

Outlook



**February
2022**

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The Parish of St Thomas , Mellor

Registered Charity No. 1130414

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www.mellorchurch.org

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Articles for Outlook should be sent to the Editor (preferably by email).

melloroutlooksubmissions@gmail.com

The deadline for the March edition is 15th February 2022



Vicar's View Point

Many people find February to be a difficult month. A friend shared this poem with me recently which

seemed to strike a chord with me.

Darkest Before Dawn

by James Crews

Three days into the new year,
and despite the lack of adequate light,
our white phalaenopsis orchid
has eased open a third delicate bloom.

Perhaps coaxed by the warmth
of the woodstove a few feet away,
the orchid thrives in its tiny pot
shaped like the shell of a nautilus,
sending out new stems and glossy
leaves,

Its aerial roots — green at the tips —
reaching upward like tentacles
to sip the morning air.

These blooms stir something too
long asleep in me, proving with
stillness and slow growth
what I haven't wanted to believe
these past few months — that hope
and grace still reign in certain sectors
of the living world, that there are laws
which can never be overturned
by hateful words or the wishes
of power-hungry men. Be patient,
this orchid seems to say, and reveal
your deepest self even in the middle
of winter, even in the darkness
before the coming dawn.

The other day I was out walking my dog
as the sun was coming up and the world
was slowly starting to wake up. It's a
magical time of day. The soft light
streaming across the fields bathed the
bare trees in sunlight. All around me was
the sound of birdsong. My dog was in
doggy heaven, nose to the ground, tail
held high, trying to decide which smell to
follow. Walking in the early morning or
even as the light fades in the evening can
become a form of prayer. For me, these
points in the day bring a sense of
closeness and connectedness to life
around and within me.

Walking at dawn or dusk reminds me of
the many beginnings and endings of life.
There are spiritual cycles embedded in
the changing seasons — which at their
richest, are a soulful human response to
where we find ourselves within the natural
rhythms of creation.

On this morning walk I saw my first clump
of fresh green shoots of some snowdrops
pushing through the frosted earth. A
reminder that new life is bursting forth all
around us.

Candlemas falls on the 2nd February and
overlays a pre-Christian festival called
Imbolc. Imbolc marked the Celtic
beginning of spring, and fires were lit to
celebrate the strengthening of the light at
this equidistant point between the winter
solstice and the spring equinox.

Candlemas is one of the oldest Christian
feast days, dating back to the fourth
century. It marks the time when the baby
Jesus was presented at the temple, 40

days after his birth on Christmas Day. Candles were (and still are) blessed in churches and then lit in homes to welcome the coming of 'the light into the world'. It's a reminder to me that the wonder of Christmas doesn't have to end when we take down the decorations, the humble lighting of a candle at any time can reconnect us with the sense of light, hope and promise that begins in Advent with the revolutionary idea that the Creator became flesh and dwelled among us'.

Walking my dog in the early morning turns into a prayer walk. The light streaming over the fields and lighting up the trees is a daily reminder of the light and hope we all carry within us waiting to burst forth into new life.

There's no better start to a new day.

Best wishes,

Tracy

P.S Our wonderful Choir is going from strength to strength – on the 2nd of January they sang the offices at Westminster Abbey and they will be singing Evensong in Saint Paul's Cathedral on Monday, the 21st of February at 5 pm.

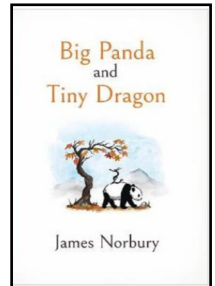
See their report and photographs of the Choir in Westminster Abbey on pages 30 and 31.



January Blues

Don't you just love January? The Christmas decorations have all come down, the house is looking bare and unloved, the monsoon season has returned outside, and an outbreak of the Covids has struck our locality with a vengeance. So what can we look towards to lift our spirits?

My delight this year came from an enchanting little book 'Big Panda and Tiny Dragon' by James Norbury. Purchased from the local bookshop complied with our family resolution this year to source all our gifts either locally or on the the theme of global warming/climate change. The book follows the journey of two friends through the seasons of the year, each page beautifully illustrated by the author. Inspiration from the book came from his time working with the Samaritans, then drawing on his studies into spirituality and Buddhist philosophy gave him the basis for his story. So as he says in his dedication, this book is for everyone who gets lost. I highly recommend it.



Kareen Dayes

Christingle

We all know the Crib Service is one of the most memorable parts of growing up in Mellor and every year Chris and his team make it so incredibly magical. When we realised that a packed “show” wasn’t going to be a good idea in December 2021, we needed a Plan B fast. When Tracy suggested we make



Christingles with the children then sing carols around the tree outdoors, we had visions of a picture perfect evening and began planning. It was decided that real flames

wouldn’t survive long on the top of our hill and we found glow sticks to replace them, in fact, disco themed Christingles may become a Mellor tradition.

Clare J, Victoria H, Janine H and I began bulk buying sweets and Mark at Cheshire Wholesale donated boxes of beautiful oranges.

As Christmas drew closer, so did the germs, and we realised we might need a Plan C. So, on Christmas

Eve, Tracy, Kirsty and I masked up and bagged up 100 Christingle Kits outside the Parish Centre. Victoria, Kate S and I then drove some of



these around the Parish to very grateful children (and a few grownups). Almost 100 kits were delivered or collected and receiving the pictures of children holding their Christingles added the Christmas magic we were all hoping for.



We already have plans for something similar next Christmas.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2022

2 Wed	10.00 am	Holy Communion (Parish Centre)
6 Sun	8.30 am	Holy Communion
4th Sunday	10.00 am	Parish Communion
Before Lent	5.00 pm	'Come & See' Bible story session (Parish Centre)
	6.30 pm	Compline (Parish Centre)
9 Wed	10.00 am	Holy Communion (Parish Centre)
13 Sun	8.30 am	Holy Communion
3rd Sunday	10.00 am	Parish Communion
Before Lent	5.00 pm	'Come & See' Bible story session (Parish Centre)
	6.30 pm	Contemplative Evening Prayer (Parish Centre)
14 Mon	10.45-12 noon	Coffee & Chat (Parish Centre)
16 Wed	10.00 am	Holy Communion (Parish Centre)
20 Sun	8.30 am	Holy Communion
2nd Sunday	10.00 am	Parish Communion
Before Lent	5.00 pm	'Come & See' Bible story session (Parish Centre)
	6.30 pm	Choral Evensong
23 Wed	10.00 am	Holy Communion (Parish Centre)
26 Sat	7.00 pm	Concert (Parish Centre)
27 Sun	8.30 am	Holy Communion
Sunday next	10.00 am	Parish Communion
Before Lent	5.00 pm	'Come & See' Bible story session (Parish Centre)
	6.30 pm	Compline (Parish Centre)

I Remember When.....

in 1968 a young out-of-work actor met the librarian of the Meteorology Department of Imperial College, London, at a party given at her flat in Queen's Gate.

The young librarian shared the flat with four girls, most of whom seemed to work for the Foreign Office. Two weeks later I telephoned the librarian and there followed months of handheld walks around the embankments, art galleries and pubs of Chelsea and Kensington. The librarian wore mini-skirts, singlets and T-strap shoes, had cropped black hair and was pretty. The actor wore a pink corduroy suite, suede shoes, had short



cropped black hair and was even prettier (Yes! readers - a pink

corduroy suit. After all, this was the 60's) One night, the actor and librarian were sitting in a pub at the bottom of Haymarket just off Piccadilly and the librarian mentioned a place called Mellor. She said it was where her family had lived for many years and was situated on the border of Derbyshire and Cheshire not far from Manchester and was north of Watford. The actor didn't believe there were people living north of Watford. She said Mellor was where she had spent her school holidays with her grandmother in a rather eccentric, dilapidated Manor house. The actor was sure it was the house she said was eccentric and dilapidated. The actor felt that some day he would like to see Mellor. He had lived

in London for twelve years and had burnt the candle at every conceivable end and he was possibly looking for peace and tranquillity. The actor eventually proposed



to the librarian in a pub in Fleet Street with the rain pouring down outside. He had put a typed note in

a matchbox from which he asked the librarian to take a match and light his cigarette! Ah! Where is that romantic young blade of yesteryear? It was, however, some years before the actor visited Mellor to stay with the librarian's Aunt and Uncle in Moor End. One sunny day, he sat with a pint outside the Devonshire Arms and he thought, "I could live here." A year or so later, the actor and the librarian had the chance of a house on Townscliffe Lane and they took it. There followed the sale of their house in Norfolk and a journey north of Watford in their Mini Clubman with two small children, loads of boxes and paraphernalia and two cats who were supposed to have been drugged but got out of their boxes and ran around the inside of the car all the way up the motorway. It was a nightmare journey with their car looking like that of Tom Joad's family in the film 'The Grapes of Wrath' but it is a journey the actor and librarian have not regretted for one minute. *Guy Nicholls*

This article was written by Guy quite a time ago and following the death of Anthea he was persuaded, by some of his friends, to include it in this edition of Outlook.

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Mellor Church Women's Evening Fellowship

Meg Barley

It was with utter shock and sadness that we learnt of the passing of Anthea Nicholls. Anthea was a longstanding and loyal member of Mellor Church Women's Evening Fellowship, having been Chair, and also a hardworking member of the committee on many occasions. She will be sorely missed. The thoughts and prayers of Fellowship members are with Guy and the family at this very sad time.

The next Fellowship meeting will be on Wednesday, 9th February at 8.00pm in the Parish Centre. Frank Pleszak, a well known local historian, will be telling us about his father's journey from 'Poland to Manchester via the Gulags of Siberia and the Battle of Monte Cassino.' This will be a very interesting talk and I hope you will be able to join us. The fee for non-members is £2.00 and everyone is welcome. If you would like to join the Fellowship the annual fee is £20.00. We would love to see you! More information is available from Meg Barley:
0161 427 4370 or meg.barley6@gmail.com

At present we are holding WEF meetings in the Arkwright Hall. Chairs are well spaced and there is good ventilation. People are required to wear masks while in public areas, such as reception and toilets, but may remove them when seated. We are asking people to take lateral flow tests before attending if possible. We are not providing refreshments and there is no sales table at present. Of course, hopefully, these arrangements may have changed by the February meeting, and for up to date information please contact Meg.

While we are committed to supporting local businesses, the inclusion of advertisements in Outlook does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation of the services advertised.

Mellor Birds



At the Christmas yoga lunch at the Devonshire, Leoni told me an **Eagle Owl** (*Bubo bubo*) was reported and photographed in a garden near Dan Bank on the Facebook page of 'Marple Community Hub'. They are huge - knee high! A few days ago another photo appeared of it at Goyt Mill perched on a

bracket or gantry - with orange eyes, 'eared', rusty, with streaks and bars. They catch prey as big as hares! Its not a native so probably escaped. Will it get to Mellor I wonder?



A video of a **Barn Owl** flying was on the Facebook page of the RSPB 'High Peak Birdwatching Group' It was taken by David on Dec 28th at 4.30pm from the south edge of Broadhurstedge Plantation just below where Pole Lane meets Primrose Lane looking out over the field towards New Mills. It sounded like Sooty and Sweep.

Best time to see barn owls is when it is dry, just after it has been raining, with no wind at dawn or dusk.

Judy's Jaunts in this Outlook goes from Rose Hill to Chadkirk. I went with Sprocket the Rocket (dog) and saw plenty of birds - **starlings, house sparrows, collared dove, blackbird, robin, bluetit, great tit, goldfinch, wren, jackdaw, black headed gull, magpie, long tailed tit, nuthatch, pied wagtail and parakeets** by



Marple Hall school. A very enjoyable walk.

It felt good to be at a concert in the Parish Centre again in January. There was singing about birds too. Thomas McGowan and Ben Collyer were the performers. One of the pieces was 'Let Us Garlands Bring' by Finzi. It is based on Shakespeare's 'As You Like It'. The refrain went -

When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding
sweet lovers love the spring.

Maggie Williams

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Sugar, lemon or ginger thins

Jill Baker

This is a Jane Grigson recipe that I used years ago and popped in my freezer to help with the catering at Christmas. The lemon thins are just right for February fresh and crisp. You need to chill overnight.

250g / 8oz softened butter

250g / 8oz caster sugar

1 large egg

1 tbsp dble cream

300g / 10oz plain flour

1 level tsp baking powder

Either inside of vanilla pod scraped

Or grated zest of 1 lemon and 1 tbsp juice

Or powdered ginger to taste (2 tsp)



This can either be made in a food processor, electric mixer or by hand. Place all the ingredients in the bowl with your choice of flavouring and mix to a dough. If you are doing it by hand cream the butter and sugar before adding the other ingredients.

Put a piece of baking parchment on the table and spoon the dough into a roll. Bend the paper up and over the dough then use both hands to roll into a cylinder 5cm / 2in in diameter. Chill overnight or freeze if you are making them as standby biscuits.

To bake - set the oven to 190C Gas / Mark 5, line a baking tray with baking parchment and slice off as many biscuits as you need THINLY. Sprinkle extra sugar over and bake for 8-10 mins they should not be browned. Store the rest of the dough in fridge or freezer.



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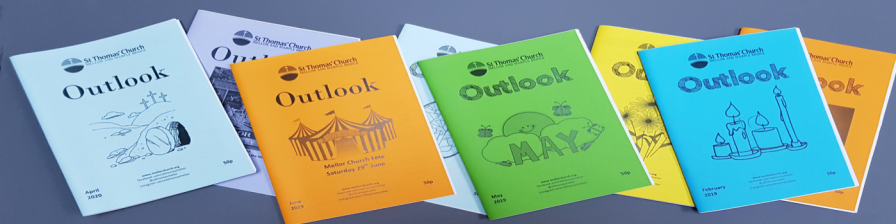
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The ten-year review of the cost of producing Outlook has, with the approval of the PCC, concluded that it is necessary to adjust the price to £1 per copy. However, those paying a year in advance will be offered a price reduction from £12 to £10.

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Dr Francis Jackson CBE.

Tributes have been paid this week to Dr Francis Jackson CBE, composer, organist, and former director of music at York Minster, who has died at the age of 104.

In September 1977 Rev Robin Phillips wrote in the dedication booklet for the new Mellor Organ 'We are very grateful to Dr. Francis Jackson, our adviser, in all our planning for the Mellor Organ.'

He also thanked Dr Jackson for giving the inaugural recital on Friday 23rd September 1977. Dr Jackson was a towering figure in the world of church music and was universally acknowledged and respected as a cherished musician and wonderfully kind and generous man. He was a chorister and pupil of Sir Edward Bairstow at York Minster from 1929 to 1933 and organist at Malton Parish Church at the age of 16. Following military service in North Africa he returned to Yorkshire and was appointed as assistant organist at York Minister. In 1946 Sir Edward Bairstow fell terminally ill and Dr Jackson, at the age of 28, was offered the post of organist and director of music, a post he held for over 35 years.

In October 2015 Andrew Dean gave a recital in his 'Bach at Twilight' series on the Mellor Organ in aid of church funds. On this occasion he played the programme of music that Dr Francis Jackson had played in 1977, the first time this programme had been played in 38 years. In the Dedication booklet Robin thanked the Organ and Appeal Committees and all who had generously supported the work which had not only raised money for the organ but had brought a renewed interest in the Church and what they were trying to do at Mellor.

Michael Benford-Miller

JAZZ + SOUL EVENING

A free drink from the bar included.

February 26th 2022
from 7.00pm.
St Thomas' Church, Mellor
Parish Centre

Performers Include:

Oscar Quinter, John Wilson, Clare Jackson, Lucy Carne,
Joseph Little,
Nathan Monk, Hannah Scott, Luca Woodcock, Terin
Hills, Theo Crowther.

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PETER CUNNINGHAM MEMORIAL CONCERT

Mellor Parish Centre
(or Church if we are still self distancing)
Monday March 14th 2022 at 7.30 pm

.....
Mozart Quartet in E

Schumann Cello Concerto arranged for quartet
Special guest soloist Nick Trygstad

Ravel String Quartet

.....
Peter Liang. Rosemary Attree
Christine Anderson Simon Turner

What a fabulous concert to look forward to!
Paddy

Mellor Church Fundraising Concert Series

We celebrated the last day of Christmas and the first of our scheduled monthly concert series for 2022 with a splendid recital of English song and piano music given by Ben Collyer and his baritone colleague, Tom McGowan. The event was extremely well attended and enjoyed by all. We remain continually grateful for the goodwill of all the musicians involved in this concert series who give their time freely for the benefit of the church and community. If you were unable to attend you can catch up by watching the concert on our **YouTube channel 'Worship from St. Thomas'** - donations to the church can be made by simply following the links in the description of February's concert which is an evening of Jazz and Soul music. This will feature many local artists including many from the churchgoing community. It is likely to prove very popular and so this particular concert will be a ticketed event. I would strongly advise you to buy tickets beforehand which can be obtained via this address: <https://www.mellorchurchchoir.co.uk/ticket>.

Future dates for your diary

February Concert - Jazz and Soul Music, Saturday 26th Feb 7pm, Parish Centre (**ticketed event**)

March Concert - Organ Recital by Andrew Dean, Saturday 26th March in Church, time to be confirmed (**no ticket required**)

Captain Ken



During my time at sea, the art of navigation has completely changed.

The coming of GPS, of course, is the main reason for this.

We now know exactly where we are without the skilled use of a sextant any more.

And as for the depth, we simply consult the chart, allowing only for tidal affect.

It is already hard to remember that many ships did not have echo sounders, and still relied upon the sounding lead to measure the actual depth.

A special line with the depth indicated with distinctive marks, is bent on to the lead weight, which has a hollow in its bottom end, which when armed with white lead and tallow, collects a sample of the sea bed.

The leadsman taking the soundings, would stand on a wooden platform protruding

from the ship's side, known as 'the chains, and he would call out the depths he measured, by shouting, 'By the mark' if it was referring to one, or 'By the deep' if it was between actual marks.

It is interesting to know that Samuel Langhorne Clemens, the famous American author, made his pen name 'Mark Twain' which he had heard the leadsman call out, on a Mississippi steam boat.

I have very vivid memories from when as a teenage Midshipman, I was selected as leadsman as the ship approached the anchorage off Tacu Bar in the Yellow Sea in North China.

The sea was just turning to ice. It was bitterly cold, and when I had called out 'By the mark ten' my final sounding to the bridge, I realised that the line was frozen stiff down to the water.

My hands were just too cold to heave it up.

I have never felt more grateful than when an Able bodied seaman, passing on his way to the focsle, and wearing stout gloves, kindly pulled the line up for me, and coiled it neatly on the deck.

Many ships both with and without echo sounders were equipped with a deep sea sounding machine.

This consisted of a winch, some electric and some manual, from which a wire fastened to a 26 pound lead was payed out directly in to the sea, and by resting a metal handle on the wire as it ran out, you could tell when it struck the bottom, and then start winding it in.

Attached to the lead was a glass tube filled with silver oxide which changed to red chloride when the sea water entered the tube.

The length of this when measured against a special gauge, indicated the depth.

This lead also collected a sample of the sea bottom. We were transiting the Taiwan Strait, in dense fog and I so well remember having to carry this very heavy lead from the sounding machine on the poop, all the way to the bridge so the Captain could see for himself the bottom sample.

On one occasion, I dropped the lead on to the steel deck, while carrying it to the bridge, and the arming collected an amount of rust flakes.

However, the Captain was delighted when he saw it, as it resembled the shale that the chart told us was there. The voyage was successful,

But I still feel a bit guilty for not explaining what had happened.

Ken Owen

Laughs with Lynda

1. What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common?
The same middle name.
2. I was horrified when my wife told me that my six year old son wasn't actually mine.
Apparently I need to pay more attention during school pickup.
3. What is the opposite of a croissant?
A happy uncle.

Down A Musical Memory Lane...

I have always enjoyed music. I have a vague memory of listening endlessly to the sounds coming out of a wind-up gramophone; I must have been three, I think. Then there were hymns, sung with real gusto at a Methodist chapel in Bradford. The old chaps would start to sing the hymn again if they had enjoyed it, with the organist desperately catching up. A radical moment was 1956 when my brother, older than me, came home with a 78 record, 'Rock Island Line' by Lonnie Donegan. This was a completely new sound to us all. Soon I was listening to Chris Barber's Jazz Band with a demure Irish woman, Otilie Patterson, hitting our ears with 'the Blues', and Donegan playing 'skiffle' to give the rest of the band a breather. We were lucky enough to go to a number of Chris Barber's. The next move was towards 'proper' Blues. Chris Barber brought a number of legends over from America. Sonny Terry, Brownie McGee, Sonny Boy Williamson and others made records with the Barber band. Popularity grew, and in the next few years a wealth of old Blues singers came over. I wrote a while ago about the impact they had on me and my friends. Lightnin' Hopkins, Muddy Waters, Sleepin' John and John



on the stage in my home town. It wasn't only me and my friends listening to this 'new' music. George Harrison, Mick Jagger, Van Morrison and many more legends have said it was their starting point. The Sixties brought the 'Pop Packages' to Bradford, and we went to a lot of concerts. A few highlights: Chuck Berry was obviously miffed about being second on the bill to the forgettable Dave Clark Five, and refused to go off. He played and played ('and the joint was a-rockin'..) until the curtains were pulled on him. Amongst the over-amplification of some groups came Carl Perkins, cool and classy, with just his guitar and the pianist borrowed from the Nashville Teens (the excellent 'Tobacco Road', remember it?) He would look across to the piano before each song, and ask with a Southern drawl 'You right there, Jaahn..?' Then launch into Blue Suede Shoes, and the rest. The Animals had just released 'House of the Rising Sun', and on stage it lasted about ten minutes, Eric Burdon obviously high on something. The Kinks in black leather seemed quite alarming but sounded good ...



And that reminds me... but I will keep some more of these memories for another article. I know that the readership of Outlook is not totally geriatric, but I hope that some of my memories have triggered some of yours!

Mike Barley.

Looking forward to reading the next of the series Mike. 'Ed.'

What's all the Scaffolding about?

Hello Church watchers! You will have noticed scaffolding going around St Thomas' before Christmas and regular hikers and dog walkers will have experienced



the pathway running along the South Side closed on three days in November with grinding

noises and billowing dust. How come the church has suddenly had a burst of activity when we are purportedly short of money during this pandemic? During the Summer we had been fortunate that several legacies had kindly been left to the church allowing us to press on with fabric maintenance. Since the last building inspection, the quinquennial inspection of 2017, one major concern was the poor state of rainwater goods (gutters, drainpipes and hoppers) which needed unblocking, cleaning and re-painting.

The church maintenance team began by assessing the job and preparation required. We found that many of the bobbins (the spacers on the drainpipes protecting the attaching bolts) were rotten, being made of wood from what looked like old cotton-reels. We tried hard to come up with a solution and finally

arrived at a method both simple and ingenious for attaching hard plastic piping to cover the bolts. It turned out to be a three man job so we set about honing the tools and getting sufficient water pipe tubing to replace the bobbins. The next step was finding out how to clean the ironwork and weather boarding supporting the gutters. It was decided to use shot blasting, a well-known method for cleaning cast iron that could be amended for use on metal and hardwood. This involves spraying abrasive metal silicate shot at high pressure which removes the rust and former paintwork down to the original surface. A mobile shot blasting company was booked and a scaffolder was therefore needed to construct a stable position from which the shot-blaster in heavy protective gear could work. The scaffolding was erected by a local company, the same one which worked on the Old Vicarage in fact.

I hope the end result has been worth it. It is sometimes said that the utilitarian aspects of a building should not be prominent and therefore I guess that not many of you have noticed our new bobbins, about 100 of them, and the lead-grey painted drainpipes and gutters. If you have, be sure to know that it was a little miracle that all parts of the project came together timewise and that inclement weather held off for the job to be completed.

William Heijbroek .

Jaunts with Judy

The walks for the coming year will all begin at a Railway Station. Some of the stations will be on the Hope Valley Line. The Hope Valley in Derbyshire has serious traffic and parking problems in the summer months. I am hoping that these walks will encourage people to leave their car at home and use public transport. I will continue to devise walks that do not have a lot of climbing and are not too muddy.

Railway Walks no 1 Rose Hill Station to Chadkirk Chapel 1 ½ - 2 Hours approx 2 miles. This is an easy walk on well made paths ideal for a Winter Walk. Pushchair and dog friendly. Plenty of Information Boards to read.

Getting there: The 375 bus that goes down Longhurst Lane stops at Rose Hill Station. *Parking for cars is on the road near the Recycling Centre or park in the railway car park*
Facilities en route: There is a cafe on the Chadkirk Business Park - pens Monday to Friday only 8.30 until 2.00. good for breakfast. Tea and Cake is served at Chadkirk Chapel on the last Sunday of the month 12 until 4. 30th January is the next open day. There are no toilet facilities on this walk.

Directions

1. Walk from the station to the main road and cross at the pedestrian crossing opposite Mc Colls store. Turn left.
2. Go down the road until you meet Marple Hall Drive. This road follows the line of the carriage drive that led to Marple Hall. At the bottom there is an obvious gateway that leads onto a cobbled path.

3. Go down the path and cross the grass to read the plaque about Marple Hall. Return to the path
4. Continue along the path. Marple Hall School will be on the left. The River Goyt will soon come into view and you should be able to see the green bridge that crosses it.
5. Fork right at the footpath sign which clearly indicates Chadkirk. Follow this path downhill until you reach the green bridge. Cross over the river.
6. Follow the path to the left and you will join a well surfaced lane. Turn left. Watch out for cars and bikes. Head down the road to Chadkirk Business Park. Walk on the pavement by the row of cottages and the cafe will be found ahead of you.
7. Return to the lane and cross over to a small car park. Aim for the left hand corner here you will see a footpath sign.
8. Turn right onto the footpath. A small stream should be on your left. Follow this path all the way around a large field (18 bleaching fields). The path finishes near to Chadkirk Farm. Turn left and walk up hill to see the Well that is dressed each year in July for the Chadkirk Well Dressing celebration.
9. Return down the hill and look for a metal gate in the hedge on the left. This takes you through to the Walled Garden and the Chapel.
10. Return to the road. Cross over and turn left down the footpath between a hedge and a field. This was created to allow people to walk safely down the narrow road.
11. At the end of the path turn left and cross over the road. You are now back to the path that leads to the green bridge. Turn right after you have crossed the bridge to retrace your steps back to Marple Hall Drive.



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Tea and Friendship.

Time brings change and after much thought and discussion the Tea and Friendship group has to announce the end of an era.



It was 22 years since we set it up. Bringing the guests to the Parish Centre for afternoon tea and chat with friends old and new. A summer lunch and Christmas meal were always highlights in the year.

However the attendance has gradually diminished due to circumstances beyond our control. I feel we will all have happy memories to take away with us and thank you everyone for your support.

By Vivien Ayres .

Enquiries to *Sheila Norbury* Tel Nos: 449 0282

A huge thank you to Sheila, Vivien and all the volunteers involved. Whenever I happened to call in, there was a wonderful atmosphere and welcoming cakes. Ed



THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

Safe in Winter's womb

Lie the seeds of Summers

Yet to come

Fr. Michael Jackmann

Lord, we are in darkness, and the world is in darkness, because we live in our own way and do not love each other as you love us. Forgive us, and dispel our darkness. Light candles of love in our lives, in our hearts and minds, that in their light we might draw nearer to Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Frank Topping

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The Christmas Tree

Chris Mann

O Tannenbaum

I've always had a soft spot for this lovely German folk song praising a fir tree for its loyalty to keep green throughout the winter. It's sung in many different translations.

O Christmas Tree

O Christmas Tree

How lovely are your branches

**Not only green in summer's
heat**

**But also winter's snow and
sleet.**

In mid-December it became clear that to hold a crowded indoor Crib Service in the midst of the Omicron outbreak would be irresponsible. I began to think of an outdoor alternative, and "O Tannenbaum" reminded me that a



Christmas Eve carol singing event around a magnificent tree would

be a great substitute. But where to start? It needed a team of volunteers with very special skills.

Obviously the first point of call was Dave Myers and although he was



up in Cumbria helping repair the damage of storm Arwen he took the task on board. Early one morning there appeared as if by magic a 16ft tree outside the church which he had removed from a client's garden in Longhurst Lane. She was delighted and said her late husband always decorated it and would be pleased with its new role.

But how to erect this giant? Peter Lowe swung into action and erected scaffolding to haul it vertical helped by Paul Gwyther, and built a huge one-ton base topped with concrete to hold it in place through expected winter storms. One face of the tree had sustained damage and sods law when it was finally in place that side was facing

outwards. Not daunted, I caught Peter cutting branches off the rear and screwing them on the front! Next was putting the lights on. These were chosen by lighting



expert, Tony Noble (who does the sound and light for Winter Wonderland) and when I questioned his figure of 4,000 bulbs he just said, "Trust me Chris!"

To place the lights, Peter Lowe and his workmate Jonathan then performed a balletic tiptoe round and around the tree imitating a spider spinning a web. Observing this, an elderly passer-by said he thought they were doing a mystic folk dance! The end product simply took the breath away of passers-by and shone right across the valley to Gibb Lane and Cobden Edge.

In spite of a Covid peak there was Christmas Eve carol singing around that lovely tree which reminded me of the joy of singing carols together in the crisp night air.

A huge thank you to our volunteers who certainly helped St Thomas take its place in proclaiming the Good News of the birth of our Saviour.

From the registers

We remember before God and commend to his love and mercy

Roger Bennett

6th December 2021

Harriet Jean Hibbs

25th January 2021

Anthea Nicholls

21st January 2021



St Thomas Choir singing at Westminster Abbey 2nd January 2022.

Report by Hannah Scott and Oscar Qualter



On New Year's Eve, the choir travelled south for a three-day holiday, of which the highlight was going to be singing at Westminster Abbey. We didn't dare to hope that the trip would happen and were so excited and could barely believe it when we finally set off on Friday morning. We all stayed in a Holiday Inn Express near St Albans. We spent a lovely New Year together, playing games and dancing. After a long lie in on New Year's Day to recover from the late night we had the day before, a lot of the rest of the choir arrived and we spent Saturday rehearsing. We took over the whole of the Black Horse pub in the evening, as forty of us went for a very nice dinner together. The big day dawned: we had an early start that morning (breakfast at 6:30am and coach departure at 7am). We put our robes on the coach and set off for Westminster! The coach drive was about an hour long and every second of the journey was so interesting because we were driving through central London, so different from home! When we got there, it was straight to practising. We got our cassocks on and practised for the morning service. We were so privileged to sing morning Eucharist and Evensong. The music in the morning consisted of a lot of Harold Darke music. After the communion service there was a break and straight on to the practice for the evening service. A lot of the music was Henry Purcell. I loved singing in Westminster Abbey, such a beautiful and historic building where so many important things have happened. We are such a lucky choir to have had this opportunity to sing there. After the service a very friendly Verger gave us a tour which included the graves of Purcell and Handel! We were also able to take some group photos. Some people travelled home, and others had another night in the Holiday Inn. We visited the De Havilland Air Museum on the Monday and St Albans Cathedral before wearily travelling home to Mellor. I was so sad to get home after such a brilliant weekend.



Ideas for Visiting Gardens this February

We haven't been able to travel to visit gardens so easily for the last couple of years so I thought a few suggestions of trips out this February to see early Spring flowers would be nice to consider.

Do check first in case you have to book tickets. Enjoy your visits!

Lovell Quinta Arboretum, Congleton <https://lovellquintaarboretum.co.uk>

The winter walk reveals very finely coloured stemmed dogwoods, including Cornus 'Sibirica' AGM, Ivory Halo and 'Midwinter Fire', set against a backdrop of incense cedars and a young Sequoiadendron giganteum 'Glaucum'. Also an impressive woodland display of snowdrops.

Dunham Massey, Altrincham <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunham-massey>

Work began to create the Winter Garden in 2007. The Winter Garden officially opened in November 2009 and has flourished since then. Cathedral-like beech and oak trees maintain the historic woodland feel, while the woodland plants located underneath the trees include snowdrop, iris and cyclamen bulbs.

Rodehall, Scholar Green, Cheshire rodehall.co.uk

Famous for their snowdrop walks, these will be held 5 February - 6 March this year. The snowdrop walks feature a mile long walk through carpets of snowdrops. There are over 70 varieties to discover in the Old Wood, down by The Pool and through Sir Richard's Walk. Apparently local art clubs will be exhibiting and selling their work in the barns by the car park.

(Diana also recommends **Trentham Estate** at **Stoke** and **Lowther Castle** at Penrith. -Ed)

Diana Cole

St Thomas EcoChurch News

“Have we Bishy Barnabies?”
New compost construction.

The relatively late onset of autumn this year has meant that much of the abundant growth of a damp summer has hung around looking tired and limp. Leaves and grasses across the churchyard have only just turned to gold and tan as the North Atlantic winds finally reached us in mid November. I have tried to enjoy a gentle and extended autumn but something just doesn't feel quite right. The reports from round the globe that have been discussed at the COP26 UN Climate Conference bear witness to much more profound alterations than just a Late Autumn, and extra grass cutting and weeding in our gardens is definitely the least of our problems.

Nature is already on the march in its efforts to keep pace with changing temperatures, so I wasn't surprised to see, in early October, a cloud of what I first thought were ladybirds, swarming over the Tower walls and through the warmed headstones of the graveyard. However, the myriad different variations of carapace confirmed my fears; many (if not all) were the more robust and varied Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* that has competed with the native *Coccinella* ladybirds since they made it to mainland UK in 2004. Could milder winters have allowed their spread northwards? I have a fondness for Ladybirds partly because of the ridiculously quaint East Anglian habit of calling them “bishy barnabies”. However the Harlequins are doing a grand job of keeping aphids down so there is nothing to do other than watch and learn. Harlequin Ladybirds congregating in

numbers on the SW buttress. Look out for their much lighter rust coloured legs to tell them apart from traditional *coccinella* Ladybirds. How many do you think are there are on .



High Altitude Compost Heap

Another way of improving the amount of wildlife in our Living Churchyard is to uprate our composting facilities. It is the perfect way to use all the green waste from upkeep of the graveyard and from clearing the cut flowers from memorials on graves. This one

that I constructed last week is already becoming a haven for all the really useful biodegrading fungi and invertebrates that are part of a beautifully evolved recycling system.



Please feel free to add anything organic you'd like to clear from gravesides (please no plastic, wire or oasis which our new church yard team will dispose of before it creates a hazard). Leaf mulch and grass trimmings are particularly welcome.

Clare Jackson

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CHURCH ROTAS

Stewards Rota

Date	8.30am	10am	6.30pm
6th February	P. Cunningham	A. Muller. P. Long	
13th February	A. Mason	G Perks A. Allcard	
20th February.	P. Cooke	P & L Forbes.	A. Shah
27th February	P. Cunningham.	R & J . Elliot	
6th March	A. Mason	A. Sanders D Jellyman	

For 8.30am please arrange your own substitute. If you cannot steward at 10am please arrange your own replacement. If this is not possible email Rachel – redwards at NHS.net

Flower Rota

6th February Gwenn Perks	6th March no flowers Lent
13th February Jill Baker.	13th March no flowers Lent
20th February Maggie Williams	20th March no flowers Lent
27th February Julie Elliot	27th March no flowers Lent

If you wish to change a date, need a key or have any query, please contact Jill Baker (07881 902533 or jillbaker427@hotmail.com). The church key is also available from the Parish Office(484 5079) Monday to Thursday mornings only.

Holy Dusters

6th Feb A Mason & C Starling
 13th Feb J Cooper & A Muller
 20th Feb P Cunningham & I Morris
 27th Feb M Lowe & H Kennedy
 6th March J Burrows & E Wilson

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