yard (numbers 12 and 13) were demolished and thus at the close of the 19th century the village stood exactly as it would remain for the next 70 years.

The notable thing about these 19th century estate villages in general, and Englefield in particular, is the degree to which they achieved the ideal that was set by the philanthropists such as Salt, Cadbury and Lever and even town planners today – an ideal the latter group have so significantly failed to achieve. This was a functioning social unit – a true 'community': not just modern houses but also jobs, a church, a school, a shop, a post office, a workmen's club, a village nurse, and football and cricket – all within walking distance of each other and surrounded by well-managed and productive countryside. While the houses in the village street itself were convenient enough for workers at the Timber Yard and the Gardens, the farms around the outskirts (Chalkpit, Mayridge and Wickcroft) each had their own few cottages for their married workers; the single men lodged in the main farmhouse itself, which is why the houses are all so large. With all this in such close proximity there was an almost constant movement of people but this was punctuated at certain points by a sudden transhumance as the men moved between work and home, home and work; first to work then home for breakfast, back to work then home for dinner and finally back home at the end of the working day

with perhaps a pint together in the Club to look forward to. All the movements triggered by the Yard hooter that could be heard all over the estate.

Perhaps equally remarkable is that this was not achieved by government decree and paid for through taxation but from the vision and at the instigation of two men possessed of an 'enlightened self-interest' bolstered by faith, who paid for it all themselves and who were supported by the workers and tenants in a kind of symbiosis that is surely what Disraeli meant when he talked of 'one nation'.

Richard Smith



## St Mark's Sunday Club

### Christmas word search



|           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| shepherds | baby      | heard     |
| Christ    | message   | sky       |
| Saviour   | night     | angel     |
| glory     | carefully | Bethlehem |
| news      | palace    | heaven    |
| praising  | flocks    | Mary      |
| hillside  | manger    | God       |
| singing   | good      | seen      |

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