



The Parish Magazine for

£1

STOCKBRIDGE LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD

May 2025



The Parishes of Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford in the Mid-Test Benefice

Rector : The Reverend Joe Sweetnam

Contact : Email - revjoesweetnam@btinternet.com/rector@midtest.org.uk, Tel - 01624 810810

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Phone No: 07900 927913 or midtestbenefice@gmail.com

This Magazine: 11 issues a year.

Price: £10 paid in advance (delivered), or £1 per copy (available in churches)

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June copy deadline: May 15th email: editorsstockmag@gmail.com

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Chris Reynell 810569	Vacancy	Chair: Derek Halle
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Brownies (meet in Chilbolton)	New Secretary to be appointed	clerk@stockbridgeparishcouncil.org
Julie Shone 01962 761269	Angela McMeekin: Poppies 810236	Stockbridge Pharmacy 810624
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mob 07738 289902	Angela McMeekin 810236	Stockbridge Surgery 810524
Kent Hill Scout Hall	Stockbridge Community Cinema	<i>Out of hours urgent treatment /advice</i>
Leigh Dance 811074	Paul Kidd 07732 580721	<i>Hants Doctors On Call freephone 111</i>
Leckford Parish Council	Stockbridge Community Market	Stockbridge Town Hall
Vacancy	Carol Preston 07925 287870	Kim Candler (Chair) 811776
Longstock Garden Club	Stockbridge Court Leet	<i>On-line bookings</i>
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peter.r.moore@gmail.com	810614	or phone 513299
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Chair: Alice Foster 07846 173217	Stockbridge Dramatic Society	Bob Powell 07802 524433
Clerk: Gill Bulpitt 07763857512	Mark Frank 810562	TVBC Councillor
Longstock Village Hall	Stockbridge Football Club	Cllr Ian Jeffrey 01794 388872
Selina Musters 810459	Trevor Dance (Chair) 07780 661223	Unity Transport (Dial-a-Ride
Longstock & Leckford WI	Kieran Wilson (Hon Sec) 07883 624808	shopping bus) 356808
Selina Musters 810459	Email: stockbridgefc@hotmail.co.uk	



From the Rectory

Dear Friends,

As the warmth of May settles over our beautiful villages, I find myself reflecting with gratitude on the Easter celebrations we shared across the Mid-Test Benefice. From prayer walks along the Test to joyful Easter Day communions in our churches, each gathering was a reminder of the deep hope that lies at the heart of our faith: Christ is risen! – and with Him, the promise of new life.

Now, as we move deeper into spring, that sense of renewal seems to be echoed all around us. The hedgerows are bursting into life, lambs fill the fields with their playful bleating, and gardens are slowly shaking off the last of winter's sleep. It's a season that stirs something within us – a call to look forward, to grow, to begin again.

This month also leads us towards Ascension Day, which falls on Thursday, 29th May. It's often a quieter festival, nestled between Easter and Pentecost, yet it holds a powerful message. After His resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven – not to leave us, but to remind us that His presence is with us always, through the Holy Spirit and in the life of the Church. It is a moment of commissioning, of handing on the baton, and encouraging us to be His hands and feet in the world.

That encouragement is something I see often in our villages – in the care neighbours show one another, in the quiet service of volunteers, in the laughter shared at coffee mornings, and in the faithfulness of those who tend our churches, week in and week out.

So as May unfolds, I pray that you may find moments of joy in nature's new life, in community, and in faith. Whether you are planting seeds in the garden, walking familiar paths, or simply pausing for a moment of peace, may you know the God who brings life out of death, hope out of sorrow, and light out of darkness.

With every blessing,

Revd Joe Sweetnam

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Cover: 'St George's Kermis with the Dance around the Maypole' by Pieter Breughel the Younger, 1627

At last, we are welcoming the month of May, and our footers this month celebrate exactly that!

From the Editorial Team

We cannot remember a year when May was welcomed with quite so much enthusiasm. A reflection perhaps of what felt like an interminable January and February and of recent Spring days when the welcome sunshine was accompanied by a teasing and testing wind which ensured that extra layers of clothing were not cast off too soon.

References to the sights, sounds, smells and traditions of May are threaded through the magazine this month; they have clearly inspired many of our wonderful contributors. We have also enjoyed learning about some newer residents and their contributions to the area's continued vibrancy, specifically in relation to music and cooking. (See pages 13 and 21). We look forward to enjoying and experiencing their talents in the months to come.

How very fitting that, as we approach the VE Day celebrations on the 8th May, we are also reminded of those former residents who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Second World War. The Roll of Honour on page 17 makes for solemn reading, and serves as a shocking reminder of the tragic loss experienced by so many local families. Thank you David Williams, and well done to Stockbridge Primary School for involving the pupils in the commemorations.

Catherine Hadler's little poem on page 15 reminds us that the year is passing quickly. Enjoy it while you may!

Frances Candler, Jennifer Kidd and Thea Taylor
Editors



Stockbridge Community Market

**Every Thursday morning
9.30 - 11.45am
in Stockbridge Town Hall**

Selling the very best local and home-made produce

Pies, cakes, breads, soups, eggs and vegetables.
Handmade crafts, toys, books, plants & bric-a-brac.

Please come along and browse

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Stockbridge Community Cinema



ANORA (18)

Friday 16 May

7.30 pm (2hrs 19min)



A young escort from Brooklyn meets and impulsively marries the son of a Russian oligarch. Once the news reaches Russia, her fairy tale is threatened

as his parents set out for New York to get the marriage annulled.

THE BRUTALIST (18)

Wednesday 21 May

3.00 pm and 7.30 pm

(3hrs 35min incl 15 minute interval)

Escaping postwar Europe, a visionary architect comes to America to rebuild his life, his career, and his marriage.

On his own in a strange new country, he settles in

Pennsylvania, where a wealthy and prominent industrialist recognises his talent for building. But power and legacy come at a heavy cost ...



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available online via our website

stockbridgecinema.org.uk or via the TicketSource telephone booking service

0333 666 3366 (no additional fee)



LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD WI

Tuesday 27th May

Stockbridge Town Hall 6.45pm for 7pm start.

Annual General Meeting Members Only

Further details from Selina Musters on 810459

Copy for Magazine

Copy date for the June Magazine:

15 May 2025

Please send emails to:

editorsstockmag@gmail.com

or phone Frances on 01264 811776

Jennifer on 811179 or Thea on 07730 964481



Summer Garden Party

WEDNESDAY 18TH JUNE
6:00 - 8:30 PM

Join us for a delightful evening in the beautiful gardens of The Old Rectory in support of the Romsey Deanery – South Rwenzori Diocese partnership in SW Uganda. This event raises funds for the Teenage Project, which provides vocational training for young people facing unemployment, offering them a brighter future.

Drinks & light refreshments provided
Guest speaker: Rhiannon, Bishop of Southampton
Admission: £25 (cash at the door)

THE OLD RECTORY,
STOCKBRIDGE
(BY KIND PERMISSION OF
ROBIN & CHRISSIE)

Longstock Water Gardens special open evening in support of St Nicholas' Church, Leckford

Friday 16th May 6-8pm

Tickets £15, to include a glass of wine
Free Parking



Photo courtesy of John Lewis

Make a date in your diary for an early summer evening stroll around the world famous Longstock Water Gardens and support St Nicholas' Church, Leckford. We hope you can join us at these beautiful gardens whilst supporting this treasured Grade II* listed church. Tickets will be available at the gate. For more information contact David Barnes on 01264 810516.



PUT YOUR HAND UP IF YOU CAN HELP!

Could you volunteer to help at Trout'n'about Sunday 3rd August and help raise money for good causes here in Stockbridge?

We'd love to hear from you.

volunteers@tnastockbridge.com

TROUT 'N ABOUT!



Patron: Professor David Owen Norris MA (Oxon) FSA FRAM FRCCO

STOCKBRIDGE MUSIC

St Peter's Church, Stockbridge

Friday 9th May 2025, 4pm & 7.30pm

Voces8



SOLD OUT - Returns only

Friday 4th July 2025, 7.30pm

Michael Collins MBE, clarinet



Tickets selling now £25 (U18s £5)
from stockbridgemusic.uk

St Peter's Stockbridge Flower Festival 2025

Theme:
**'One Moment in
Time'**

Friday 2nd – Monday 5th May

**Friday, Saturday and Sunday
10am-5pm**

Sunday 12 am – 5pm

**Delicious Teas on the
Church lawn**

**Saturday, Sunday and
Monday afternoons**



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**'MAN THE
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in King's
Somborne
Village Hall**

**Saturday 10 May
7.30pm for 8pm**

We are absolutely thrilled to welcome full-throttle alternative folk band *Man The Lifeboats* to the Sessions. Described as 'a stomping musical cocktail of alchemic proportions', they craft songs with big choruses that tell stories through straight-up lyrics and pounding bass lines.

This is an evening you can't afford to miss!

Tickets £16 in advance from

www.ticketsource.co.uk/sombornesessions

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Profits go to maintaining King's Somborne Village Hall



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**Longstock
Garden Club**

**Our talks in the Village Hall have
now finished and will resume on
Tuesday October 14 at 7pm.**

For our **programme of summer visits** to
gardens, please go to our webpage

www.longstockgardenclub.com

For more information, please contact:
Peter Moore 07881573493

Stockbridge Town Hall



Weekly

Mon am	Pilates with Paula
Mon am	Pilates Unlimited with Clare
Mon pm	Sing for Fun
Tues am	Iyengar Yoga with Melissa
Tues pm	Kathryn Campling Yoga
Weds am	Yoga with Dionne
Weds am/pm	Su Joy Art Class
Thurs am	Stockbridge Community Market
Thurs pm	Jo Caley Joga
Fri am	Moo Music
Sat am	Jo Caley Joga

This Month

May 1	re:dress Winchester
May 1	Little & Wild Soft Play Co.
May 2	Chloe Pates Art Sale
May 3	Antique Fair
May 6-7	Wild Bazaar
May 6	Stockbridge Drama Society
May 7	Stone, Vine & Sun
May 9	Stockbridge Music Society
May 10	South Central Makers
May 11	Benedita Sousa Yoga Day
May 12	Sale of BYAN Spanish Dresses
May 13	Stockbridge Drama Society
May 14	U3A
May 15	Stockbridge Parish Council
May 16	Stockbridge Community Cinema
May 17-18	Kate Griffin Art Exhibition
May 19-21	Wild Bazaar
May 21	Stockbridge Community Cinema
May 22-26	Jules At No.43
May 27-28	Wild Bazaar
May 27	Longstock and Leckford WI
May 31	Antiques and Curios
May 31	Hawkmoor Books



Houghton WI

**10am Monday 19th May
at Houghton Village Hall**

**Annual General Meeting.
Discussion of national Resolutions
and Plant Exchange.**

Visitors welcome. Further information from
Jane Anderton on 01264 810928

Test Villages u3a

**Thursday 8th May
(note change of date)
at 2pm in Chilbolton Village Hall**

Joanna Sotherton

presents

**'Life of a Lingerie Buyer
for John Lewis'**

Joanna will describe her career from initially gaining a place on the John Lewis Partnership Graduate Training Scheme to becoming the Lingerie buyer for all their department stores. She will recount tales and experiences of her buying trips to Europe, the USA and Asia.

**Thursday 5th June
at 2pm in Chilbolton Village Hall**

Dr Alison Frater

presents

**'Arts Health and Justice; women in
the criminal justice system'**

Dr Alison Frater recently retired from a long career as a consultant in public health including as a director of public health in Hampshire. Throughout her career she worked to increase understanding of determinants of health in prisons. Her talk discusses the adverse consequences of policy inertia in attempts to reduce women's incarceration. It demonstrates the value of arts in highlighting the issues - and the need for a more health-focused approach to reducing crime.

**Doors open at 1.40pm for the presentation,
followed by refreshments.**

New members are very welcome.

u3a is a UK-wide network of groups that provides the opportunity to socialise and learn for fun.

Find out more about our
Test Villages group at:
testvillages.u3asite.uk



Wherwell History Group

**Friday 16th May
8pm at Wherwell
Village Hall**



Julie Muirhead

presents

'One Place Study' of St Mary Bourne

For further details, please check our website at
<https://www.wherwellhistory.com>
(£5 entry fee for non-members)

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Stockbridge Primary and Pre-School News

Summer beckons!

Easter holidays always seems like a milestone marker in our academic year; spring has definitely sprung and the two week break gives us a brief respite to build up towards a very busy summer term here in school.

We spent time before the holidays sowing all of our seeds; the polytunnel is an absolute boost as we're able to grow all manner of fruits and vegetables that thrive in the warm conditions the environment produces. Melons and various squashes are on the agenda this year as well as cucumbers – a first for us! Children have embraced the warmer weather and jumpers are discarded by 10am playtime with teachers despairing at sorting them all back to their rightful owner by the end of lunch! We also took time to dig out 3 flower beds on the playground which have always been tricky to fill and look sad and bare for 6 months of the year. We've filled them with bark, sand and gravel and all manner of trucks, diggers, guttering and other accoutrements have been purchased or donated so that our children can creatively play in them in the coming weeks.

Summer is a busy time for us with national testing too. Between now and just after the Whitsun holiday, children in Year 6 will sit their SATs tests, Year 4 children will undertake the multiplication tables check (they need to know all tables to 12x12 by age 8-9) and Year 1 children will sit their phonics check. All results are reportable nationally later on in the year.

Year R children, our youngest at just aged 4-5, will also be assessed for their progress and attainment against national Early Learning Goals to check whether they're on track to be 'school ready' for Year 1. This heavy burden of testing, much of which only serves to confirm what we already know about the children, is balanced out by the richness that all schools strive to provide to ensure we are educating the 'whole' child; not just one who can sit exams and pass tests.

Our Year 4 residential is on the first two days back after the Easter holiday where children will romp in the New Forest, shelter build, climb, orienteer, play teambuilding games and learn about living with others and compromising and collaboration. Year 6 are already excited about and preparing for their 'fiver challenge' where they are given £5 and told to 'make it grow'! This involves a 'dragon's den' scenario and subsequent marketing and business planning – last year, our excellent Year 6 children turned their £90 into over £800 and paid for their end-of-year trip entirely from these profits! We have Year 3's first foray into residential later in June with a night camping on our grounds as well as trips out, visitors to enhance children's learning and much more.

Our topics this term for Upper school focus on the local geography of the River Test so expect to see us in our lovely new Hi-viz vests (courtesy of the community cinema – thank you!) out and about. Our younger children in Years 1-3 are learning about the United Kingdom and our very youngest in pre-school and Year R are into transport. Let's hope for continued sunshine (and a few showers to ease the watering burden!)

*Emma Jefferies
Headteacher*

enact in collaboration with Stockbridge
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sarah@enact.online

enact SADS

TROUT 'N ABOUT!

Following on from last year's successful Trout'n'About, the organising committee is looking to close the High Street again on 3rd August. We were delighted by so many positive comments about the road closure last year, many of which highlighted how much safer and more enjoyable Trout'n'About was without traffic. That said, we would like to hear from anyone with suggestions, comments or concerns about closing the road. We would like to know for sure that the road closure remains something that residents and businesses would like to happen on Trout'n'About 2025. Please Email: roadclosure@tnastockbridge.com

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STOCKBRIDGE
CHIROPODY



Daffodil Run through Stockbridge



Sunday 6th April was blessed with Spring sunshine to show off to their shiny best the vintage cars participating in the annual Daffodil Run which passes through Stockbridge.



The event always gathers interest from far and wide and brings an air of bygone motoring gentility and grandeur to the High Street.



A splendid spectacle and great fun for all!

(With thanks to Nigel Rugman for photos)

New Service from Village Bus



Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus have recently introduced a new timetable which will be running through Stockbridge, and they would be delighted to welcome you on board.

Thursdays: Stockbridge - Winchester Service

Outward - departs St Peter's 11:05, New Street 11:06
- arrives Winchester (The Broadway) 11:30
Return - departs Winchester (The Broadway) 14:00
- arrives New Street 14:24 - St Peter's 14:26

(NB. This service is perfectly timed to visit the **Community Market in Stockbridge Town Hall** before a trip into Winchester.)

Fridays: Stockbridge - Romsey Service

Outward - departs St Peter's 12:45, New Street 12:46
- arrives Romsey Bus Station 13:30.
Return - departs Romsey Bus Station 15:30 (then picks up at Waitrose)
- arrives New Street 16:14, St Peter's 16:15

4th Wed of month: Stockbridge - Andover Service

Outward - departs St Peter's 09:55, New Street 09:56
- arrives Andover Bus Station 10:15
Return - departs Andover Bus Station 12:15
- arrives New Street 12:34, St Peter's 12:35

TVBC Bus passes are accepted

Single Fare £3 - Return £6 - Under 16 half-price
For details of all routes and timetables see

broughtonvillage.net/village-bus

The Broughton & Mottisfont Community Bus is a small charity providing help in the community.
All our drivers are volunteers.

A Defibrillator Near You!

Defibrillators for public use are located at: -
Stockbridge Fire Station (available 24 hrs)

Longstock Village Hall (available 24 hrs)

Leckford Estate Office (restricted hours).

Leckford Farm Shop (restricted hours)

For further details, and for other UK locations, go to www.defibfinder.uk

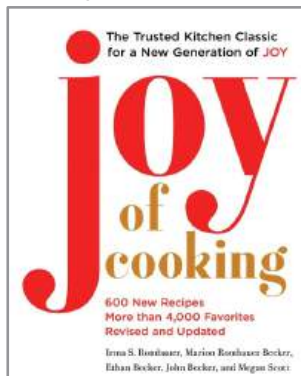
Instructions for use are given when the device is commandeered but for anyone who would like prior understanding of how to use one, see <https://www.aeddonate.org.uk/events/>

Cuisine Art - Elaine Sperber

I owe a lot to the fact that my mother really didn't like cooking. My father always said that when they got married she couldn't cook a chicken – which she cheerfully agreed was true.

But by the time she had lived in California for a few years with my Brooklyn-born dad and was raising two children of her own, she had managed to learn a few things. She also had the great good fortune to have my Aunt Esther, my father's sister, not far away. She was able to pass on some of the basics, and managed to share some of our Hungarian grandmother's recipes which my father couldn't get enough of! Not just chicken, but Chicken Paprikash, Palascintas (Hungarian blintzes), Trepanas (potato dumplings) and more sturdy Eastern European food. Luckily, these recipes were eventually passed down to me, but only by word of mouth (no pun intended). No written instructions ever seemed to exist!

My earliest encounter with proper cookery books came when I managed to grab the only two my mother had. Due to the infrequency of their use, they were high up on a kitchen shelf, with a serious layer of dust. The first was the classic 'Joy of Cooking', edited by Irma Rombauer and first published in 1931 under the great full title, 'The Joy of Cooking: A Compilation of Reliable Recipes with a Casual Culinary Chat.' Continually revised and updated over the decades, it is still the most popular and best-selling cookbook of all time in the US, having sold more than 20 million copies. And, amazingly, it's still in print.

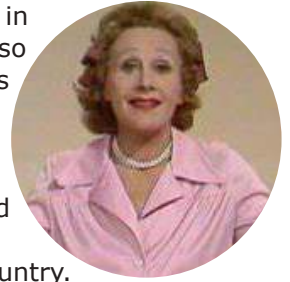


I was probably about 8 years old and desperate to learn how to make, and especially to bake, lovely things. 'The Joy of Cooking' covered all the traditional categories of food, with reasonably doable recipes and techniques. It was intriguing - but as it was also virtually all text, with maybe a few line drawings, for me it paled by comparison to her 'Women's Home Companion' cookbook (1945) which had glorious colour photos. I fell hard for the page on *Petits Fours*, which showed a plate of exquisite little cakes iced within an inch of their lives.



Beautifully decorated with tiny buttercream roses and lilies in pastel hues, they were irresistible. I never managed to master the art of the icing bag and piping tips, but although it is falling apart, that book is still with me as a reminder of what inspired me to do some serious cooking.

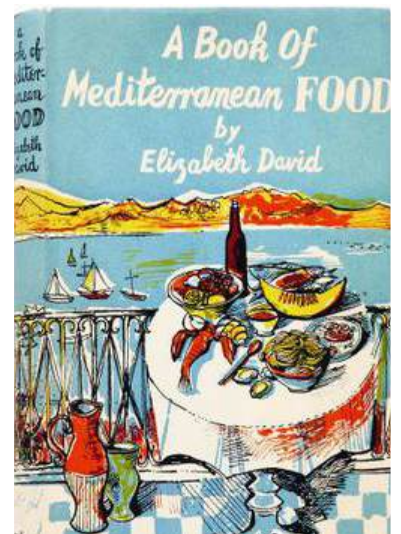
Recently, a friend told me that British chef Fanny Cradock had spent some time in Stockbridge many years ago, so my interest was piqued. I was curious to find out what the UK equivalents were of my early influences: which books, chefs and cultural changes had the greatest impact on the evolution of cooking in this country.



Sad but true, until the 1970's, British cooking had a terrible international reputation. Post WWII rationing, followed by the introduction of quickly-prepared, frozen and tinned items, along with an inherent traditionalism where food was concerned, considerably delayed the arrival of new trends in cuisine.

Britain can now boast about having some of the best restaurants and most famous chefs in the world. But in the early days, the evolution of modern technology (better ovens, hobs, fridges and freezers), along with some great writing about food, were key to kicking off these changes.

Elizabeth David's 'A Book of Mediterranean Food' (1950), 'French Country Cooking' (1951) and 'French Provincial Cooking' (1960) were major influential works by a British author which inspired several generations of chefs. They were literary efforts as much as recipes from Europe, and although they may have been a bit intimidating to some, they are still brilliant reads today.

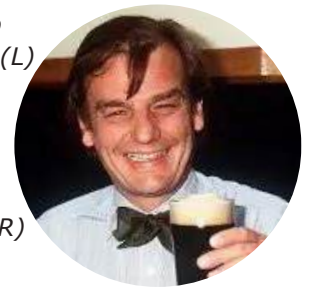


But for the less brave, for the first time there were also early home-grown television successes in Fanny Cradock, Philip Harben and later, Keith Floyd.



Philip Harben (L)

and



Keith Floyd (R)

The ability to watch chefs do what they do in a visual medium was new and hugely popular. Now you could actually see how to blend flour and butter and turn it into pastry dough... How to blanch fresh vegetables without boiling them to

death, and how to roast meat, chicken and fish without killing their flavours!

For American women of my era, the greatest transformation of all came from the unforgettable Julia Child. Not only did she write and promote two of the best cookbooks ever ('Mastering the Art of French Cooking Vols 1 & 2' - 1961), but she became one of the first 'reality tv stars' with her warm and eccentric performances on The French Chef, her show on public television from 1963-73.



At that time in the States, many women were starting to exert their power in political and cultural arenas – and pushed hard for major changes. But, at the same time we wanted to be able to cook every recipe, perfectly, from Julia's books. The mix of ideals made for some very lively conversations over dinner and can be said to have resulted in significant social progress and many great meals!

By this time, British viewers would have moved on from Fanny Cradock to Delia Smith, who some say was the British Julia Child.

She would be shortly and famously followed by others – including Ainsley Harriott, Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver, whose tv personalities propelled their cookbooks to outstanding sales. A trend Which is still exploding today! *Delia Smith c2009* It was a new and exciting era in home kitchens.



And all the while, British cooking just got better and better. Incorporating international trends and influences which arrived with multiple waves of Asian, Caribbean and African settlers, the UK's early dire reputation was replaced by enthusiasm for its excellence.

I think my mother would have been delighted to know this, she was ever in favour of progress – but after tasting my new dishes today, she would no doubt still ask me when I was going to recreate the Palascintas, or bring out the *Petits Fours* ...

To continue the theme of Cuisine Art - both by food creation and photography - here's a Pop-Up feast ...

Pop-up Feasts at The Test of Stockbridge

For those of you who might be confused, 'The Test of Stockbridge' used to be 'Lillies' then 'Kudos' and is now run by Lucy Shannon, who has transformed the venue, and who is also responsible for our very splendid High Street greengrocers. She has partnered with Jess Murphy, a professional cook who lives in Broughton, and together they have conceived the idea of a series of monthly pop-up gourmet dinners, usually on an exotic theme. The first to 'hit the street', on a Persian theme, happened on Friday, 28th March.

Was it successful? Well, maybe the following write up gives us a clue. Mike Sassi lives in Stockbridge and posts on Instagram "*theteststockbridgetrout*", regular observations of Stockbridge life. He has very kindly allowed us to reprint his comments.



"Hugely enjoyable evening at Stockbridge's first Persian pop-up, last night - with fabulous food provided by @jess_kitchen_hampshire."

The braised lamb and bulgar wheat tabbouleh were excellent. The homemade humus and roasted hazelnut carrots were even better.

The eastern-style pavlova was out of this world.

At the end of the evening, woman-of-the-moment Jess Murphy, Broughton-based entrepreneur, chef and baker, posed for a pic with her husband Pete. Apparently, she set up her business only three months ago. And this themed evening, hosted by The Test of Stockbridge, was the first. So, in years to come, we'll be able to say that we were there when it all started. "Stockbridge be Proud!"



These pop-ups will happen on the last Friday of every month, with the next one, on an Asian theme, on 23rd May. For details of future events, email: manager@theteststockbridge.co.uk, or just pop in (not up!), or indeed phone Lucy on 07777 666058.

Nigel Rugman

(With thanks to Mike Sassi for photos)



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National Trust Update



Springtime greetings to you all! I have been massively enjoying the warmer weather of late; new butterfly species are emerging with every week, the first swallows and martins have returned to us and my beloved reptiles are basking among our heathlands in the New Forest, building up their energies ready for breeding season. I have spent a few happy hours surveying and finding adders and smooth snakes, encounters which make me forget the chaos of the human world and just thoroughly enjoy meeting wildlife in all its snakey glory.

As of writing this, I am yet to hear the first cuckoo but I know some have returned and others are en route so I'm sure it won't be long before I hear their melodic, enchanting calls. I much favour the following poem which details their song cycle:

*In April, come I will
In May I sing all day
In June I change my tune
In July I prepare to fly
In August away I must*

A poignant reminder that spring and summer fly by so we must enjoy it to the full before it leaves again!

But back to business; we have been doing our annual checks of the fencelines on the commons as well as any repairs required on gates or other pieces of access furniture. Not the most thrilling of ranger tasks but very necessary all the same, to ensure we remain safe and open – we don't want any fencelines to fail and livestock to free roam their way to town. We replaced the entire NE fenceline of the Down over winter as it was 15 years or more old and rapidly failing – livestock had got loose last year but were thankfully contained before any traffic accidents occurred.

We are looking into the replacement of the interpretation panel for the top carpark of the Down but currently we have no budget for a new, updated board – so it's likely we may be replacing it with the original one having reinforced the legs. At some point, we would like to update all the interpretation boards with a new style of signage but this will rely on when we have the money to do so.

At the Court Leet meeting in March, I talked about a couple of projects we were hoping to get underway this year, that would be funded and led by other organisations. One was river restoration works on Stockbridge Marsh (with the Wessex Rivers Trust, WRT) and the other was juniper scrapes and regeneration works (with Plantlife). Unfortunately, due to various circumstances - including the Environment Agency prolonging their timeframe for providing FRAP consents (Flood Risk Activities Permits, required for works on/near rivers) to 21 weeks instead of 8 - the river works will not be going ahead this year. However, WRT are still in discussion with us and Natural England and we hope to progress with these works next year.

On the topic of rivers, I should also mention that we are continuing to test the water regularly and levels of ammonia and phosphates remain fluctuating – sometimes better than others but often still above what is considered 'good'. This means the river is still suffering from the storm flows put into it by Southern Water and we cannot ever say for sure that it is safe for you or your dogs. Paddle at your peril! Which is a sad state of affairs indeed.

Southern Water has informed me that they have, and I quote, been "proactively monitoring our treatment works that are at risk of prolonged storming, in order to better understand the environmental impact and provide early mitigation to reduce any potential harm". This is promising, but I was frustrated and disheartened when they informed me this spring that they were unable to access the river at the Marsh to sample this year, due to the grass growth on the other side of the fence being too dense, rendering it too unsafe as they would struggle to know where the edge of the bank was. So, since they were defeated by some vegetation, I'm not fully sure as to how they plan to continue to sample the river. Our rangers sample the river every month without issue...

In more positive news, the Plantlife project on the Down to try and kickstart the juniper population, is currently ongoing in the planning phase with consents being applied for as we speak. If it gets the go-ahead, then two scrape areas near the juniper trees will be scraped back of all top soil, down to bare chalk rock. These areas will be fenced for a temporary period to ensure rabbits/cattle don't get in and NT staff and volunteers will then harvest and process juniper berries to scatter on the bare chalk in the hopes of germination. This is different to previous attempts on my part, where I de-turfed areas and got baby juniper to grow, because this time they are removing all soil down to the bedrock chalk. Juniper is great at growing out of bedrock – and it gives it such a headstart that by the time other scrub species are able to colonise the area, the juniper will already be big enough to not be totally outcompeted by them in their younger years.

That's the plan anyway! I visited Danebury and was shown their scrapes there and similar ones are also being looked into at Leckford, and have been done at Marten Down, so it's a landscape-scale project.

In the meantime, enjoy the blooming of the wildflowers, the coconut smell of the gorse and the dreamy churr of the turtle dove (if I write that, then perhaps it will come to pass that some turtle doves will get back home to the Down this year).

Happy wandering!

*Catherine Hadler
Lead Ranger National Trust*

80th Anniversary of VE Day on 8th May 2025

We will commemorate the 80th anniversary on 8th May of Victory in Europe Day with a short service at the Stockbridge War Memorial starting at 10.30am.

Stockbridge Primary School will participate in this service which will be led by our Rector, the Revd Joe Sweetnam. The service will include an Act of Remembrance with the Royal British Standard dipped and the calls sounded on the cornet by Richard King.

With the Russian armies closing in on his bunker in Berlin, Hitler committed suicide on 30th April 1945. The German surrender soon followed. On 4th May on the Lüneburg Heath in North-West Germany, Field Marshal Montgomery accepted the unconditional surrender of German forces in the Netherlands, North-West Germany, and Denmark.



Field Marshal Montgomery overseeing the surrender of German Forces on 4th May 1945

On 7th May, Admiral Dönitz, as the head of state, signed an act of military surrender at General Eisenhower's Headquarters at Reims in France. On 8th May in Berlin, the unconditional surrender of all German forces was signed in the presence of all allies, including the Russians, formally ending the 2nd World War in Europe.

After 69 months of conflict, the defeat of Germany was celebrated on that day throughout the Western world, the then British Empire and in Russia. More than a million people celebrated in the streets throughout the United Kingdom. In London, crowds massed in Trafalgar Square and up the Mall to Buckingham Palace. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, accompanied by

their daughters and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, appeared on the balcony of the palace before the cheering crowds.

I am indebted to Geoff Merritt for this photograph of VE Day celebrations on 8th May 1945 in Longstock. It is easy to imagine a similar gathering of all the generations with few men in Stockbridge and Leckford.



Included among the celebrants would have been staff from the US Army's General Hospital on the hill opposite Stockbridge Down. The hospital remained in place until July 1945, caring for sick and wounded US service personnel.

Families with members serving in the Armed Forces would have had to wait for many months to be reunited as the wheels of demobilisation turned slowly. Sympathies then were with the families of those who gave their lives in the 2nd World War and for whom there would be no reunion. Those feelings remain to the present day when we remember the fallen during acts of remembrance in St Peter's and at the Stockbridge War Memorial.

David Williams



The Royal British Legion Houghton and District Branch

Contact David Williams (Chairman)
01264 811072

Social evenings are held on the first Wednesday of most months in the Greyhound on the Test

Roll of Honour for the 2nd World War for our three parishes

Guardsman William Andrews, 5th Battalion Coldstream Guards. Killed in action, Reichswald, February 1945, aged 33.

Trooper James Earnest Bradfield, North Irish Horse: killed in action in Italy on 28th August 1944, aged 21. He was the only surviving son of Ernest and Phyllis Bradfield of Stockbridge. He is buried in the Montecchio War Cemetery in Italy.

Flying Officer Arthur Edward Easterbee DFC, 272 Squadron Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve: killed in action in Italy on 10th April 1945, aged 35. He was the son of Charles and Mary Easterbee of Stockbridge and husband of Marion Easterbee, who was living in Taunton when he was killed. He is buried in the Udine War Cemetery in Italy. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for gallantry as the navigator in a bomber.

Flying Officer Eric Hamilton Francis DFC
Died 20th January 1944 aged 22

Driver Seymour Hathaway, Royal Army Service Corps. Died in an accident in England, August 1943, aged 28.

Lieutenant Colonel Sir Norman Gray Hill Bt, MC, TD, Royal Army Medical Corps: killed in Italy on 24th February 1944, aged 49. He was the son of Sir Norman Hill, 1st Bt., and of Lady Hill (née Danson), of Stockbridge. He is buried in the Catania War Cemetery in Sicily. He had been awarded the Military Cross in the 1st World War.

Private William Frederick Levy, 2nd Battalion Hampshire Regiment: killed in action in Italy on 3rd September 1944, aged 32. He was the son of George Henry and Gertrude Ellen Levy, of Stockbridge. He is buried in the Gradara War Cemetery in Italy.

Squadron Sergeant Major Rupert Lobb, MM & Bar, MiD, 44th Royal Tank Regiment: killed in action in Belgium on 7th September 1944, aged 26. He was the son of Mrs. Ethel Mary Lobb, of Stockbridge. He is buried in the Heverlee War Cemetery, Leuven, Vlaams-Brabant in Belgium. He was awarded the Military Medal twice for gallantry as a tank commander in the Western Desert and mentioned in despatches.

Corporal Albert Kenneth Lovelock, 7th Battalion Hampshire Regiment: killed in action in Normandy on 18th July 1944, aged 23. He was the son of Arthur Fred and Minnie Kate Lovelock of Stockbridge. He is buried in the Secqueville-En-Bessin War Cemetery in Calvados, France. His uncle, Sydney Lovelock, was killed in France in 1916 and is also named on the Stockbridge War Memorial.

Sergeant (Flight Engineer) George William Mawson, 103 Squadron Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve: killed on 29th July 1944 when his Lancaster bomber was shot down in a raid near Stuttgart, aged 19. He was the son of George Walter and Edith Eleanor Mawson of Stockbridge. He is buried in the Durnbach War Cemetery in Germany.

Sergeant Lionel Herbert Milligan
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve
Died 23rd May 1944 Aged 22

Sub-Lieutenant Jack Arthur Thomas Parker, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and 85 Squadron Royal Air Force: killed while based at the Royal Naval Air Station at Lee-on-Solent on 28th January 1944, aged 23. He was the son of Thomas Farnham Parker and Stella Emily Parker, of Stockbridge. He is commemorated on the Lee-on-Solent War Memorial.

Marine William Simpson, Royal Marines. Died in a training accident, Dorset, August 1944.

Trooper William Sims, 9th Queen's Royal Lancers: died from wounds inflicted in the battle in the Western desert near Tobruk on 27th May 1942, aged 28. He was born in Stockbridge to parents Jonathan and Martha Jane Sims. He left a widow, but we have none of her details. With no known grave, he is commemorated on the War Memorial at El Alamein in Egypt.

State Registered Nurse Dorothy Smith: lost at sea in the early hours of 18th September 1940 aged 26 when the Steam Ship City of Benares was sunk by a German submarine in the Atlantic. Lost with Dorothy were 87 children being evacuated to Canada and 175 adults. She was the daughter of Winifred Emily Smith, and of the late Herbert Henry Smith of Stockbridge.

Cpl Charles Henry Frank Underwood Pioneer Corps: Died 16 January 1945 Age 39

Private Frank Vince, 1st/4th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment: killed in action on 22nd April 1943 in Tunisia, aged 22. He was the son of William and Lucy Vince, of Stockbridge. He is buried in Medjez-El-Bab War Cemetery in Egypt. A member of Frank's extended family, Stanley Vince, was lost at sea in 1916 in the 1st World War. Stanley Vince is also named on the Stockbridge War Memorial.

Stoker 1st Class Thomas Wiltshire, Royal Navy: killed on 21st April 1941 aged 38 in a German bombing raid on HMS Drake, a shore station at Plymouth. He was the son of Thomas and Mary Ann Wiltshire, of Stockbridge. He is buried at Plymouth (Weston Mill) Cemetery.

With thanks to Jill Goodwin for doing much of the research, and to Micki Nadal and John Musters.

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Reflections on... ...belonging to the Mid-Test Benefice's Community

Did you know that 12th May marks the start of 'Mental Health Awareness Week'?

This national event has grown significantly in recent years, with the aim of raising awareness about mental health and encouraging people to support themselves and those around them.

Mental health is a vital part of our overall wellbeing, just like physical health. Yet too often, it's overlooked or under-supported. The Royal College of Psychiatrists have stated that "we urgently need more funding for mental health research. If we're serious about treating mental and physical health equally, funding for mental health research needs to increase exponentially."

Each May, 'Mental Health Awareness Week' focuses on a specific theme to spark national conversation to work together to drive this funding and support. In the past three years, we've seen themes such as 'loneliness', 'anxiety', and 'the movement for our mental health'. The theme for 2025 is especially relevant to us here in the Mid-Test Benefice: 'Community'.

But what does 'community' mean? According to Oxford Languages, a community is "a group of people living/working in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common."

Homo sapiens, aka us, evolved in communities to survive and grow. Physically, we collaborated to manage the dangers all around us, such as the aggressive predators and harsh weather conditions. Thankfully, these are now less prominent (!) but mentally we are more primitive. Our minds work to defend us, such as being alert on the roads for fast drivers or roaming deer, as I experienced recently near Danebury Ring.

Our minds also drive us to connect with others - to be "prosocial". This is essential for building trust in our communities. As Owen Eastwood, global author and performance coach, wrote in his book 'Belonging': "we are tribal. When we feel connected to those around us, we perform to a high standard. Belonging is the bedrock of trust, and trust delivers performance."

The Mid-Test Benefice has so many communities: the churches, the schools, the town/village hall events, WI meetings, local shops and cafés, and many more. We also have our own families and friends, both physical and digital. Don't they give us that vital sense of belonging?

As a qualified MHFAider® (Mental Health First Aider) and instructor, I've supported individuals on the High Street who have shown signs of needing mental support. I'm now talking with local businesses to build a network of trained staff members who want to be there for their colleagues, their customers, and also the wider Mid-Test community outside their offices. We are looking for more people to join - would you be interested?

So, as we approach Mental Health Awareness Week, I invite you to pause and reflect on the amazing community we're part of. Embrace where you feel your own belonging. Maybe you'll make a small prosocial difference - perhaps by checking in on a neighbour, volunteering your time, or simply saying "thank you" when someone offers a kind word or a helping hand on the High Street. Or perhaps you already do this - well done!

If you have any thoughts or questions, feel free to get in touch at paddymelville@hotmail.com.

Wishing you and your community a lovely day and into 2025.
Patrick Melville

May We Speculate?

"Ne'er cast a clout till May is out" is a familiar saying warning us of the treacherous nature of our weather. Few of us need reminding to take a coat or an extra cardi (a clout) when venturing out on an apparently sunny day in May. But does it mean the month of May or, as is more likely as it is more flexible, does it refer to the blossoming of the Hawthorn tree also known as May? The saying in full reads "Button to chin till May be in, cast not a clout till May be out".

Similarly "Here we go gathering nuts in May" from the well-known nursery rhyme has connotations with hawthorn blossom. Rather than the questionable gathering of nuts in May, it is much more likely to refer to the gathering of "knots of May" - the bunches of May blossom used to make garlands for May Day celebrations and for the ever popular May weddings.

Hawthorn has forever been associated with the newness of Spring and the potential for a fresh start and may also explain why the Pilgrim fathers named their boat 'The Mayflower' when they set out for a new life in America.

We are lucky to be surrounded by trees and hedges of this most fragrant Spring arrival so will have no difficulty following the advice of Peter Thompson who writes for the 'Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust' - "Drink it in, as it will not only refresh your heart but your soul as well"

Jennifer Kidd





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Nick Ferretti Rocks!

If you missed Nick Ferretti's sold-out gig at The Grosvenor Hotel on Friday night, 4th April, I am truly sorry for you. Yes, the Grosvenor's eclectically-decorated dining room and mirror ball, which sent out shafts of light darting in all directions, created a certain ambiance for the occasion. And then again, having dinner (served by the Grosvenor's amazing staff who worked their cotton socks off all evening) whilst listening to and watching Nick perform, utterly disproved the adage that 'you can't have your cake', well, dinner, 'and eat it'!

Nick is a singer who is remarkable, not only in the span of genres that he covers, but also in the spin that he brings to those songs. The physicality and passion which he injects into his singing grabs the audience by the neck - you do not so much listen to as inhale his music with him. It needs to be added that Nick was supported on the night by two musicians, themselves at the top of their games, Ross Harris, the drummer and singer, and (*here with Nick*) James Ahwai, the bassist.



Young and old, we all rocked!



Having talked about the performance, let's turn now to Nick Ferretti's story, one that you could not possibly have invented. A New Zealander, he and his wife Tanya decided about ten years ago that they would travel around their country in an ancient bus, two very young boys in tow and earning a living by busking wherever they stopped. They then decided to widen their horizons further by coming to Europe - quickly discovering that the lot of the street performer in cities such as Paris and Barcelona is not a happy one, leading to constant harassment and fines!

However, Mallorca proved much more welcoming, where the family spent a couple of years and Nick worked the streets 8 or 9 hours at a stretch. One such day a man known as the Pop Titan of the German music industry (think Simon Cowell in this country) happened by, evidently liked what he heard and made a recording, unbeknownst to Nick. This led to a musical rollercoaster, with Nick being entered into a German "Superstar" talent show, of which each stage was performed in a different country. He came second, with the fame that followed leading to gigs all over Europe.

And then Covid hit, and the world changed. In the panic that followed, Nick and Tanya decided to seek shelter for their family in England, specifically in Longstock. At this point, an incredibly lucky break occurred, with Nick being asked to do what he thought was a small surprise performance for his German mentor. In reality, he had been entered into the German equivalent of the "Britain's Got Talent" competition. He WON, the prize money giving the family financial security during their first year in England.

I think all would agree that we have some remarkably interesting people amongst our community, none more so than Mr Ferretti. You may like to know that Nick is doing a **fundraiser gig in support of the homeless at the Pumphouse in Winchester on 20th June.**

Nigel Rugman



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I had my annual walking break during the brilliant spell of sunny weather. We walked the complete length of the coastal path around the Isle of Wight! Absolutely stunning but serious amounts of coastal erosion! This got me thinking; the Isle of Wight's most amazing climate generates the very best and tastiest tomatoes all shapes and colours, along with the best garlic. Both are coming into season now!

Here is my most favourite recipe that simply combines the two in all their glory.

Mixed Tomato and Burrata Salad

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

1 x tub Burrata mozzarella cheese
1/2 tsp sea salt flakes
500g mixed variety tomatoes, including baby plum and various coloured tomatoes.
Small bunch fresh chives, chopped
Small bunch fresh parsley, chopped
Large sprig of thyme, stalks removed
1 tsp wholegrain mustard
6 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp cider vinegar
2 cloves of garlic finely chopped
Balsamic vinegar glaze
8 basil leaves

For Croutons

2 slices of day old sourdough bread spread with butter and cut in 1 cm cubes.

Method

Place the chives, parsley, thyme and garlic into a clean jar. Add the mustard, olive oil and vinegar to the jar and shake well to mix.

Slice the larger tomatoes horizontally so you have the seeds equally displayed. Halve the smaller baby plums.

Put the bread cubes in a hot pan and fry until golden but still softer inside. You could air fry these for 2 minutes if preferred.

Arrange the tomato slices on a lovely large plate or shallow bowl. Sprinkle with the sea salt flakes. Spoon the dressing (as it could be quite full of herbs) evenly over the tomatoes and allow to stand for at least 30 minutes at room temperature.

Tear the cheese into bite-sized pieces. It is very soft, almost liquid, so do not worry, and place around the bowl on top of the tomatoes. Arrange the croutons in the spaces between the Burrata.

Next top with a little Balsamic glaze, which is usually in a squeeze bottle and much thicker than

ordinary Balsamic. It is almost like a thin icing and you can crisscross over the salad. Finally tear the basil leaves into pieces and scatter over the salad.

Tips

Tomatoes should not be kept in the fridge, they are far tastier when kept at room temperature.

I have some strawberry balsamic glaze which also works really well.

You can change the herbs to suit yourself, this is very versatile recipe.

Linda Hotchen.

May Traditions - The May Pole

The erection of a tree or pole as the centrepiece of community festivities to celebrate Mayday and the arrival of Spring is a practice observed in various parts of Europe and the Americas. However, the origins of this tradition and dancing around the pole continue to prompt disagreement among scholars.

In the absence of a definitive view, some scholars classify maypoles as symbols of the world axis. Being found mainly in areas of Germanic Europe prior to Christianisation implies they are a relic of Germanic pagan tradition. Indeed, there is evidence that sacred trees and wooden pillars were venerated by pagans across those parts of Europe. However, English historian, Ronald Hutton, argues there is no evidence to connect pagan practices with the maypole tradition and agrees with Swedish scholar, Carl Wilhelm Von Sydow, that maypoles were erected quite simply as 'signs that the happy season of warmth and comfort had returned'.

In Britain, they were first seen, often adorned in garlands, around AD1350-1400 as part of medieval Christian culture. In 1588, villagers in Exeter gathered around the 'summer rod' for feasting and drinking, and Chaucer mentions a large maypole standing in the church at St Andrew Undershaft in London, erected by church parishioners annually.

The rise of Protestantism in the 16th century brought intense disapproval of maypoles and other Mayday practices - they were viewed as idolatrous and all but banished in England. Happily, the tradition was revived after the Restoration when Charles II, the 'Merry Monarch', ensured popular support with the erection of a huge 40metre-high maypole in London's Strand; it remained standing for almost fifty years.

By the 19th century, the maypole, with the addition of dances

involving the intertwining and release of ribbons; torture to many a small child with a tenuous grasp of left and right; became a symbol of Merry England.



Jennifer Kidd

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Views from the Potting Shed

Browsing through my gardening books, looking for inspiration to redesign borders in my garden, I inevitably fell down a horticultural rabbit hole and became sidetracked discovering more about one of the gardening giants of the 19th and early 20th centuries - the man who was probably the great great grandfather of our mixed or herbaceous borders.

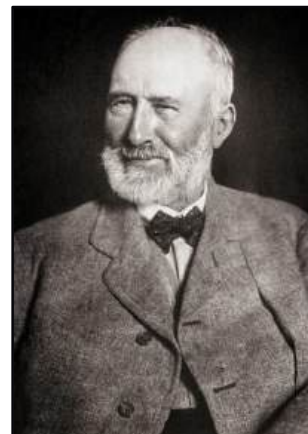
William Robinson, author of the influential 'The English Flower Garden', 'The Wild Garden' and a host of other books and publications, loathed the formal parterres considered *de rigueur* in mid-Victorian England, heavily planted each year with bedding plants and coloured stones in rigid patterns and garish colours which he compared to 'colourful tarts on a pastry cook's tray' and whose descendents we see in formal municipal planting today. He championed instead the use of hardy plants, which did not need hothouses to raise the hundreds of tender, bedding plants grown to complete the complex patterns, and which were thrown away at the end of the summer; he promoted this view extensively and often rather bluntly.

In what could be considered a prophetic comment, in his magazine 'The Garden' he wrote 'We have to deal with the future'. A contemporary of Gertrude Jekyll, with whom he worked extensively, and of William Morris's Arts and Crafts Movement, his relaxed mixed border planting influenced Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson and, later, Christopher Lloyd, some of my gardening heroes. His own property, Gravetye Manor in Sussex, is now a beautiful hotel whose gardens follow the principles laid down by Robinson.

His legacy is all around us: disliking bare soil, he experimented with what we know as 'ground cover' plants; he planted climbing roses through trees and other structures; he forged ahead with woodland planting and incorporating ponds and pond-side planting into gardens, and ensured the borders and woodland areas in winter provided as much interest as possible.

He travelled widely, bringing back seeds and plants from across the globe which could survive in the British climate and whilst in Paris, although finding much to admire in French horticulture, his liberal political views could still lead him to dislike Versailles whose gardens, to him, offered echoes of an absolute monarchy.

Stumbling across references to him in several gardening books, a picture arose of a rather grumpy Irishman (not so in this portrait) who alienated many of his peers but remained good friends with the likes of Gertrude Jekyll, even asking her to buy his gardening boots whilst he was in Egypt.



In gardening terms we have much to thank him for, as his vision was not only for large estates, but for smaller suburban gardens and the relaxed cottage garden style remains a corner stone of British gardens.

So, out of the rabbit hole once more, I find myself not much further along the path to garden planning, but much more aware of the legacy left to us by these visionary gardeners.

Micki Nadal



Saturdays

Just a reminder that our phone lines are not open on Saturday mornings. Stockbridge Surgery is open for booked appointments and medication collection only. If you have an urgent medical need at the weekend, please ring 111.

Hay fever

If you suffer from hay fever, many remedies can be bought at a pharmacy or supermarket without a prescription including *fexofenadine* 120mg tablets for people aged 12 and over. Please try the pharmacy first.

Private referrals

If you have seen a GP about a health problem and would like a private referral instead of an NHS referral, please let the GP know in your consultation. We will need to know which Consultant to direct the referral to. If you have not seen a GP regarding the health problem, please make an appointment first. Please do not make an appointment with a Consultant before the referral has been made.

Inhaler recycling

Unfortunately, the free inhaler recycling scheme has ended. The only schemes in operation currently are ones that have to be paid for.

*Ann Spooner
Practice Manager*



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What one person can do about climate change? . . .

I saw this title on a Ted talk recently (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRQWXFCaOGs>) and watching it brought home to me that we all have power to influence the big corporates whose continued use of fossil fuels is driving climate change. We can 'put our money where our mouth is'! Or as Jesus said: "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (*Matthew 6:21*).

What could that look like in practice?

1. **Your current account.** Do you know the Good Shopping Guide ethical rating for your bank? My account is with Nationwide which is the best-scoring bank/building society on our high streets locally – and they score 85. If you're with, say Barclays or HSBC, who both only score 14/100, you may wish to consider a switch (and other banks may not be much better – check their GSG score!). This isn't difficult as the bank you're moving to will do most of it for you but you will need to advise anyone who pays money into your account.

2. **Do you have any savings?** The most ethical places to put those are with Triodos (who also now offer a current account) and Ecology Building Society who both have whopping scores of 98/100. I've been using them for years. Their savings rates are reasonably competitive and you'll know that your money is being invested in projects that "promote positive social, environmental, and cultural impact, focusing on areas like sustainable energy, food, and social inclusion" (ok, I quoted that from the Triodos website!).

3. **Do you have a pension fund/other investments** and, if so, do you know what your fund is investing in? I chose an ethical fund for my pension fund which means I'm not investing in fossil fuel and armament companies amongst others. If you're not sure, why don't you contact your fund provider, letting them know that you don't want your money in say fossil fuels? – the more people who demand ethical places to invest, the more they will be provided.

4. Did you know that **the company that you get your insurance from** may be one of the biggest market investors alongside pension companies? I worked as a treasurer in industry and much of our financing came from insurance companies wanting somewhere safe and remunerative to put your premiums. Again, writing to them, asking where they invest and suggesting that you'll be looking for insurance from companies that will only invest their money in ethical places in future, is powerful!

Sending a message to fossil fuel companies etc. to clean up their act and really invest in green alternatives is one of the most powerful things you can do for the planet. If they realise that many people will stop investing in them, my hope is that they will have no choice but to do more than the token 'greenwashing' which, sadly, is often all that

is happening now. After all, it's your money and with a little bit of effort you can ensure that it's only doing things that reflect your ethics and values.

Hold the dates:

Saturday **May 24th 10:30am-12:30pm – Parish outing to Andover Trees** to find out more about the project and help with butterfly and other nature surveys. If you'd like to go, please email me at lisalamberti@hotmail.co.uk. The more the merrier.

Sunday **June 15th 2-4pm – Church Count on Nature** event in the churchyard at St Mary's. (See next month's magazine for more info.)

May's good news



By the time you read this there will be baby white storks hatched and preparing to fledge on the Knepp Estate. Last year they had a record 53 chicks fledged – and if you get a chance to see them at Knepp I would thoroughly recommend it – seeing so many large birds in the skies above you is special. A species that was extinct in the UK since the 15th century has now returned! And if you can't make it to Knepp, there's a live webcam on one of the nests so you can see how Bartek and Ania's chicks are getting on. Enjoy!

<https://whitestorkproject.org/live-cam-feed/>

Lisa Trailor

And to add to Lisa's upbeat conclusion, who cannot fail to feel joyful at seeing May blossoming all around us, as in this magnificent Common Pear tree (*Pyrus communis*) on the top of Danebury Hill Fort? It, and the peacefully-shaded Highland Cow below, were captured recently by Peter Hughes.





Stockbridge Parish Council News

Parking Survey

Stockbridge Parish Council would like to say a big thank you to all those who took the time to fill out the Council's parking survey that was distributed in the PC's newsletter and was available from the PC's website. The survey, which showed overwhelmingly, that there is no support for a paid parking regime in Stockbridge from residents and traders, will be used to inform the PC's response to HCC's survey of Stockbridge's parking. Although it is acknowledged by many residents and traders that there are problems with parking in Stockbridge, solving these problems by HCC will cost money and HCC will seek to re-coup the funds through a paid parking regime. It was important to have the evidence to take back to HCC that whilst the problems are acknowledged, a paid parking regime is rejected.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

HCC has now submitted its initial proposal for the post-devolution authorities in Hampshire. This is part of wider Government ambitions to replace the current two-tier structure of local government with a smaller number of unitary (all-purpose) councils. For Hampshire and the Solent region, this means unitary councils will deliver all services currently provided by the 15 councils in the area. In his presentation to Councils at the end of March, Cllr Adams-King (Leader of HCC) admitted there were significant economies of scale in reducing the number of these authorities because larger scale councils deliver immediate and ongoing efficiencies for the public purse and make local government more sustainable.

New Marsh Path Gate

The Council is pleased to announce the installation of a new kissing gate on the Marsh Path. The Council received complaints from residents that the old narrower gate was difficult to get around and near impossible to navigate with a pushchair. The Stockbridge Water Meadows are a very popular open area for walking and the Council felt it was important to make this improvement in order to ensure access for all. The Council used S106 developer money to pay for the work.



New 'On Demand' Public Minibus Service

There is now a new "On Demand" public mini-bus for travel around the Northern Test Valley area, providing affordable, flexible, and convenient travel for people in more rural areas. Trialled by HCC and

operated by Community First, there are no fixed routes or timetables, so minibuses can pick up and drop off passengers anywhere between designated bus stops within the SP10, SP11, and SO20 areas. The service covers around 350 bus stops, providing vital access to local towns, shops, and services, including Andover train and bus stations. The service is **wheelchair-accessible** and allows booking via an app, the web or telephone. Information is available from the PC's website or you can telephone 0333 015 1271 to book.

The Queen Elizabeth Memorial Garden

The Parish Council officially opened the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Garden in early April. Members of the Council, Stockbridge's Town Crier and the community were joined by the Mayor of Test Valley for the official ribbon cutting and opening.



The plants and lawn are now looking established and are growing well. If anyone is interested in volunteering for some "light gardening" duties, please contact the Clerk.

(Photos from Derek Smith and Frances Candler)

The May meeting of Stockbridge Parish Council will be the **Annual Parish Council meeting** when the Chair of the Council is voted for.

This meeting will be held on **Thursday 15th May**, 7:15pm, at the Town Hall. All welcome.

Belinda Baker, Clerk to Stockbridge Parish Council
Email: clerk@stockbridgeparishcouncil.org.uk
Tel: 07770 406607

Church News

St Mary's Longstock

Thank you to those who came and helped with the **Spring Clean**. A fairly small number, but some had been in the church to do their stint before the 5th. There were enough to clean the church and windows and to ensure the churchyard was looking good.

The weather in April was for the most part dry and sunny. This meant the paths along the Test were drying out – and sufficiently so we could have our **Good Friday walk** enjoying the beauty of the River Test. Around 30 adults and one very small child all made their way round. We paused every so often for Bible readings – from *Isaiah* and *Psalms* 22, all prophesying the death of Jesus. The story of the trial, and then crucifixion, came from *John* 19. Very sombre readings to reflect on as we walked.



The 10 dogs who brought their owners were all very well behaved. Lots of photos were taken.

Easter Day dawned fair and the service was well attended. We were given permission to use Reserved Sacraments for our service, which ensured that all who wished to take Easter Communion were able to do this. Everyone stayed for communion,



or for a blessing. Will, our organist played beautifully and the Easter Hymns were sung with gusto. As ever, the flowers decorating the church were magnificent. Thanks to Boo, Carolyn, Charlotte, Sue and Chris.



The **Easter Egg hunt** was successful, although it is possible that one or two eggs may still be there waiting to be found.

The **Annual Meeting** had not taken place at the time of writing this, but I hope it will be well attended.

A few new dates for the diary:

We plan to hold a **'Thank you' day** on Thursday **22 May** 2025 for all the volunteers who faithfully help with keeping the church open and looking good. A letter will come out for the bell ringers, flower arrangers, church open and closers, cleaners, sidespersons and those who help financially. This will be entirely informal so that Joe and PCC members can thank everyone and raise a glass of wine or fruit juice and enjoy fellowship and food together. 6.30pm in the church.

On **June 21** we will hold a **'Vicar's Tea Party'** and gift day. 3.30 – 5.30pm. Venue to be confirmed. We hope for fine weather and a chance to come together on what we hope will be a fine sunny day!

5 July, 6.30 – 9.30pm we will have a fund-raising **Barn Dance** in Longstock Village Hall. We have booked musicians and a caller from Woodsiders, so dust off your dancing shoes. There will be a Ploughman's supper. Hope to see many of you there.

Please make a date of the **Village Fete** – Saturday **30 August**. All the usual fun and frolics.

Harvest will be on **12 October** this year and after the Harvest Service, the supper will be a 'Lamb Roast'. Please make a note of this date.

The last fundraiser of the year will be a **quiz** in the Village Hall on **22 November**.

If you have any queries please contact Maddie Hedley, Churchwarden, 810284 / mjh723@btinternet.com or the Benefice Administrator, Lois Opperman at midtestbenefice@gmail.com.

Please see page 2 for contact details for Revd Joe.

St Mary's Service dates are on page 31

The website is available at Midtestbenefice.2day.uk
Maddie Hedley

The Column for April

Baptisms

6 April 2025 at 2.00pm. The Baptism of Archie Warren Moore at St Mary's Church, Longstock

27 April at 2.30am. The Baptism of Willa Lloyd at St Peter's Church, Stockbridge.

There were no weddings or funerals in April.

The funeral for the late Simon Green, of Barleydown, Longstock, will take place at 2.30pm on Thursday 1 May at St Mary's Church, Longstock.

Church News

St Peter's and Old St Peter's Stockbridge



Reflecting back to April and the glorious sunny weather, we were treated to the annual Bean Car Daffodil Run on 6 April. Each year vintage cars manufactured before 1940 gather in our village for a 'pit stop' – generally for coffee – and provide a spectacular display of classic cars many displaying daffodils on their cars or on themselves and this Riley was no exception parked alongside St Peter's.

I am not sure whether the congregation numbers at 11 o'clock Communion Service were augmented or not but a certain regular member of our congregation was unable to park, took her car home, and rushed back on foot!



'The Crucifixion'

On Good Friday, Sarah Seymour our organist and choir director conducted a Mid-Test Benefice Choir in St Peter's for John Stainer's 'Crucifixion', first performed in 1887 and intended to be accessible to parish choirs. It is still a highly popular cantata that I personally have enjoyed for well over 50 years.

Professional soloists, Tenor Toshi Ogita, Bass Lawrence Gillians and Organist Jack Redman created a vibrant and immersive re-enactment of the Crucifixion of Jesus along with a choir of nearly 40 from all areas of our Benefice. This was our Meditation for Good Friday. Sarah Seymour has always loved this cantata and with her drive, infectious enthusiasm and personal contacts ensured an uplifting experience for all 190 attending. The way the story is told is stirring and the language used speaks to us in a way that all can understand.

Sarah Seymour joined Stockbridge church as organist in February 2024 and has made a great contribution to our hitherto small choir. It has grown in size and stature and is appreciated by all who come to St Peter's. She is also a teacher of singing and piano and has always had a love of sacred music. We are so very lucky to have her.

Toshi Ogita opened the work, his warm and graceful voice announcing the arrival of Jesus and his disciples at Gethsemane. Lawrence Gillians' rich powerful voice followed with the Agony. The choir,

with many very able voices, was accompanied by the hugely talented Jack Redman, not only an organist but composer of multiple works.



Photo - Nigel Rugman

The congregation participated, partly conducted and partly encouraged by Sarah, giving a strong feeling of individual involvement particularly appreciated just as John Stainer intended.

The silence at the conclusion of the cantata was palpable. All of us, soloists, choir and congregation had experienced something moving and very special.

Several members of the Benefice Choir (Geoff Cox, Richard Robinson and Bruce Williams) are also involved with other choirs on a wider scale and will be joining seven choirs at the Anvil in Basingstoke to sing Verdi's 'Requiem' on 10 May.

'Ride and Stride' Event Fundraising Success

David Williams, our Churchwarden organiser, has received an invitation from Hampshire and Islands Historic Churches Trust to a celebration in Winchester Cathedral on 19 May to receive an award as the Highest Fundraising church at the 2024 Ride and Stride Event. Last year, Geoff Cox, Catherine Williams and David and Janet Williams did the 'striding' and raised about £2000 + gift aid. David and Janet have handled this rôle for many years and a new volunteer is needed urgently. Please consider whether you could help here!

Annual Flower Festival

Another major fundraising event to look forward to in early May is our Annual Flower Festival. This year it takes place on 2,3,4,5 May in St Peter's as usual, with the theme 'One Moment in Time'. This is always a delight, masterminded by the indomitable Angela McMeekin, whose team never fails to impress with imaginative and impressive displays. Sadly, I cannot take part this year as I shall be visiting Nôtre Dame to see the restoration after the fire. I was in Paris in 2019 just after the fire, seeing the cathedral still smoking and took that image as my theme for the Flower Festival in St Peter's that summer.

Teas on the church lawn will be organised by Catherine Williams and Alison Vialou-Clark with the usual willing team on hand to help! The Band will

Church News

be playing and all we need is the sun to shine. Do support this popular event. Free entry and donations very welcome – so easy now we have a card machine.

Looking Ahead:

Friday to Monday 2–5 May Flower Festival (see above)

Wednesday 7 May 'Exploring Theology'. As a follow-up to the Benefice Lent Course, Winchester Diocese are funding a 6-session journey into the core of theological ideas. For further information Email Frances.terhaar@winchester.anglican.org to register your interest.

Thursday 8 May. A short Service of Remembrance at 10.30am to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Thursday 29 is Ascension Day

Sunday 8 June Whit Sunday, Day of Pentecost.

Chrissie Quayle

Prayer for May

Thank you for the recent sunshine and for the wonderful Easter celebrations.

You are the Risen Christ and we now await with hope for your coming Spirit at Pentecost.

We pray for our preparation for this during May.

Lord, whilst we thank you for all the good things in our lives we can never forget the trials and fear of war.

It is hard to find peace when one side does not want to work for this. We pray for your love and wish for peace to enter the hearts of all those at war.

We pray for the children and families during conflict that they can find shelter, food and water. We pray for the ambulances on their way to Ukraine and for all the charities working in Sudan, Darfur and the Middle East.

At home, we pray for financial stability.

We pray for the VE Day celebrations on 8 May, thankful that that war ended together with the need for sacrifice.

Lord, you made a beautiful world. Help us look after it in the right way, making sure the oceans and rivers are not poisoned, that resources are not plundered and that we are good stewards.

Lord, thank you for the rainbow.
Amen

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May Services for

Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford

4th May (Easter 3)

08.00 **Leckford** Holy Communion BCP

09.30 **Longstock** All Age Worship

11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist

8th May Victory in Europe Day

10.30 **Stockbridge War Memorial** Act of Remembrance

11th May (Easter 4)

08.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

09.30 **Longstock** Parish Eucharist

11.00 **Stockbridge** All Age Service

18th May (Easter 5)

09.30 **Longstock** Morning Worship

11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist

18.00 **Leckford** Evensong

25th May (Easter 6)

11.00 **Stockbridge** Morning Worship

29th May (Thursday) Ascension Day

19.00 **St Mary Broughton** Ascension Day Service and Commissioning of PCCs.

From the Rural Dean

Very soon all of your local Churches will have had their Annual Meetings when churchwardens and members of the Parochial Church Council will have been elected. If you have been thinking about getting more involved in your local church this year, now is the time! There are bound to be new churchwardens this year.

I hope that you had a splendid Easter and even, perhaps, a Holiday. By the time you read this, the Schools will have been back for a while and by the end of May it will be Half Term. Thursday 8th May will be the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day. Do see if you can find people who can remember the celebrations. My memory doesn't go back that far (!) but I will still be able to join in a prayer or two:

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those men and women who have died in active service, particularly in the Second World War, whose sacrifice brought Victory in Europe. As we honour their courage and cherish their memory, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever.

Amen

Rural Dean, James

Revd James Pitkin - revjamespitkin@gmail.com



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