

SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN, BUCKLAND

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BUCKLAND PARISH MAGAZINE

December 2025

Dear Friends,

We're all familiar with the saying, 'A dog is for life, not just for Christmas.' It was first used to remind people that caring for a pet is a lasting commitment, not just a seasonal impulse. But the truth behind it runs much deeper. Love, in all its forms, isn't meant to be a once-a-year event. The care we offer to one another, a visit, a phone call, a listening ear, is something that needs feeding, nurturing, and attention, just like the family dog or the garden we tend.



It's easy, isn't it, to do a burst of goodwill in December? We're encouraged to be kind, generous, charitable, and rightly so. Yet once the festivities fade, it's tempting to retreat back into our rou-

tines, and forget that kindness was ever meant to be a way of life rather than a holiday theme.

Advent, gives us a chance to remember that. Those four weeks before Christmas, invite us to slow down and look deeper. It's a time not only of waiting for the coming of Christ, but of preparing our hearts to make space for him and in doing so find greater space for those around us who need our care and love too. Advent isn't just about candles and carols, as beautiful as they both are, but about attention: noticing what and who is around us. The neighbour who rarely is seen anymore. The person from church who hasn't been for a while. The friend who keeps saying they're fine, but whose eyes and body language tell another story.

Caring, like faith, is rarely tidy. It takes patience, consistency, and sometimes the courage to risk being awkward. It might mean inviting someone for coffee even if

they say no the first few times. It might mean offering to give someone a lift to church each week and social events or simply stopping to chat with someone who's lonely. These small things, and they really are small, are what builds communities where love feels real and hope can breathe and grow.

When we reach Christmas and hear again of that precious baby born in Bethlehem, surrounded by animals and ordinary people, we're reminded that God doesn't wait for perfection before showing up. The shepherds were unwashed, the stable wasn't spotless, the three wise men pitched up several years too late and Mary and Joseph were far from home and family. Yet right there, in that humble place, God's love became flesh.

Perhaps that's the heart of the message this season offers: that holiness doesn't arrive wrapped in shiny paper, but in everyday acts of care. When we offer kindness, however small, we echo the love that first reached out to us in Christ, a love that came to dwell among us and still does.

So this Advent and Christmas, let's keep our hearts and our eyes open, for the light that still shines in dark places, and for the people and creatures who need our gentleness. May we care with patience, love with constancy, and give with joy, not only for a season, but for life.

Wishing you and all those you love a blessed Advent and Christmas

Pru x

DECEMBER EVENTS

- 1 Dec, 7.15pm. Talk: The Real Dad's Army (Local WW2 Home Guard), DLHG, p.30
- 6 Dec, 10.30am to 12.30. Advent Quiet Day, Buckland Reading Room, p.6
- 6 Dec, 2.15-4pm. Christmas Wreath Workshop, Brockham. BGHS, see Nov. p.29
- **6 Dec, 3.30pm.** Christmas Concert, United Reform Dorking, Ladybirds Choir, p.30
- 10 Dec, 7.30pm. Carols for Christmas, B&B Choral Soc, St Michael's Betchworth, p.28
- 13 Dec, 6.00pm. Flute ensemble (A2Z) Christmas concert. St Mary's Buckland, p.9
- 19 Dec, 6.00pm. Carols on Buckland Green (open to all), p.7
- 21 Dec, 12 noon-2pm. Christmas Drinks & Nibbles. Reading Rm, B&B Soc, p.27

JANUARY 2026 EVENTS

30 Jan, 7pm. New Year Quiz and Supper, Betchworth Memorial Hall, B&B Soc, p.27

CHURCH SERVICES—DECEMBER

Date	St Mary's Buckland	St Michael's Betchworth
30 November Advent 1		10 am Parish Communion Matthew 24: 36-44
7 December Advent 2		10 am Parish Communion Matthew 3:1-12
14 December Advent 3	10 am Iona Service Matthew 11: 2-11	
17 December (Wed.)	7pm Nine Lessons & Carols (all the family welcome)	
21 December Advent 4	10 am Parish Communion Luke 1:67-79	5pm Nine Lessons & Carols
24 December Christmas Eve	4pm Candlelight Service (for younger children & families) 9.3opm. 'Not the Midnight Mass' (for older children & Adults)	
25 December Christmas Day		10 am Family Communion Luke 2: 1-20 (for all the family)
28 December Christmas 1	10 am Parish Communion Matthew 2: 13-23	

Special Christmas Services are shaded!



Advent Quiet Morning





Saturday 6th December

> 10.30-12.30
in the Reading Room

coffee and cake included

"CAROLS"

ON

BUCKLAND GREEN



Friday 19th of December meet at 6pm (weather permitting)
Carols at 6.30pm
Refreshments provided,
please bring a torch along with your yule tide spirit
collection in aid of
"St Mary's Churchyard Trust

ALL WELCOME



NEXT MONTH ...

We celebrate a Centenary of the Buckland Parish Magazine, the first issue of which appeared in January 1926. It will be a 'bumper issue with over 70 pages—presented in two parts ...

- About TEN articles 'with a 1926 perspective' of Buckland from a number of contributors
- Our 'normal' magazine for January 2026.. If you would like to make a contribution to the 1926 retrospective, there is still time, but I will need contributions no later than 5pm FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER.

For regular monthly contributors, the copy deadline is FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER, a little earlier

than usual to enable the printer to deliver before the Christmas closure.

Ed.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2025. Friday 12 December, 12 noon—Buckland Reading Room

The Buckland Christmas Lunch will be held on Friday the 12th December in the Buckland Reading Room. Doors open at 12 noon and lunch will be served about 12.30 ish......We look forward to seeing all our friends to help us celebrate Christmas 2025 but we do ask that you phone or e-mail Liz or myself to let us know you would like to come then we will know how many brussel sprouts to cook. (but other vegetables will be available) The number for Liz is 01737 221444 or for Carol it is 01737 247399. See you on the 12th December.

Carol Leeds

COVER IMAGE—'The pleasures of forgetting to Lock up'

As someone on the Church locking—up rota who sometimes gets distracted from the task, and remembers at 7.45pm, it was a great pleasure to capture this picture of the church with floodlights and a full moon in late September. Ed.



BUCKLAND & BETCHWORTH BELLRINGERS REPORT

Last month Buckland bellringers rang for Remembrance Sunday with the bells half muffled. Did you notice the different sound? The bells ring out clear at handstroke then are muffled at backstroke, making an echo. It is traditional to muffle the bells for a sad occasion, as a mark of respect.



As we look forward to ringing for the Christmas services the bells will ring out clear, joyfully, as suits the festive celebrations. We particularly enjoy ringing for Christmas services, and especially for the candlelit carol service, with small tea lights marking the pathway to the candlelit church. Various carols and Christmas music mention bells, including Ding Dong Merrily on High. Jingle Bells, and Carol of the Bells. Many Christmas poems include bells, notably Betjeman's Christmas which begins 'The bells of waiting Advent ring' and Longfellow's I heard the bells on Christmas Day. The first and last verses of Wilcox's Christmas Fancies describe Christmas bells:

Christmas Fancies by Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919)

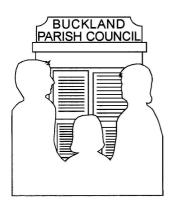
When Christmas bells are swinging above the fields of snow,
We hear sweet voices ringing from lands of long ago.
And etched on vacant places,
Are half forgotten faces
Of friends we used to cherish, and loves we used to know —
When Christmas bells are swinging above the fields of snow.

When Christmas bells are pelting the air with silver chimes,
And silences are melting to soft, melodious rhymes,
Let Love, the world's beginning,
End fear and hate and sinning;
Let Love, the God Eternal, be worshipped in all climes
When Christmas bells are pelting the air with silver chimes.

Happy Christmas, from the Buckland Bellringers Julie Beale

Buckland Matters

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE



Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The Government recently wrote to our district and county council laying out plans for unitary government. The eastern area of Surrey County Council, which currently comprises Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, Tandridge, Epsom and Ewell will be combined into one Unitary Area to be called East Surrey.

At the moment Buckland is served by: three MVDC Councillors Simon Budd, Paula Keay and Paul Potter, whose ward is Buckland, Betchworth, Brockham, Boxhill and Headley; and one SCC Councillor Helyn Clack whose division is Dorking Rural.

Elections will be held on Thursday 7th May 2026 to appoint two Unitary Councillors for each of the Surrey County Council divisions to East Surrey Unitary Authority – which will initially operate as a shadow authority to the District and County authorities in the run up to the change.

Buckland will be within **Dorking Rural** alongside Betchworth, Brockham, Charlwood, Headley, Leigh, Mickleham and Newdigate parishes, the presently non-parished communities of Boxhill and Westhumble and some areas of Tyrells Wood and Givons Grove (south of Leatherhead). Surrey County Council (SCC) and Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) will continue to operate as separate entities and our MVDC and SCC Councillors will continue as our Councillors until the 31 st March 2027. The Unitary Councillors elected in May 2026 will serve on a shadow authority which will replace SCC and MVDC with effect from the 1st April 2027. The Unitary Councillors elected in May 2026 will serve as our two elected East Surrey Unitary Authority Councillors until May 2031.

2026 Annual Parish Meeting

Please keep the evening of Monday 23rd March 2026 free to attend the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting. The meeting provides an opportunity for you to hear topical updates which will include the latest insights into how you could be affected by the Local Government Reorganisation.

Buckland Parish Council owned grit bins

Council owns three grit bins and allocates funds to allow for one replenishment of the grit bins each year. The grit is made available for use on public rights of way and in public spaces close to the location of each grit bin - please do not use the content of these grit bins on private paths or drives or transport it elsewhere in the village.

If you do decide to spread grit, please use it sparingly – SCC Highways advises a small amount will be effective, suggests you use a spade or shovel to spread the grit thinly and evenly across the pavement and a shovel full of grit will be sufficient to treat 20-30 square metres.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk, parishcouncil@bucklandsurrey.org.uk 01737 448023

Celebrating 30 Years as Custodians of Buckland Windmill



Buckland windmill was 're-discovered' in 1995 and subsequently restored in the period from 1996 to 2004. Duncan Ferns joined the 'Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 30 years ago and during his period of ownership, the Society has given a lot of advice and guidance for the restoration and maintenance of the windmill.

In October 2025, a 6-page illustrated article was published in the SPAB journal, 'Mill News', detailing the restoration and maintenance over 30 years. With permission of SPAB and the Buckland village website, the article is now available to read/download on the village website at:

www.bucklandsurrey.org.uk/village-history/buckland-windmill

Duncan Ferns

DECEMBER NATURE NOTES What does Winter Mean?

As a child I remember snow and ice on the ground for weeks during winter, but it doesn't seem to happen now. According to the met office, compared to when I was a child 70 odd years ago, winters in the UK are on average about 1°C warmer. This warming shows up most clearly in milder nights and fewer very cold spells. Frosts are



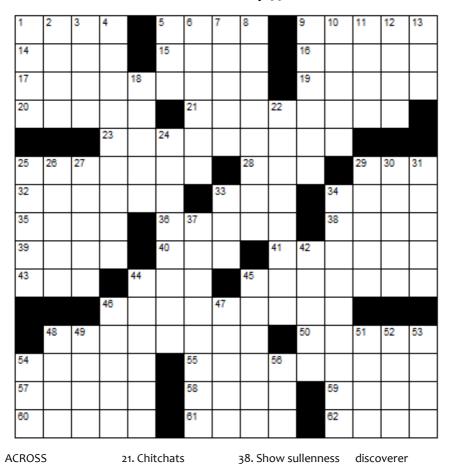
less frequent, about 10 less frosty days per year compared to my childhood. Winters are also getting wetter and stormier. Winter precipitation has increased by about 15% on average for UK winters over the last century and the 21st century already contains many of the wettest winter half-years on record. This raises flood and soil-saturation risks in the Mole Valley. Snow is also rarer. When cold outbreaks do come, heavy snowfall can still occur, but overall snow-cover frequency and depth have declined.

Over the past century, Surrey's winters have softened and grown wetter, reshaping the quiet rhythms of the county's natural life. Hard frosts that once sealed the soil and checked insect pests are rarer now, so slugs, aphids and fungal diseases can thrive through the season. Milder air tempts bulbs to push their shoots up early, birds to sing before spring, and insects to emerge sooner — sometimes only to be caught out by a late cold snap. Wetter ground means soggy fields, flooded paths and shallow-rooted trees more prone to windthrow when storms sweep in. At the same time, fungi, mosses, lichens and wetland species find new opportunities in longer damp spells, while waterfowl linger on swollen rivers and flooded meadows. Surrey's winter landscape is becoming less about deep dormancy and more about resilience and adaptability to a changing climate.

One thing that will never change, unless the earth's tilt changes, are the glorious December sunrises and sunsets. They carry a majesty that belongs only to the winter months when the sun's light filters through the atmosphere at a low angle, bathing the landscape in a soft, golden glow.

Norman Jackson, 4Bs WhatsApp Nature Group, 07810 462403

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD Solution p.33



1. Hauls
5. Declines
Ledger entry
14. French for
"State"
15. Breezy
16. Genus of heath
17. Showroom
19. Subsequently
20. Ending in a
piercing point

23. Expose to
radiation
25. Puts on
28. Half of two
29. Superior limb
32. Scheme
33. Greek letter
34. Double-reed
woodwind
35. "Darn!"
36. Beginning

39. Easter flower
40. Animal doctor
41. Ascribe
43. Type of tree
44. Label
45. Two-wheeler
46. Predestination
oelievers
48. Newsletter
o River horse

discoverer
55. Consumption
57. Extraterrestrial
58. V V V
59. Otherwise
60. Explosion
61. Makes a mistake
62. Adjusts

54. Radium

DOWN 1. Not more 2. Mormon state 3. Big bash 4. Infertility 5. Hearing organ 6. Methane from plant matter 7. Vast 8. Symbiotic organism 9. Erase	10. Eliminate 11. Ship post 12. Frosts, as a cake 13. Driveway surface 18. Bit of parsley 22. Enthusiasts 24. Refurbish 25. Confuse 26. Danger 27. Sacred hymn 29. Give or take 30. Itinerary	31. Metric unit of length 33. Estimated (abbrev.) 34. Antonyms 37. Not positive 42. Wool eaters 44. Ability 45. Balladeer 46. Travels by plane 47. Protective covering	48. Male cow 49. Murres 51. Heap 52. Hitching place 53. 1111 54. Taxi 56. S
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TERMS OF REDUNDANCY – PART THREE (they keep coming, after Parts 1 & 2 in September & October)

From Peter Button, of Shagbrook, Buckland:

Wind farmers are disgusted
Chemists are dispensed with
Harbour Masters are deported
Naked bathers are denuded
Drivers of Swedish are cars are devolved
Whiskey Drinkers are distilled
Horse riders are dismounted
Princes (and toilet fitters) are dethroned
Thank you Peter!

Poets are diversed, sometimes inversed BBQ cooks are, just plain and simple, fired Cobblers are given the boot Estate Agents are locked out Fishermen are gutted

The lucky ones:

Guillotine operators are lucky, they get a severance payment Sailors are lucky, when their ship comes in, they just cruise on Greengrocers are lucky, they get a months Celery, and four leeks in lieu of notice Preachers and Professors are lucky, they carry on their jobs, but don't get paid

SUDOKU

Grade: Medium. Solution on p.33

	5					3	7	
			2	7	6			
7					1			
2		3		1				
		7				6		
				3		4		5
			1					9
			5	9	4			
	6	2					1	

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WORDSEARCH— Did the Old Testament expect Jesus to Come?

Born Crucified Virgin Immanuel Pierce Bethlehem Hands Ruler Feet Gloat Israel David Rise King Dead Just Abandon Right Decay Realm Healing Blind Deaf Lame

Mute

H L T H G I R T B A L E I M A K A U T J U S T R Y I I M L N U A T C R M O N L E E E D O O D B U G O R H U R A S E L U T I D D E N I G R I V G E G N I L A E H N S P S E M A V H M L D D L I H B F B A T M J M E R E O I E A D E I F I C U R C A E D E B L A B A N C T I T I E D E A D Y D E T F

Solution on p.33

A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION An opinion piece by Father Richard Rohr (Franciscan & Author)

My colleague, James Finley, works with us at the Centre for Action and Contemplation in Alberquerque, New Mexico. Here, he leads us through a meditation to help us experience the immediate presence and intimacy of God's love and those who have joined God before us:

I invite you to imagine that you are sitting alone in the middle of a well-lit room. There are no windows and no furniture in the room other than the chair you are sitting in.... As you sit there alone in silence, the light in the room slowly begins to dim. As the room dims, a light on the other side of the wall you are facing slowly becomes brighter and brighter. You begin to realize that the wall you are facing is not really a solid wall, as you had imagined, but is rather a gossamer veil that is becoming increasingly translucent in the light that is shining through it, filling the darkness of your room with an unfamiliar light.

In the light shining out from the other side of the veil you see God, the angels, and the saints. They are all laughing and waving at you, letting you know how delighted they are that you can see them. You start laughing and waving back at them. Then God, the angels, and the saints pass through the veil to join you, rendering the room radiant with communal joy and delight in which your very presence begins to glow with the presence of God. Illumined and transformed in this way, God and the angels and saints carry you with them into heaven, just on the other side of the veil, where all are dwelling who have died and crossed over into God. Then God and the angels and saints carry you with them back through the veil, back to the room, now aglow with heavenly wonder and delight. Then, once again, they transport you back into the celestial realm, and then back again into the room....

You are left once again in the familiarity of your earthly experience of yourself sitting there alone in the room, facing the wall. But while everything is the same as before, everything is, in an interior way, radically different. For you now realize that while, yes, it is true that, on one level, the wall you are facing really is a wall, ... yet in the afterglow of the unitive experience that has just graced your life, you now know in the depths of your awakened heart that, ultimately speaking, the wall is no wall at all.... You have been graced with a fleeting experience of being immersed in God-immersed-in-you in a boundless communion that utterly transcends, even as it utterly permeates, the darkness and fragmentations of this world.

MUSIC IN DORKING—DECEMBER



1st at 8.00, Step into Christmas, Dorking Halls, 6th at 3.30, Ladybirds Choir, Dorking (see p. XX) 6th at 7.30, Brockham Choral Society, St Martin's church, £15

7th at 3.00, Grimethorpe Colliery Band ,Dorking Halls 9th at 7.30, A West End Christmas, Dorking Halls, 10th at 7.15, Nutcracker ballet screening, Dorking Halls 11th at 7.30, Andre Rieu concert screening, Dorking Halls 13th at 1.30, Andre Rieu concert screening, Dorking Halls 14th at 2.00, Nutcracker ballet screening, Dorking Halls 17th at 6.30, Dorking Choral Society, St Joseph's church

With Christmas approaching, our local choirs are offering their Christmas concerts, complete with carols and other festive music. The Dorking Choral Society, conducted by Daniel Mahoney, has a concert of Christmas carols, including some favourites for the audience to join in. Brockham Choral Society's Christmas concert includes music by Handel, John Rutter, Cecilia McDowall and Leroy Anderson, along with some carols. The choir will be joined by the Martineau Brass Quintet and by guest soloist Alex Wright from Trinity Boys Choir, who recently appeared at Glyndebourne.

The Ladybirds choir Christmas Concert is advertised on p. xx

The Dorking Halls has a number of Christmas shows and screenings, including Step into Christmas, a spectacular Christmas concert to start the festive season, A West End Christmas presented by the Show Choir and guest soloists, two screenings of Tchaikovsky's Christmas ballet The Nutcracker from the Royal Opera House, and two screenings of Andre Rieu's Christmas concert, with his brilliant Johann Strauss orchestra playing waltzes and carols.

With so much Christmas music on offer, there should be something for everybody. Happy Christmas!

Ian Codd

Christmas isn't a season. It's a feeling

Edna Ferber (American Author, 1885-1968)







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Features

GARDENING NOTES Christmas gifts for budding gardeners



At the end of another gardening year, December brings the focus on Christmas. Perhaps we are fortunate that gardens are dormant and most tasks are general maintenance and preparation for the new year to come. Once you have chosen your Christmas tree and adorned your home with decorations, thoughts turn to Christmas gifts. So here are a few ideas:

- For young and aspiring gardeners, a few packets of simple-to-grow flower and vegetable seeds should give inspiration. Many can be sown directly into the ground in the spring and will need minimal care.
- A basic "how to" gardening book will give tips and many ideas. Charity shops are a great source of relevant books. For more seasoned gardeners, some of the best ideas can come from long-forgotten suggestions from the 60s and 70s. They make for a good winter read, although it is interesting to note one of the main changes is the use of some long-banned harmful chemicals.
- Surely there is no gardener who would not welcome a new or extra pair of pruners? Or for larger stems, maybe loppers or a pruning saw? Likewise, toasty thermal gloves or thin seedling gloves and all in between are an excellent stocking filler.
- A self-made hamper of garden sundries, using a mix of useful goodies such as twine, labels, feeds and hand tools, all packaged in a terracotta pot.
- Statues and stoneware will add character and form to any garden. It may be a birdbath to encourage wildlife or a large urn to fill with seasonal plants.
 Figurines and animals are a long-lasting gift which will mature with age.
- A seasonal planted arrangement, flowering houseplant or bowl of bulbs will always be appreciated for a burst of indoor colour. For outdoors, camellias will be bursting with bud in December a wonderful gift.
- If you are still stumped for the perfect present, an HTA garden gift card is an easy gift for friends and family to receive and to give to you!

David Hogg, Buckland Nurseries

Small Surrey Churches - Part Ten

The Heath Church, Reigate



- A 'Hidden Treasure' just 500 meters from Buckland's Parish boundary
- Restored and active church, with beautiful simple interior
- Built in 1907, as a Tin Tabernacle a 'temporary structure!'

Turning off the A25 onto Flanchford Road, with the Heath cricket pitch on your right, you pass a row of attractive houses on the left. At the end of the houses, a track on the left leads to The Heath Church. It is truly hidden, and you would be forgiven for not knowing it is there.

The site was donated by W H Nash, and the building funded by two benefactors, one being Sir George Livesey, who owned Shagbrook, on Reigate Road, Buckland, and the second, Frederick Horne, who owned Colley Manor on Colley

Lane, Reigate. The building had a timber frame and corrugated iron cladding and was described as being 'of a temporary character'. From the outset it was designated a chapel-of-ease, a 'daughter' church of St Mary's Reigate, and this relationship continues today, 118 years later.

The interior features a sky-blue roof, a large chandelier installed in 1982, from St Mary's Reigate, and an excellent stained glass feature window, dating from 1971. This was designed and made by Keith New (d. 2012) who had also designed windows in the cathedrals of Coventry, Bristol and Sheffield. The window features seven spheres representing the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: namely Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, Knowledge, Piety and Fear.



Interior of The Heath Church, Reigate



The East Window, 1971. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit by Keith New

The church has gas central heating installed in 2002 and the current organ was installed in 2005. Extensive repairs to the structure were made in the period from 2013 to 2015, including strengthening the foundations, replacing the iron cladding with a similar coated corrugated steel, new windows and roof tiles.

From 2019 to 2021, improvements included a rebuilt extension, housing a welcoming kitchen with tables for refreshments and new comfortable chairs.

The condition of the church has varied over the years, but with the improvements over the past 15 years or so, the church is currently in excellent condition and it has a long life ahead, no longer as a 'temporary structure', but as a well restored and unusual building, which is thriving with well attended weekly services.

I visited for a service earlier in the year and was made very welcome. The church is locked outside it's hours of use, but it is definitely worth a visit.

References

Lambell, Mary, 2015. The Heath Church, Reigate—A Short History. 8pp

ST. JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL Your first parish

The Rectory, St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

And so, the old year draws to a close, and you are packing to move to your own first parish in January. Let me give you some final words of advice. Curates, you will have noticed, are forgiven everything. I hope you have appreciated this period of grace, because come 1st January, all that will change. You will then become responsible for everything that goes wrong



in your church. You must be able to mend leaking taps, shovel snow, arrange flowers, mow the churchyard and run jumble sales. You will be expected to know the moment someone falls ill – preferably the day before. In addition, they will expect you to preach profound sermons - in seven minutes flat, and to lead a life of prayerful solitude while being the life and soul of the parish. From the day your predecessor left, he will have turned into a saint. You will be their new disappointment. Be assured that whatever you do, you will always disappoint someone.

?

Be prepared for phone calls at 3am telling you that someone has left a light on in church, and shouldn't you go turn and it off? You will be asked about car parking arrangements for the October Harvest Service by mid-January, while hymns for the 9 Lessons and Carols will be required by early summer. I suggest you buy in extra pullovers, overcoats and scarves for life in your vicarage. A good number of mouse-traps may well come in useful too. Welcome to your new life of an incumbent.

Expect that each Sunday morning, as you prepare for the service, there will be a straggling queue of people who want to tell you an astonishing variety of things: there is a large cobweb 30 feet up over the pulpit, they don't like the second hymn on the board, the flowers look rough this week, there may be a bat in the vestry, some child has left a shoe in the back porch, and the car park has broken glass in it.

You may find this a distraction as you prepare for a worship service. But remember that at least they have bothered to come to church at all. In my experience, congregations are always irritating, but at least they do take up a lot of space, and that looks good in the pews. The church would look empty without them.

Your loving uncle, Eustace



IONA

Part Three Iona Abbey from 1100–1900 & the Benedictines

In Part Two (October), we explained how Columba established the monastery in 550 AD, and following his death, the remaining monks suffered several Viking Raids. The last of these raids slaughtered 68 monks resident on Iona, at what is now known as 'Martyr's Bay, on Iona close to the Abbey'. The remaining few monks fled back to Ireland in 880 AD and Iona Abbey was abandoned.

In 1114 the island of Iona was seized by the King of Norway, who held it for fifty years before Somerled recaptured it, and invited renewed Irish involvement in 1164: this led to the construction of the central part of the cathedral in 1190.

Benedictine Monastery 1203 - 1570

Ranald, Somerled's son, now the Lord of the Isles, in 1203 invited the Benedictine order (French Catholics) to establish a new monastery. This was built on the site of St Columba's first monastery, and the size of the new larger building was the size of the present-day Abbey. The Abbey was a success in this period and in the 1300's there were additional enlargements by the Macdonald family, Lords of the Isles, who considered it their spiritual seat and the church was their 'Cathedral of the Isles'.

The monks of Iona adopted the Rule of Saint Benedict as their guiding text in 1203, when Pope Innocent III confirmed the monastery's possessions and granted papal protection to the monks from any improper interference, for which the Papal church in Rome was paid two gold coins per year. However, this 'protection' was practically only with 'prayers', as just the following year, there was yet another battle for control of the Abbey ...

The site was raided by a force led by two bishops from the Irish Augustinian monasteries. This was a response by Ireland's Columban clergy to the loss of its connections and influence at this significant site founded by St Columba, and anger at the site following Benedictine rules, rather than Augustinian rules.² So, even in these early times their were battles between factions of Christianity following different rules.

The Augustinian Irish folk did not win their takeover plan, and the Benedictine rules persisted for around 300 years until the Scottish Reformation.

Reformation & Destruction 1570

The Scottish Reformation was the process in the 16th century when Scotland broke from the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and became officially Protestant, establishing the Presbyterian Church of Scotland (the Kirk). This pivotal period, culminating in 1560, involved religious conflict, Scottish Lords and their English allies battling the Queen Regent's French forces, and was significantly influenced by preacher John Knox, regarded as the founder of Presbyterian (Protestant) church. The Reformation had profound religious, political, and cultural consequences, shifting Scotland from its French alliance to closer ties with England and changing its cultural landscape forever.

Following the Scottish Reformation, Iona, along with numerous other abbeys throughout the British Isles, was dismantled, and abandoned. The monks were forcibly removed and their libraries and possessions destroyed.



The ruins of the 13th Century Abbey, about 1890. The tower and parts of the outer walls survived, but the entire roof and interior are destroyed.

So from 1570, the Abbey was reduced to a ruin: no part of the interior or roof survived. However, the robust 21 metre (70 feet) high tower walls and some of the external walls remained standing, open to the elements of the weather.

In 1693, the Island of Iona passed into the ownership of the Campbells of Argyll. Several generations of the Argyll family left the ruins untouched, until, at last, after 300 years of neglect, the 8th Duke of Argyll commissioned architect Robert Rowand Anderson in 1874 to design a restoration plan for the church, incorporating the surviving walls from the 13th Century Benedictine Monastery. In 1899, the Duke presented the property to the Church of Scotland in 1899, with the proviso that it should be restored as a place of worship. The Church of Scotland established a trust fund to undertake the full restoration, employing additional architects and numerous projects. The newly restored **church**, built on the footprint of the 13th century Benedictine Abbey and around the origin stone tower and several partial walls, was open again for public worship in June 1910. However, even at this date, several of the **outer monastery buildings** of the church, still lay in ruins.

Next month, we see how the outer monastic buildings were restored and the Abbey was given a new lease of life.

THE POWER OF SILENCE

I have lately got back to that glorious society called Solitude. Henry David Thoreau

The quieter you become, the more you are able to hear. Rumi

Awareness, and silence, and stillness are all different ways of saying the same thing, of pointing to something that's already yours that you don't have to get.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Within you, there is a stillness and a sanctuary to which you can retreat at anytime and be yourself. Hermann Hesse

The essence of every living being is silence. You must discover your original silence. *Jean Klein*

When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence. Sri Aurobindo

Societies & Charities

For the protection and conservation of the quality of life in Betchworth & Buckland

The Betchworth & Buckland Society 2025/2026 Events

Christmas Drinks & Nibbles

Sunday 21st December 12-2pm The Reading Room

£10 for members, £15 non-members

New Year Quiz & Supper

Friday 30th January 2026

7pm for 7.30pm start

The Betchworth Memorial Hall

Members f20 & Non-Members f25



Two-course supper, nibbles & a glass of wine.

Teams of 8 or book in smaller numbers and we'll put a few teams together



Wine Tasting Evening

Friday 20th March 7.30pm The Buckland Reading Room

Price tbc

Hosted by the Vineking Tasting Rooms Sampling seven wines with cheese , biscuits, and nibbles

Numbers are limited so please register your interest as soon as possible

Email for membership enquiries (£10pa) betchworthandbucklandsociety@gmail.com

www.betchworthandbucklandsocietv.org.uk



BROCKHAM GREEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY Brockham * Betchworth * Buckland

BGHS WORKSHOP Christmas Wreath, Garland & Table Decoration

Saturday 6th December 2:15 to 4pm Brockham Village Hall.



Wreath with Ribbon £20
Table Decoration £15
Garland £15

We will provide the oasis/containers, wire, ribbons and refreshments. You will need to provide your own greenery/foliage, secateurs, decorations, plus a candle if you opt for a table decoration. Suitable for accompanied children too.

To book or for further information please contact Katie on katiemackay479@gmail.com





THE LADYBIRDS CHOIR Christmas Concert

Saturday 6 December at 3:30pm United Reformed Church Hall, West Street, Dorking RH4 1BS

A big thank you to everyone who came to the Ladybirds Choir's summer concert – together we raised £660 for Dorking Beatitudes, a charity with a shop situated in St Martin's Walk selling good as new children's clothing, toys, books and equipment. We are delighted to be supporting their work again at our Christmas concert.

We will mark John Rutter's recent 80th birthday with a performance of his *Star Carol* and you will also hear numbers as diverse as the popular Ukrainian *Carol of the bells*, A winter's tale and Jingle bell rock. We are thrilled that we will be joined by singer Maëla Maitland-Gabellec, who is studying Music and Musical Theatre at Reigate College and helps out at Dorking Beatitudes' shop. Her powerful and expressive voice regularly captivates audiences and she recently gave a highly acclaimed performance at the Mole Valley Arts Alive launch event in Dorking.

Tea and mince pies will be served after the concert. Tickets are priced at £8 and are available on the door or in advance from Sue Scarrott on 01372 878321.



DORKING LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Monday 1 December, 7.15pm for 7.30 Talk: The Real Dad's Army Community Baptist Church, Junction Road, Dorking

The Real Dad's Army: Live talk by Steven Bird who can give us some idea what the Home Guard was really like, as he has researched original documents for a single Home Guard battalion in Kent, the only one for which complete records remain. £2 at the door for non-members.

https://dlhg.org.uk. David Burton

DORKING MUSEUM IN DECEMBER

The team at Dorking Museum offers warmest seasonal greetings to all readers and supporters and friends of the Museum. Please note that the Museum will be closed over the main Christmas/New Year period (check website for dates).

To the Last Man – the Dorking Home Guard: The Museum's autumn exhibition tells the story of the men of Dorking and the villages who responded to the call by Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for War, to enlist in the 'People's Army' – later, the Home Guard – in 1940 to defend the nation. Five hundred men living in the town and immediate neighbourhood offered their services – many without any military experience, often in full-time work, and many volunteering for other home front organisations. The 7th (Dorking) Battalion, Surrey Home Guard, commanded by Major Geoffrey Lane, was initially headquartered at the Old Fire Station on West Street (later at the Drill Hall).

A defensive line of concrete pill boxes and anti-tank obstacles stretched across the south, especially in the Dorking area, protecting the Mole Gap route towards London and the operational headquarters of the Southern Railway. Local units were trained for hand-to-hand fighting and told to take no prisoners. In December 1940, Brockham village featured in War Office propaganda photos designed to reassure the public that the defence of the nation was in the hands of well-equipped men. They went from a poorly armed and equipped group of part-time volunteers to a trained fighting force protecting the local community and freeing up regular troops for front-line duty.

The feared invasion never came, so their skills were never fully tested. The exhibition display includes uniforms, weaponry, medals, incident reports, photographs and other items of the period.

Museum Family Activities at Dorking Library: The last event of 2025 is Merry Christmas Crafts: Come to Dorking Library and make a Christmas card or join in other craft activities: Saturday 13th December, 10am-noon. Free event, materials provided and children must be accompanied.

Get involved: The Museum depends on its enthusiastic team of volunteers to maintain this valuable community resource. Maybe you could spare a few hours a month, with opportunities in an interesting range of key roles with flexible working in the Museum, in the community or from home. See dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities for further details.

David Burton



A Christmas tale.... (or tail)



Two prawns were swimming around in the sea one Christmas Day. The first one was called Justin and the second one was called Kristian. They were continually being chased and threatened by the sharks that inhabited the area.

Eventually Justin had had enough. He said to Kristian, "I'm fed up with being a prawn. I wish I was a shark, and then I wouldn't have to worry about being eaten all the time." As he said this, a large mysterious cod appeared and said, "Your wish is granted!" And believe it or not, with that Justin turned into a fearsome shark.

Kristian was horrified and so immediately swam away as he was scared of being eaten by his old friend. As time went by, Justin found his new life as a shark to be boring and lonely. None of his old friends would let him get near them as they thought he would eat them and so they just swam away whenever he approached. It took a while, but eventually Justin realized that his new menacing appearance was the cause of his sad plight.

Then one day he was swimming all alone as usual when he saw the mysterious cod again. He thought it would be better if he could go back to his old life, so he swam to the cod and begged to be changed back. The cod worked his magic and suddenly Justin was a prawn once more. With tears of joy streaming down his cheeks Justin swam straight to Kristian's home.

As he opened the coral gate, the happy memories came flooding back. He banged on the door and shouted, "Kristian, it's me, Justin, your old friend. Come out and see me again." Kristian replied, "No way! You're a shark now and you'll just eat me. I'm not being tricked into being your dinner."

Justin shouted back "No, I'm not a shark any more. That was the old me. I've changed... I've found Cod. I'm a prawn again Kristian."

HAPPY CHRISTMAS !!!

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Crossword (p.14) Solution



Wordsearch (p.16) Solution

Sudoku (p.16) Solution

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Articles Please submit articles for next months edition by the above date, via email to **fernsdc@gmail.com.** If possible please submit WORD format for text files, JPG for images and PDF for posters. New articles and contributors are welcomed. If in any doubt about whether an article could be published, please contact the Editor.

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AVAILABLE FROM: 23 Dec 2025



Distributors can collect on the above date. Household delivery will be up to a few days later.

HISTORICAL NOTES

A book on the History of Buckland is available: **Buckland 1000-2000 with 2020 Vision** by Duncan C Ferns. 300pp, over 250 illustrations and a 600-name index. Purchase on request to <u>fernsdc@gmail.com</u> (£20 with free local delivery, or + P&P)

Buckland (then Bochelant) was mentioned in the Domesday Book as a village of 35 households, a church and a watermill. These days it is a picturesque village covering 1362 acres, with a total population of around 580 in 240 households. Buckland is in the Diocese of Southwark (*Bishop*: The Rt. Revd. Christopher Chessun) and the Area of Croydon (*Area Bishop*: The Rt. Revd. Rosemarie Mallett).

BUCKLAND READING ROOM ACTIVITIES

Regular activities in the Reading Room:

Monday am Singing for Pleasure (1st & 3rd Mondays)

Tuesday am Toddlers
 Tuesday 2.15pm Bridge Club
 Thursday 2.15pm Bridge Club
 Thursday evening Yoga

For booking enquiries please contact Jane Stewart, preferably by email: <u>Bookings4bucklandreadingroom@gmail.com</u> or 07733 116992

Arts Society, Betchworth Bell Ringers (practice Friday evenings) Betchworth & Buckland Children's Nursery Betchworth & Buckland Toddler Group Betchworth & Buckland Society (Secretary) Betchworth Operatic & Dramatic Society British Legion Brockham Green Horticultural Society Brockham Surgery/Chemist Buckland & Betchworth Choral Soc. (Sec.) Buckland Parochial Charity (Clerk) Buckland Parish Council (Clerk) Buckland Village Shop Children's Society Family Activities Betchworth & Buckland North Downs Primary School Reading Room - Bookings - Chairman - Treasurer - Secretary Reigate Pilgrims Cricket Club	Carole Evans David Sayce Laura Snelling Debbie Jones Nathalie Nichols Diane Mayall Maurice Daley Ruth & Paul Johnson n/a Caroline Bartlett Debbie Jones Sheena Boyce Amy Snaith Margaret Miller Katrina Rea Jane Douglass Jane Stewart Tim Howe John Maud Liz Vahey Julian Steed	01372 452563 242776 843610 07701 347351 07801 967623 842758 843058 842691 843259/842175 07967 969425 07701 347351 448023 845999 842098 07803 163868 843211 07733 116992 844595 843530 221444 842220
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Village: www.bucklandsurrey.org.uk

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