

CHRISTMAS 2025



The Link Magazine
for Goring & Steyning
Methodist Churches

Letter from the Manse



Dear friends,

It was a cold morning on Friday 12th January 2007 in Washington DC. A street musician had started playing his violin in the subway during the early morning rush hour. Most people rushed past going about their day as usual. Some put some loose change in to the man's empty violin case as they busily continued with their day. A smaller number took a few minutes out of their day to stop and listen but this was a very small percentage of the over a thousand people who walked past during the 43-minute period the man played for. Those who walked past would no doubt not given the music a second thought – they had places to be, appointments to keep, other things on their mind. However, the street musician turned out to be Joshua Bell, a world-renowned violinist playing his violin that was worth \$3.5 million. He had played a sold-out concert the night before where people paid around £80 for the privilege of listening to him in concert. If people had known who he was, I wonder if they would have taken the time to slow down, stop, and appreciate the music, even for just a short time.

Like that early morning in Washington DC, on the night Jesus was born, very few people realised the significance of what was happening. It was an ordinary night in Bethlehem apart from the fact there were a few more people in town due to the census. The inns were full, people were busy – they had places to be, appointments to keep, other things on their mind. They had no idea that that night would be spoken about for the rest of time! That first Christmas, God quietly came in the person of Jesus to be with us. As one of Stuart Townend's Christmas worship songs puts it, Jesus came,

'not with fanfares from above, not with scenes of glory but a humble gift of love: Jesus born of Mary'¹

These days, we know the Christmas story. We hear it multiple times in different ways, year after year. However, it is still possible that we miss the significance. We can be too busy to slow down, stop, and appreciate the gravity of what God has done for us in Jesus. To really appreciate God's gift to us, we need to be intentional. Even if the people walking past Joshua Bell recognised who he was, it's likely that they still needed to get to work on time, but if they knew in advance that he was going to be there, perhaps they would have planned to make space to stop and listen. We know the story of Christmas and that God came to be with us in the person of Jesus. The question this Advent and Christmas season is, will we make space in the busyness to slow down, stop and listen for what God might be wanting to say to us?

My prayer this Christmas is that as we still ourselves amongst the hustle and bustle of general life, that we might encounter Jesus afresh as we celebrate the significance that God is with us.

May peace be with you and may God bless you this season,

Steven

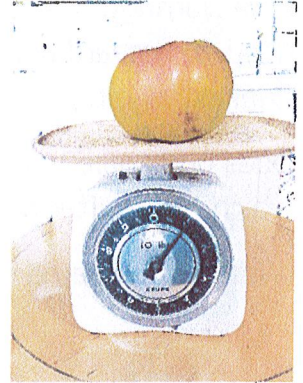
¹S. Townend, 'Joy has dawned', <https://www.stuarttownend.co.uk/song/joy-has-dawned/>



Wassail!

A Christmas (Apple) Tree Story

I was delightfully surprised this autumn to enjoy a good crop of apples, after the cool winds of spring had shredded the blossom so quickly. Several apples were 1lb size and quite a few came along about half that. What was the variety? When I moved into this house all those years ago and found this big apple tree produced cooking apples I had assumed them to be Bramley.



However, a man up the road told me that my tree wasn't a Bramley but something like 'Queen of Bath'. I tried to find out more in those pre-Google days and found nothing yet remained uneasy about describing the apple as a Bramley. It ripened to a reddish colour that Bramley apples, as in supermarket, never do. But my unease about the name of the variety rose again recently.

I made more effort; googled around and indeed found the man was sort of right! The description on various websites suggest that my apple tree is almost certainly the heritage apple 'Queen'. This they said was first raised by a farmer, Mr Bull, in Billericay, Essex in 1858 from a pip from an apple bought in his local market; so parentage unknown. It was marketed firstly as 'The Claimant' and later as 'Queen' and developed several synonyms such as 'Essex Queen' or 'Saltmarsh Queen'. It received a First Class Certificate from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1880, 13 years before the Bramley Apple. 'Queen' became popular as a garden apple tree in the late 1880s to early 20th century. And so I decided to rename the house in its honour, as a heritage apple. But what is the heritage of apples?



Apples (says Wikipedia) were among the first travellers along the Silk Road. Out from their origin on the western side of the Tien Shan Mountains in Kazakhstan they were in Europe around 6000 BC, hybridised with the crab apple to give that slightly tart taste and domesticated en route, as they have continued to be. But apples do not breed true from pips etc. as was recognised by the world of antiquity who knew it was better to graft them onto a rootstock. Alexander the Great sent samples of dwarf apple trees as they were found in Persia and Asia Minor to Aristotle in Athens around 300BC. But mine was grown from a pip?

Apples were known in Latin as *malus* (with long a) so a play of words with *malum* (short a) meaning bad (as in malefactor) is obvious. As the Roman Empire became Christianised the unspecified fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden became

depicted as an Apple. In England Roman Christianity was probably confined to urban communities. The only roman period artefact in Sussex with definite Christian associations was discovered in 1943 at Wiggentholt - a lead tank with the greek *chi-rho* motifs on - *Ch-R* [ist].

The word 'apple', is a word with Germanic roots that Anglo Saxon (and/or Britannic beforehand) give us and it served until the 1600s as a general term for fruit including nuts. The 14th Century expression *appel of paradis* refers to *banana*! In the Arthurian legend *Avalon* (in Welsh *Ynys Afallon*) translates as '*Island of Apples*'. Sussex was the last of the anglo-saxon kingdoms to become Christian its king (if no-one else) converting in 681 AD.

Durrington is recorded to have had a church (ie Saxon church) in Domesday Book 1086, but a norman church replaced it. By 1300 Durrington also had a windmill, and around much the same time Durrington was exporting a good quality cider. But apple trees are not self-pollinating; they need an orchard and also, perhaps, the Orchard Wassail! Orchard Wassailing requires drinking/singing the health of the trees in the hopes they may better thrive.

Does one apple tree make an orchard? I also have 1 pear tree (no partridge - occasional robin) which so far after 6 years nothing does it bear. Maybe I need to do the wassail!

'Wassail' originated with Old Norse *waes haeil* = '

Be in good health or 'Be fortunate'

. Its purpose was to awaken the cider apple trees and scare off evil spirits to ensure good harvest. And also, to please the Apple Tree Man, the spirit of the oldest apple tree in the orchard in whom fertility of the orchard is thought to reside. But nothing to do with the 'Green Man' it seems. The drink itself is a kind of punch or mead with crab apples, mulled cider, wine fruit juice, mulled ale. It should be drunk from a 'wassail bowl'; a bowl with many handles. And/or a toast soaked in Wassail as a gift to the tree spirits is lifted into the boughs and an incantation recited.

But why wish just the trees good health? And so there was also house-wassail. As the song explains this was not begging but reciprocal exchange between lord and peasants (serfs till 1395) on 12th Night January 6th. (or old 12th Night = 17th January). The lord gives food and drink. The peasants give blessing and goodwill.

'We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door

But we are friendly neighbours whom you have seen before ('Here we come a wassailing').

So there was a fair degree of self-interest in wassailing but it could turn nasty: '

'we won't go until we get some [figgy pudding]

so bring some out here'.

House wassailing became largely replaced by carol-singing perhaps as society changed as it became more urban and as society and the feudal system dropped away. Carols and carol-singing was collecting for others or giving to others without reciprocating. 'Carol' may be from '*carola*' meaning a 'ring -dance', that is a group activity, such as folk dance, or Morris dancing rather than waltz/ballroom dancing. Thus carol-singing has in common with wassailing that it is a group communal event and ethos. A 'carol' includes communal songs to celebrate harvest. I am

certainly more familiar with carol-singing. What can that offer as good wishes for friends, if not for the trees.

Carols began outside the Church and only later began to be sung in church as the Church struggled to Christianise the winter songs, if not the whole winter celebrations. An early act was firstly writing or collecting carols as a group; thus a book of 25 carols '*caroles of Christmas*' appeared in English in 1426 by John Audelay, a Shropshire chaplain. A collection of late mediaeval latin songs *Piae Cantiones* was published in 1582 in Finland. but not really known until 19th when it became the basis of many of the well-known carols today. Books of carols appeared from 19th century on, such as *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern* by Wm Sandys in 1833 which contained *God rest ye Merry, First Noel* among others.

But the establishment of the 'Nine Lessons and Carols' service from 1880 gave storyline and structure to carol singing. The intention of Bishop Benson of Truro Cathedral was not to Christianise winter songs but to keep people out the Pub! At the same time the choir gave up its practice of singing carols at the homes of members of the congregation. Carol singing had gone indoors and in church. Kings College Cambridge took up the practice in 1918. The service was first broadcast by the BBC in 1928 and was on TV from 1954.

But the order of service allows for a wide and wild variety of carols to be sung. Such as the poem *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree* first published in the Spiritual Magazine of August 1761 written by R H. He is believed to be Rev. Richard Hutchins a Baptist clergyman of Long Buckby, Northants.

The tree of life my soul hath seen Laden with fruit and always green

The trees of nature fruitless be compared with Christ the Apple Tree

I'll sit and eat this fruit divine it cheers my heart like spirit'al wine

And now this fruit is sweet to me that grows on Christ the Appletree.

It links to the tradition of wassailing or wishing health to the apple tree and the notion of Apple Tree man, the spirit of the tree and source of its fertility as well as having biblical allusions. It has been frequently sung in the Kings College Nine Lessons and Carols to the graceful music composed by Elisabeth Poston in 1967. But maybe these verses show it to be too reflective and personal for the 'outdoor' more robust carol tradition? It's not quite what I am seeking for my Apple Tree.

I remember as a teenager taking part in 'outdoor' carol-singing and singing a 'robust' carol that I have never heard in 'Nine Lessons and Carols', nor seen in any compilation or listing. This was with the choir of Florence Road Baptist Church Brighton We sang not from the Baptist Church Hymnal but sheet music. As the choir in a group moved up Ditchling Road on a Sunday evening after church, I knocked on doors and collected the donations. Thus we united both the carol-singing tradition and the house-wassailing, I now like to think. I remember the opening words of the carol, as follows :

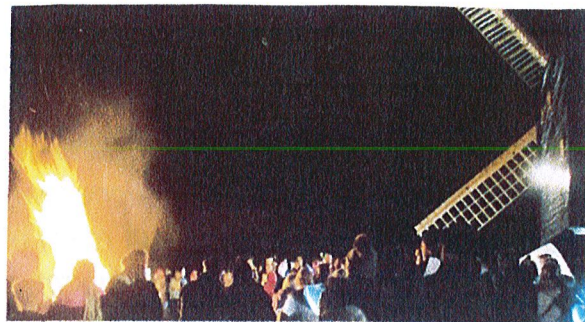
Rolling downward through the midnights comes a glorious burst of heavenly song.

'Tis a chorus full of sweetness and the singers are an angel throng.

Glory glory, in the highest, on the earth good will and peace to men

Down the ages [repeat] send the echo, let the glad earth shout again.:

These day 'Carols Around the Fire' at High Salvington Windmill, Worthing, continues for me that group, outdoor, out-of-church tradition of both wassail and carol-singing for the benefit of others, as we collect and visitors donate for local community charities. In the 1650s when the Puritans were in charge after the Civil War (and Durrington chapel lay in ruins), people sang carols in secret. Covid forced another puritan Christmas upon us in 2020, when gathering for carol singing was forbidden. We duly laid aside our hymn-sheets but still collected donations for local charities. Our hymn-sheet does not include 'Rolling Downwards'.



So a few days ago I googled three words: 'carol rolling downward'. On the instant (!) several YouTube videos appeared and after 70 or so years I heard again the carol, words and tune being sung.! Quite an extraordinary heart-wrenching moment. The carol was sung not by church choirs, gospel singers or any religious group choir but by folk song groups around the country; in Suffolk, Yorkshire, and Devon. In fact, (says Choral Wiki) the carol was written by Rev Robert Lowry (1826-1899) and Wikipedia informs me that he was a Baptist Minister born in Philadelphia. USA.

Come Twelfth Night I could go into the garden and pour a libation to Apple Tree Man and/or the spirit of the Tree etc, but now I can do better for I now have the words to draw together apples, wassailing and carol singing, thanksgiving and hope. I shall wish the tree and all of you

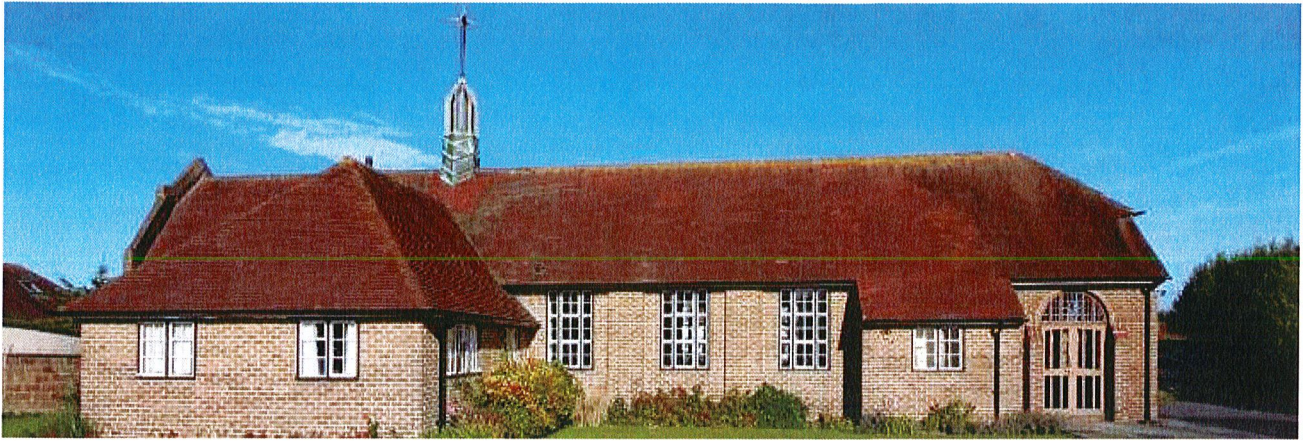
Let the Glad Earth Sing Again!

December 2024

Wendy Funnell

Sources: Wikipedia: Apple. Apple Tree man. Wassail, wassailing. Carols, History of Christianity in Sussex, Nine Lessons and Carols . Other websites : Pomiferous, British History Online. Freddy Feest.

Anything else : Wendipedia!



Goring Services:

Sunday 7th December 10am: Gillian Amphlett

Sunday 14th December 10am: Revd Tongayi Matamba

**Sunday 21st December 10am: Revd Steven Donnison – All-Age
Worship with children's nativity and Holy Communion.**

6pm: Revd Steven Donnison -Carol Service

Christmas Day 25th December 10am: Revd Steven Donnison

Sunday 28th December 10am: Revd Rosemarie Clarke

Sunday 4th January 10am: Pam Frost

5pm: Circuit Dwell Service

Sunday 11th January 10am: Revd Dan Balsdon

**Sunday 18th January 10am: Revd Steven Donnison – All Age
Worship**

Sunday 25th January 8.15am: Messy Breakfast

10am: Revd Steven Donnison – Covenant Service

You're invited to Carols by Candlelight

At Goring Methodist Church,
Bury Drive on
Sunday 21 December at 6pm

Followed by festive
refreshments!





Steypning Services:

Sunday 7th December 10.30am: Lesley Barnes

**Sunday 14th December 3.30pm: Revd Steven
Donnison – Carol Service**

Sunday 21st December 10.30am: Revd Richard Tanner


**Sunday 28th December 10.30am: Revd Steven Donnison – Holy
Communion and Relaxed Service.**

Sunday 4th January 10.30am: Revd Janet Tanner

**Sunday 11th January 10.30am: Revd Steven Donnison – Covenant
Service**

Sunday 18th January 10.30am: Shelagh Morgan

Sunday 25th January 4.00pm: Revd Steven Donnison – Agape Service



*The
Light
of
Christmas*

**Nativity & Carols by
Candlelight Service**

14th December

3.30pm

followed by tea and mince pies

Steyning Methodist Church

BN44 3GG

Quiet Day at Rustington (led by Bob Sneddon)

On the 8th November I attended a Quiet Day at Rustington. This was born out of a conversation between Bob Sneddon (retired Minister at Rustington) and Rosemarie Clarke (Superintendent). We were greeted with tea/coffee and biscuits while we settled down and introduced ourselves from others from around the circuit, about 26 of us in all. Bob explained how the day would unfold and we were given some paperwork with questions for our reflections.

We had 4 themes based around the story of Nicodemus. The first one was **'Who am I?'** (John 3: 1-2). We were given a card with one side 'Personal conversation with faithful brothers and sisters about the affairs of our soul should be of great use to us' (based on commentary on John 3:7 and written by Matthew Henry (1662-1714), on the reverse: a soul friend (Anam Cara) is a loved one who awakens your life in order to free the wild possibilities within you (John O'Donohue). Once Bob had delivered a short talk around this section we were encouraged to go and reflect by using the question sheet as a prompt, visit the craft station or do some colouring of a Nicodemus scene or pattern for about 20 minutes.

Then back for section 2 – **Throwing caution to the wind** (John 3: 1-21). After our short talk our time and space there was another 20 minutes of reflection with the opportunities above or we could go for a walk around outside. One of the reflection questions was 'How do you react to the idea of throwing caution to the wind?' What would that mean for an individual Christian? A congregation?

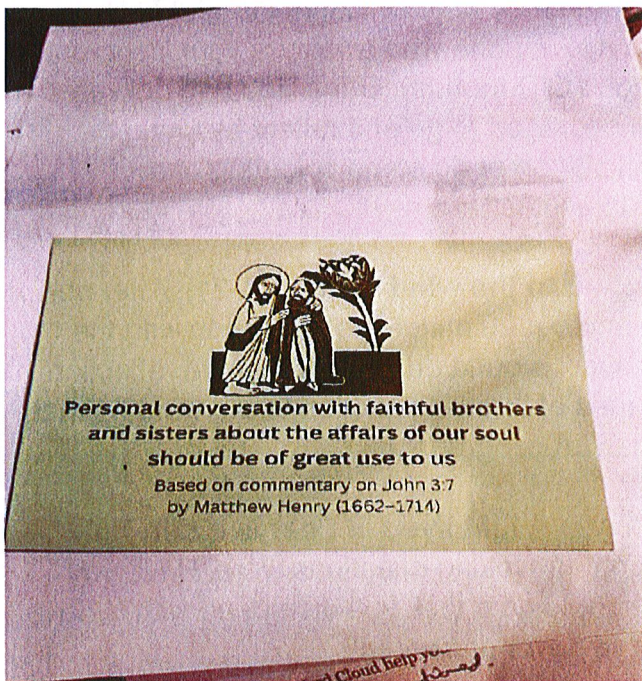
Section 3 (after a quick tea/coffee break) was **A Life lived in Fear is a Life Half Lived** (John 7 45-52). Some of the thought-provoking questions were 'Have you ever known Fear?/Have you ever been sent to do a task you disagreed with?/ Have you ever been asked questions that you've never answered?

Then it was time for lunch. Followed by our 4th section – **With all my worldly goods I thee endow** (John 19: 38-42). One of the questions posed was – C.H. Spurgeon once said 'The last part of a man (person) to be touched by God is their wallet.' Do you agree? Why might he have said that? Our Time and Space for this was to reflect on a Word Cloud Bob had given us and we were invited to use of a Cinquain poetry outline to gather our thoughts on Nicodemus. We then came back and shared this if we wanted to in a circle and also to bring forward anything that the day had brought to our mind. After this we shared communion together and the Peace and the day ended with the usual Blessing.

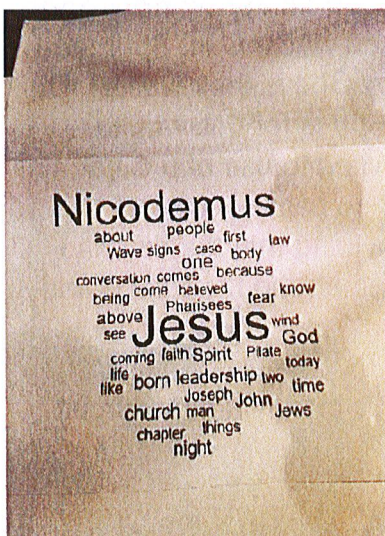
I am hopeful that there will be more days like this as there is clearly a need circuit wide as it was very well attended.



Craft Activity



Matthew Henry quote



Word Cloud

BOOK REVIEW



God on Mute by Pete Greig

Pete and his wife Sammy were, until recently, part of the ministry team at Emmaus Road Church, Guildford, director of Waverley Abbey and instigator of the 24-7 Prayer movement. He writes regularly for the podcast 'Lectio 365' which was derived from the Order of the Mustard Seed.

When their two children were very young Sammy developed a brain tumour and this resulted in regularly severe epileptic fits. Pete and their friends spent many hours searching for answers and praying for healing, but it seemed their prayers were not being heard or answered. Pete desperately searched for a book to help him make sense of what was happening, but could not find one so he wrote one himself to help others struggling with unanswered prayer.

God on Mute is a very interesting read and covers the stories of real people and their faith as well as giving some reasons why we think our prayers go unanswered and also what might be happening in reality.

I good recommendation for anyone going through troubled times who feels they are forgotten and not heard.

Pam Harrison

Aisling Griffin from Pax Christi will speak on the
need for a

GOSPEL OF NON-VIOLENCE

Speakers: Aisling Griffin

&

The Rev. David Mumford

7.30pm Thursday 4th December

Friends Meeting House, 34, Mill Road,
Worthing BN11 5DR

This is an Open meeting. - All are welcome



Goring Methodist Church held a very successful Action for Children Coffee Morning on Saturday 8th November. It was very well supported with people keen to buy cakes, jams, crumbles, Christmas cards and knitted craft goods. Plenty of cups of tea & coffee were sold along with numerous sausages in a bap. The AFC collection boxes were also opened on the day. We are delighted to report that, along with a generous donation that £727.70 was raised.



Action for Children Fundraising Day

Tuesday 9 December
9am-6pm

At The Holmbush Centre

Come and do your shopping and
enjoy live music and festive fun!

Can you spare some time too, no matter how little, to hold a collecting
box with us?

It's very rewarding; there's a lovely atmosphere on these occasions and
we've struck up some wonderful conversations with complete strangers
in past years!

Your help would be very much appreciated and you'd be making a real
difference to such an important charity.



Thank you – please speak to Janet, John, Dave or Marion
... or just turn up on 9th!





Goring Methodist Church



TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP

16TH DECEMBER 2.30PM.

**Why not pop along for some refreshments
and at 3pm enjoy some Carol Singing as
David Parr explains their origins.**

The Star of Bethlehem

There has been a lot of discussion about the Star of Bethlehem over the years. Here are a few details I put together a few years ago from various articles that have been written. It all starts from the carol we sing at Christmas 'We three Kings of Orient are.....'

Matthew 2 v 2; Soon afterwards, some men who studied the stars came from the east to Jerusalem and asked "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him." When King Herod heard about this, he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the law and asked them "Where will the Messiah be born?" "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they answered. "for this is what the prophet wrote: 'Bethlehem in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least of the leading cities of Judah; for from you will come a leader who will guide my people Israel (Micah 5 v 2).'" So Herod called the visitors from the east to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.

v 9; And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the east. When they saw it, how happy they were what joy was theirs! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

v 16; When Herod realised that the visitors from the east had tricked him, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood who were two years old and younger - this was done in accordance with what he had learned from the visitors about the time when the star had appeared.

Numbers 24 v 9; The nation is like a mighty lion.

Numbers 24 v 17; I look into the future, and I see the nation of Israel. A king, like a bright star, will arise in that nation. Like a comet he will come from Israel. (Good News Bible)

Although a lot is said, there aren't many astronomical facts. The appearance of a star is only told in Matthew's gospel. In Matthew the star is just that a star, and it was not spotted by the chief priests and teachers of the law in Jerusalem, so it may not have looked very unusual. However Numbers and another writing not included in the Bible indicate that the star was bright. The wise men - Magi - priests who studied Astrology and Astronomy, were probably accomplished star gazers.

The other thing we need to look at is when all this took place. We know December 25th was the date of a pagan festival that was adopted by Christianity, and as shepherds were gathered in fields, it is suggested that the

time of year might be lambing season. The year would need to be near the end of Herod's reign. Herod was King of Judea 37 - 4 BC. Matthew indicates that the wise men told Herod the date that the birth of Jesus was predicted, so he would have used this information when he murdered all children of two and under. From all this we deduce that the year must have been something around 6BC. (For your interest, one article I read notes that some people celebrated the 2000th birthday of Jesus in March 1994.)

So what are the likely suspects?

Supernovas / Novas / Comets - if a supernova (a star that explodes) had occurred at this time then we would still see the remnants today. There were novae (stars that flare up) / comets recorded by the Chinese, one in March/April 5BC that was visible for 70 days. It would have been visible in the east several hours before sunrise. Another nova was seen in 4BC. Halley's Comet was visible 11-12 BC, which is a little too early.

Shooting stars (meteors) / Fireballs - this seems unlikely as they occur for a very short time (a few seconds, or for a meteor storm, a few hours).

Planetary conjunctions - well there are a few that occurred around this time. The most likely was in 7BC when there was a triple planetary conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces, i.e. the two planets pass close together three times within approximately six months, in this case between June and December. Pisces is astrologically associated with the Jewish people and with Israel, Saturn was seen as the protector of Israel, also Saturn would have been seen as the old ruler and Jupiter the new King. A triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn (which itself happens more frequently) occurring in Pisces, happens every 900 years. This would have been seen in the east (although the opposite direction to the direction of travel) in the early morning. By the end of this conjunction these planets would have been in the south (the direction of Bethlehem from Jerusalem) in the early evening.

Another conjunction happened between Venus and Jupiter on Aug. 12, 3BC (just after dawn) and June 17, 2BC. This probably happened too late to be a suspect, but the second conjunction actually had Venus passing in front of Jupiter visually and occurred in Leo, which fits with Israel being referred to as a Lion.

The other possibility, of course, is that the star was a miracle sent by God to guide the wise men to Jesus

I will let you decide which option you prefer.

Linda Croft

The Planets in December 2025 & January 2026

If you are up early in the morning around 7th December you can see Mercury rising around 6.30am about an hour and a half before the Sun, in the southeast. On days before and after this, Mercury gets gradually closer to the Sun, so will be more difficult to see in the twilit sky.

Venus is in conjunction with the Sun on 6th January and Mars on 9th January so neither are not well placed for viewing.

Jupiter is very bright and can be seen throughout the night in the constellation of Gemini (the Twins). It is at opposition on January 10th.

Saturn rises before sunset and can then be seen throughout the evening setting around midnight in November and around 10pm in January. It is in the constellation of Aquarius (the Water Bearer).

The Geminid meteor shower peaks on the 14/15th December.

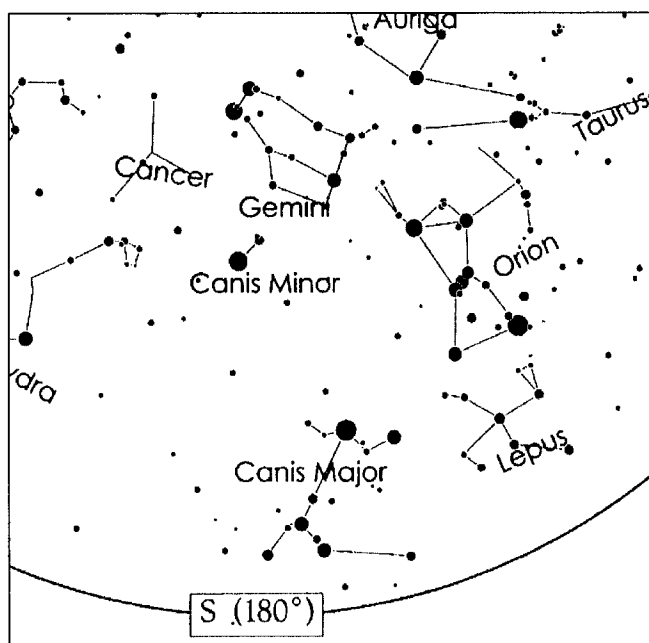
The winter solstice is on 21st December and the Earth is at Perihelion (closest to the Sun) on 3rd January.

The winter constellations of the Pleiades (Seven Sisters), Taurus (the Bull) and Orion (the Hunter) are on display. Following them are the constellations of Gemini (the Twins) and Leo (the Lion).

Full Moon is on the 4th Dec and 3rd Jan and New Moon is on the 20th Dec and 18th Jan.

Here is an illustration of the night sky, looking south at 10pm around the end of January.

Linda Croft





CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Trees decorated by schools, businesses and community groups

Friday 5 December, 10 am - 5 pm

Saturday 6 December, 10 am - 5 pm

Christmas Fair 10 am - 1 pm

Worthing Community Concert Band 6.30 pm

Sunday 7 December, 12 noon - 4 pm

Top Ten Carols 4 pm

St Michael and All Angels Church

South Street, Lancing, BN15 8AJ

Free Admission - Donations Welcome

For more information, please visit www.chalkspringchurches.org/christmas

Supported by

H G KING FUNERAL SERVICES

LOCAL . INDEPENDENT . FAMILY RUN



Magic to Local Families – 25 Years of Support

Be a Secret Santa

HOME START
Arun,
Worthing
& Adur

SCAN ME

Give the Gift of Christmas to a Local Child
Help us give Christmas essentials to local families in need -
giving children magical memories that last a lifetime

DONATE £10 TODAY

Scan the QR code, visit home-startawa.org.uk/christmas-appeal-2025/
or call 01903 953799

Charity No.1132416

For 25 years, Home-Start Arun, Worthing & Adur has been walking alongside families through some of their toughest times. This milestone reminds us that our work is only possible thanks to the kindness and generosity of our community. Our volunteers – often parents or grandparents themselves – visit families at home or welcome them into our four weekly Groups. With compassion and confidentiality, they support parents facing financial hardship, domestic abuse, bereavement, poor health, or isolation. By stepping in early, Home-Start helps families cope day-to-day, prevents problems from escalating, and reduces the pressure on already stretched public services – creating lasting benefits for children and the wider community.

But while Christmas should be magical, with presents, festive meals and memories wrapped in love, many families in Arun, Worthing and Adur face a very different reality. Over 18,000 children (27%) are growing up in relative poverty, with parents struggling to heat homes, put food on the table and provide the little extras that make the season special. Referrals to Home-Start from health visitors, midwives and social workers continue to rise, showing just how challenging times remain. This Christmas, we're asking for your help. A gift of £45 could provide festive food, children's presents, warm clothes and blankets for a family in need. It also allows our volunteers to bring comfort and emotional support at what can otherwise be a lonely, isolating time.

Every donation, big or small, makes a difference. Your kindness could mean a child waking up to a present on Christmas morning, a family sharing a meal together, or a parent feeling less alone in hardship.

Over the past 25 years, we've seen how generosity transforms lives – giving parents hope when they feel overwhelmed and ensuring children grow up in homes filled with warmth and care. With your support, we can be there for the families who need us most this Christmas and bring joy, love and magic to children who might otherwise go without.

To support our Christmas Appeal, scan the QR code above, go to <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/29157> or for more information, visit our

website <https://homestartawa.org.uk/christmas-appeal-2025/>

Goring Christmas Fair



Father Christmas wanted to thank everybody who helped make this years Fair a success when £1,698.91 was raised for church funds. You might be interested to know what a visitor thought of our event:

Dear Goring Methodist Church

I would just like to say a big thank you for all the hard work that was evident when I visited your Christmas Fair on Saturday.

It was lovely to receive a knitted angel as we entered the hall, everything was well displayed and reasonably priced, an army of knitters must have worked so hard to produce all the lovely gifts on sale and all volunteers looked marvellous in their winter jumpers. I brought my daughter-in-law along and we had a really lovely time. Please feed back that it was very much appreciated.

Many thanks

Kind regards

Gillian Trott

Community Ambassador - Good Life Sorted Worthing Area

[Facebook](#)

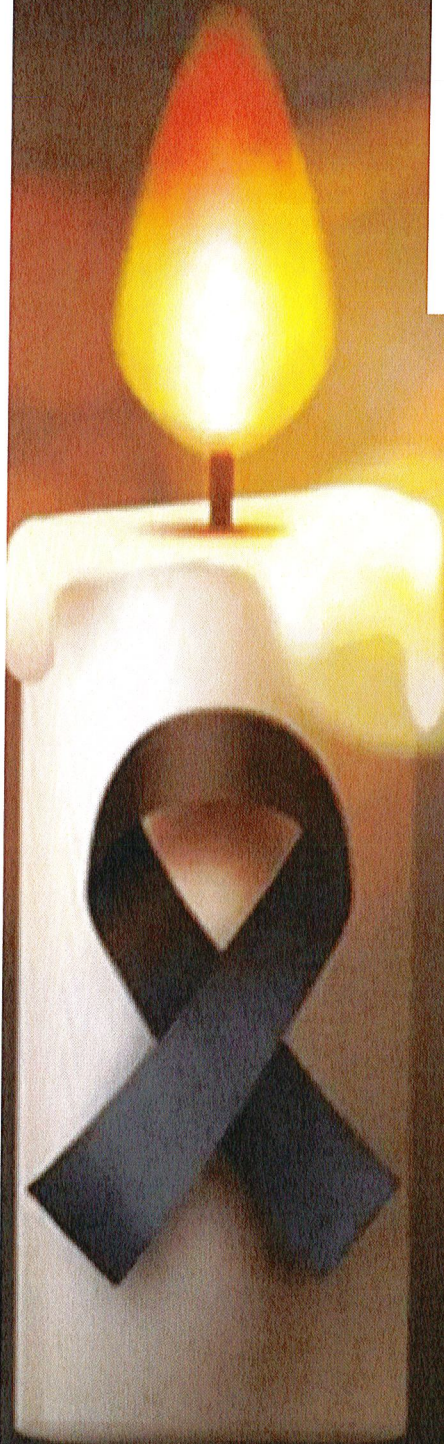
[Good Life Sorted](#)

Goring Methodist Church

WHERE
LOVE FAITH
UNITE



Bury Drive, Goring-by-Sea, BN12 4XB



**MEMORIAL
CANDLES
MAY YOUR
SOUL REST IN
PEACE**

**WEDNESDAY 7TH
JANUARY
CHURCH OPEN
10AM-2PM**



Please note the deadline for the August edition of 'Link' is Friday the 20th February. Please hand or email all copy to Jeremy at goringmethodist@gmail.com

Please submit anything you think might be of interest. It is YOUR magazine, so any suggestions for inclusion would be welcome.