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Prestbury Parish Magazine



 North Cheltenham
Team Ministry

October 2026



£1

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Baptisms (Christenings) & Weddings

may be arranged with the Team Office (*contact details above*)

Other Pastoral Matters & Reconciliation (Confession)

please contact one of the clergy (*telephone numbers above*)

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editors, the Clergy, the Parochial Church Council, or of any authoritative body of the Church of England

*The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
St Mary and St Nicolas Prestbury Cheltenham - Registered Charity No 1130933*

continued inside back cover

Cover Picture:

A bagpipe player

Note the Royal Stewart tartan (or variant)

Image by [Pat Photographies](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Reflections from the Reverend Jacqueline

As the leaves turn gold and the weather cools, the rhythm of the church calendar picks up after the hot summer. We have been celebrating Creationtide in our services at St Lawrence and reflecting on how God's creation is interwoven in our daily lives.

Autumn brings us to the season of Harvest — a time to pause, look around, and reflect on the concept of abundance. We live in a society where success is measured through the amount of stuff we have in our possession, the holidays we take and the types of cars we drive.

We celebrate Harvest within the Church every year because it gives us opportunity to express our gratitude for what we have. We also collect donations for the Fresh Hope Pantry at St Peter's Church on Tewkesbury Road. More information can be found at <https://www.freshhope.co/projects/the-pantry/>

In the Christian tradition, true abundance is not defined by material wealth or freedom from scarcity. Rather, it is found in recognising God's boundless grace, love and presence in our lives. We are invited to view our lives through the lens of gratitude and spiritual richness.

God's harvest is here among us. What can we do to take up the responsibility that our wealth brings and give to our neighbours in need? We can keep ourselves to ourselves, enjoy our own lives, follow our own interests and leave others to look after themselves. Or we can take up the responsibility of being truly our God-given selves. We can give some of our time, our attention and our gifts, something of ourselves to our neighbours in need and in our own parish.

As we celebrate this Harvest season, may our gratitude become action. Let us receive God's gifts with thankful hearts, care faithfully for creation, and share our time, attention and resources generously with those around us. In doing so, we become part of God's abundant harvest—a community in which grace is recognised, blessings are shared and every neighbour is valued.

“the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

(2 Corinthians 9. 6-7)

Revd Jacqueline

SCOTTISH ANCESTRY



Craigievar Castle, Aberdeenshire. A Forbes ancestral home?

For as long as I can remember, there has been on a bookshelf at home a hefty green volume called *The House of Forbes*. It looks a bit like a family bible and weighs in like one. It was presumably bought by my widowed grandmother, Winifred Forbes (*née* Vine), in 1937 when it was first published. She must have given it to my father and he then gave it to me.

I have never read this stodgy ancestral tome and have only dipped into it on rare occasions. I suspect that my grandmother may have been hunting for lineage and ancestors. Perhaps she was trying to discover more about Herbert Leslie Forbes, the man she had married in 1917 in Kingston, Jamaica, where they were both born.

From an early age, I was told that we had Scottish ancestry on both sides of the family but I did not visit Scotland until I was over thirty, despite having a name that sounded very Scottish to others. Duncan used not to be such a common name in my boyhood, especially in southern England. My mother said that she had alternatively wanted to Christen me Douglas or Dougal and so I was relieved that, of the three D's, it turned out to be Duncan. I didn't realise for some time how very Scottish the name sounded until a friend's father started calling me Angus. By the forgetful, I can also get called Malcolm or Donald. The name Duncan apparently means 'brown warrior' in Gaelic, although I tend to think of myself as more of a worrier than a warrior.

So how Scottish were we? The clan Forbes has a tartan and a hunting tartan, and Lord Malcolm and Lady Forbes still live in Castle Forbes (built 1815), Aberdeenshire, where for a fee I could arrange for my body to receive a natural burial. My mother was a Wilson and her mother Florence Mann qualified as a doctor at university in Glasgow. My mother described her family background as Lowland Scots and her paternal grandfather was a minister of the Church of Scotland in Lesmahagow. I suspect that the Forbes forbears or the Highland Scots on my father's side went to seek their fortunes in Jamaica in what was then the British West Indies. My father's father, H.L. Forbes, worked for the American United Fruit Company, first in Kingston and then in Spanish Honduras, where he was murdered on a plantation in 1922.

The shocking circumstances of his death only became clear to me after my own father's death when we found a yellowing newspaper cutting in a brown wallet which had belonged to his mother. It was a news item from the *Daily Gleaner* of Kingston which began:

'A cruel and dastardly murder was committed on a farm in Spanish Honduras about two weeks ago, the victim being Mr. H. Leslie Forbes, who is well known in Jamaica.'

But that's another story. Later, travelling by ship across the Atlantic, my grandmother and father, Alec Forbes, settled in London in about 1930.

Scottish on both sides of the family, how Scottish do I feel? In Italy our friend Rory Stuart has facetiously introduced me as 'Duncano, Re di Scozia', Duncan King of Scotland, in order to embarrass me. Once, a colleague tried to clarify how Scottish I might really be and decided on the scant evidence provided that I was 'a non-practising Scot'. I do not have or wear a kilt, even on Burns night, partly because they are now so very expensive. ('It's not because we're mean; it's just because we're careful.') I tend to support the Scottish rugby team among others, because they do so very much with a small player base and I have long admired the Hastings brothers, Andy Irvine, Gregor Townsend, Chris Paterson, Doddie Weir et al., but I'm not interested in the tartan army or Scottish football. My younger sister Janet went to study Botany and Zoology at St Andrew's University where she also played squash for Scotland and in the past ten years or more, she has lived in Edinburgh, partly to be near her younger daughter, Lucy, who studied in Scotland and settled there.

While I can attempt to imitate some accents, the Scottish accent often eludes me and I can sometimes find broad Glaswegian difficult to comprehend. But I'm a Unionist and, if the Scots Nats were ever to take Scotland into true independence, I would rue the day. As Burns says in 'To A Mouse',

*The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!*

Duncan Forbes

SCOTLAND

My links with Scotland began in 1948 with a fellow gunner while I was a National Serviceman. His name was William McAleese, and he was from a rough part of Glasgow. He and I could not have been more opposite in every way, but we became the closest of friends during my time in uniform while we were at Oswestry, Woolwich, Egypt and Malta. Bill was aggressive, disagreeable, unpopular with everyone and his dialect was like a foreign language, but I began to understand him and somehow, he and I hit it off. He used to tell far-fetched stories of growing up amongst the meths drinkers in his locality, of his fighting in the streets and that he was a descendant of The Black Douglas who was feared by all (one of Scotland's most famous medieval warriors and a companion of Robert the Bruce) - none of which I or any of the men in our unit believed! Those who openly doubted his stories received a punch on the nose, as he was always looking for an excuse for a fight and was the cause of many. I acted as his interpreter, for few could understand him, and more often than not, stepped in between him and whoever it was he was about to beat up! If anyone had the slightest dispute with me, he would aggressively defend me, and I increasingly wondered if I was the only proper friend he had ever had. Regrettably we lost touch because during my two-week compassionate leave back in Britain the army lost all my papers. Instead of returning to Malta to complete the last month, I was demobbed and our paths never crossed again.



Many years later in 2024, I noticed in the obituary column of *The Telegraph*, a photo of a soldier who I immediately thought was my army pal of 76 years ago. It was not though; it was instead Bill McAleese's nephew, Peter! The page-long obituary told me that he too had been brought up in Greenock. He joined the Parachute Regiment aged 17, needed more action than he was getting, so transferred to train with the SAS. However, he was sent back to the Paras for fighting his colleagues! After a while he was allowed back into the SAS but was again sent back to the Paras for the same offence! Still not finding enough action to satisfy his aggressive nature, he left the army altogether and became a sought-after mercenary, earning good money in difficult situations all over the world.

Wading through this fascinating obituary, I came across a quote from Peter McAleese's autobiography 'No Mean Soldier' the story of the ultimate professional soldier in the SAS and other forces. The following confirmed my suspicions: "Like my father and Uncle Billy, fighting rivals with sticks, iron bars and knives became second nature. We went around with an axe or knife hidden under our jackets without thinking." Peter's 'Uncle Billy' was none other than my army pal, and all his wild tales back in 1948/49 had actually been completely true!

One day, an old SAS colleague approached Peter McAleese, even though he had retired as a mercenary and was now writing books. This man had been offered a dangerous mission which he would only accept if he could persuade McAleese to come out of retirement and lead a band of twelve men of his choice to tackle the job in hand. When he was told the enormous daily fee he would receive, plus a bonus of a million dollars if successful, he just couldn't refuse and said "Yes" without even asking what was required of him!

That task was to hunt down and kill Pablo Escobar, the most notorious of all drug barons, who lived in a fortified hacienda on the edge of the Colombian jungle. McAleese picked his twelve-man team from those he had known in the SAS, put them into training, first on a football field and then into a jungle training camp. Escobar had become increasingly mercurial, was committing horrific acts of violence against ordinary citizens and had to be stopped. The cocaine tycoon was the world's richest criminal and could afford ample well-trained security, so the mission of McAleese and his men seemed to offer limited hope of success. As his plan unfolded, the helicopter in which McAleese was being ferried across the jungle, came to grief. The pilot had been instructed to fly as low as possible above the trees to avoid detection; it clipped treetops, and crashed, killing himself and badly injuring McAleese, who lay for three days in undergrowth. Eventually rescued by local villagers, he recovered back in Britain where he resumed not only his writings but his Roman Catholic faith which he had abandoned as a youngster. He became a devout and practising follower of his faith. Amongst the many books he had published, Peter McAleese wrote 'Killing Escobar', which he himself failed to do but Escobar was eventually shot and killed by the Colombian police. It was a best seller, and he made a film of the same title which I have just watched in complete fascination.

Three years ago, another Peter, my great-nephew, Peter Bowen, joined the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and is enjoying the experience immensely. Already he and the band have performed at the Edinburgh Tattoo and been on a world tour. His latest highlight has been playing music at the Palace of Holyroodhouse during the investitures when King Charles handed out medals to those who had been awarded them in the 2026 Birthday Honours List. This included John Grant of the family-owned and run Glenfarclas

Distillery at Ballindalloch on Speyside, a good friend of mine who was presented with an OBE in recognition of over 50 years' service in the whisky industry and his contributions to charity. It was he and the late Marcus Steel, my other great friend and active member of the congregation at St Nic's, who kindly sponsored my autobiography when it 'hit the shelves' in 2021.

When musician Peter Bowen, played his saxophone at the investitures he wore the tartan of his regiment. He doesn't have his own as he is not the least bit Scottish – but his great-uncle does! In 2002 Queen Elizabeth II celebrated the 50th year of her reign. To mark this momentous Golden Jubilee, Her Majesty decided that all 850 Royal Warrant Holders should have their own specially designed tartan and be given the opportunity to order a kilt, trews, skirt or shawl as befitted their gender. The tartan was launched at the annual Royal Warrant Holders' Banquet at the Park Lane Hilton in the form of a serviette, and each guest was invited to take theirs home with them. Pam and I did so and because we showed great interest, were asked if we'd like more. We were soon given more and the full set of a dozen has been in constant use ever since. I have yet to be measured up for a kilt, but you never know. The only thing stopping me is that my knees are not nearly so lovely as they used to be!

Bernard Parkin



*A dinner party at home in 1993 celebrating Pam's 61st birthday.
Note the serviette in the Royal Warrant Holders' tartan.*

Just Hold On!

One of the hardest things to do as a Christian is to hold on to our faith when all the evidence points to walls of evil flattening all that is good. Mid-afternoon on Good Friday is one of those times when as believers in Jesus we stand at the bottom of an awful cul-de-sac with nowhere to go. And there are times when even Archbishop Rowan himself admitted that he could only just hold on in the face of terrible evil, and he was humble and brave enough to confess this on national radio. His use of the word 'just', as in 'just hold on with our fingertips' is one that will resonate with many of us.

This is hard but here's the application, one which found some reception in a recent sermon at St Nicolas. One of the very last things Jesus said before he died was: "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing". In doing this, he lost his life, he gave it up, but he found it. And whatever evil does, each time Jesus will go one step further in love, to overcome it, enabling us to just hold on. A bit like that weed which keeps coming back on your patio? Each time, you root it out again, so you keep ahead.

But how can we just hold on? Here goes! The Christian writer Henri Nouwen became entranced by a pair of trapeze artists from a circus, watching their show night after night. He sat with the leader of the pair talking about flying through the air. This man said: as a flyer, I must have complete confidence in my catcher. You might think that I, as the lead, am the great star of the trapeze, but the real star is Joe, my catcher. He must be there to grab me out of the air. How does it work? Well, the secret is the flyer does nothing and the catcher does everything. When I fly to Joe, I just must stretch out my arms, waiting for him to catch me and pull me safely over into the cradle. I do nothing. The worst thing the flyer can do is try to catch the catcher. The flyer flies, the catcher catches – and the flyer must trust.

The catcher catches, and the words of Jesus come to mind: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. In losing my life for you, I will find it. Jesus is saying to all our dyings and defeats, our disappointments and disasters: don't be afraid, you are the beloved child of God. Don't worry about grabbing me, he says, I will grab you. Just stretch out your arms, hold on and trust me, I will catch you.

Fr Nick

To hear Fr Nick's complete sermon of 30 August 2026 at St Nicolas' Church go to

<https://www.youtube.com/live/1eUwT2JKHxk> It starts at 35 minutes 47 seconds in.

Notes of Scotland

Sadly for me Scotland has been about business rather than pleasure, perhaps something that in my retired state I can start to address, tips on the West Coast 500 would be welcome. When I was twenty-one I joined Bradbury Wilkinson, a security printer who printed the Royal Bank of Scotland's banknotes, it was 1980 and status was still a big thing, I wasn't senior enough to deal with the banknote contract, but I could deal with Banker's Drafts and cheques. In 1986 the much better-known company De La Rue acquired us and the combined company printed banknotes for the three Scottish Banks: Royal Bank, Bank of Scotland and Clydesdale Bank. These were three proudly-Scottish and well-run banks, the founders of whom would turn in their graves if they could see their demise particularly during the banking crisis, they had proud histories.

The Bank of Scotland, founded in 1695 by an Act of the old Scots Parliament, is Scotland's first and oldest bank, created to stabilise the nation's fragile economy and support trade at a time when credit was scarce and coinage unreliable. Opening for business in 1696, it became the first bank in Europe to successfully issue paper money, introducing banknotes in denominations from £5 to £100. Its early shareholders known as "adventurers" raised £1.2 million to fund a public bank that would support merchants and landowners. Over the centuries, the Bank of Scotland expanded across the country, financed major infrastructure projects, and pioneered innovations such as mobile banks, early ATMs, and the UK's first home-banking service. Today, it remains one of the world's longest-continuously operating banks and continues to issue its own Scottish banknotes, although it is part of the Lloyds Group.

The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) followed in 1727, founded by Royal Charter to provide a "New Bank" with strong Hanoverian and Whig ties, partly in response to suspicions that the older Bank of Scotland harboured Jacobite sympathies. Within a year, RBS introduced one of the most important innovations in modern finance: the overdraft, first granted in 1728 to Edinburgh merchant William Hogg. Its early decades were marked by fierce competition with the Bank of Scotland, including the famous "note wars," in which each bank attempted to destabilise the other by presenting large quantities of rival notes for payment. RBS expanded steadily, opening its first Glasgow branch in 1783 and acquiring numerous provincial banks throughout the 19th century. By the 20th century it had become a major national institution, it now forms part of NatWest Group.

The Clydesdale Bank, founded in 1838 as the Clydesdale Banking Company, emerged from Glasgow's dynamic industrial economy. Created by a group of liberal-minded local businessmen led by James Lumsden, it aimed to support the manufacturing and commercial growth of the west of Scotland. Rapid early expansion brought branches across Glasgow, Edinburgh, and the surrounding towns, and the bank strengthened its position through acquisitions such as the Greenock Union Bank and the Edinburgh & Glasgow Bank. Over time, Clydesdale became known for serving Scotland's industrial middle classes, Glasgow and the industry along the river Clyde, being a highly industrial and prosperous area between the two world wars. The Bank later underwent major ownership changes, including periods under Midland Bank, National Australia Bank, and Virgin Money UK. Strangely with its acquisition of Virgin Money, Nationwide Building Society now owns Clydesdale Bank.

Despite the huge penetration of cards and online payments, in 2026 the three banks still issue their own bank notes. Bank notes are a lovely thing – obviously as cash! – but they also capture much of the culture and history of a country. It is a little sad that much of Europe has adopted the euro, it used to be part of the fun of travel collecting different notes for different countries, I am sure that many of us had a first foreign trip to France, with a handful of those crispy old French Franc notes.

In a later role far beyond Scotland I once travelled across Tanzania in the Central Bank's Land Rover, taking pictures of local agriculture for our designers to incorporate into designs, but that's a story for another day when the editor provides a suitable subject.

So next time you see a Scottish note (or any other banknote), take a second look and reflect on the culture and history that it contains.

Chris Horswell



SCOTLAND VISITED TWICE IN ONE YEAR – 2022

Making up for lost time

What a year 2022 was! We had not ventured north to Scotland very often....indeed once every 10 years, I think.

I have cousins David and Yvonne who live in Aberdeen, another cousin John in the Isle of Lewes. All a bit far away.

Ambassador Cruise around the British Isles and the family wedding and touring

In May 2022 Phyllis and I went on a 2-week cruise around the British Isles from Southampton. It was mainly Scottish venues and very enjoyable. In the August we went to a family wedding at a location between Inverness and Aberdeen which gave us an opportunity to spend nearly a month touring around. We enjoyed all our time in Scotland.

The Cruise

From Tilbury we sailed the North Sea to the Shetland Isles and Orkney Isles. The North Sea was kind to us! We had a day in each port and visited the main town in each. A Rotary friend and his wife were also on the cruise and had visited these Islands previously. They went on wildlife viewing trips on this occasion. It was fascinating to learn of the early Norwegian influence on these Islands.

The Isle of Skye was next island to visit and from the boat we went on a coach tour to Dunvegan Castle and the spectacular scenery around it.

The next Island was Mull. We decided to go on a coach trip there to Iona. Our parish where we lived in Leicestershire had had a few regular pilgrimages to Iona and we hadn't joined them but it was good we were able to visit Iona, albeit a day, from the cruise. The early Christians and Iona, we learned, were important in bringing Christianity here.

The cruise then visited Belfast, Cobh for Cork, The Scillies, Guernsey and finally Le Havre and back to Tilbury.

Our time especially in Scotland gave us an appetite to see much more there and that opportunity was afforded by the family wedding!

The family wedding and touring

David and Yvonne's son Tom was getting married to Siji in the August and the families and friends were all congregating for a week of celebrations in the area around Dufftown, about midway between Inverness and Aberdeen. My plan was that Phyllis and I would fly to Inverness and hire a car and spend a few weeks touring. Airline tickets were booked one way to Inverness with the intention of flying back from Glasgow some weeks later enabling us to be flexible. Ageism struck! Two weeks before our flights I tried to hire a car.....but.... being over 75 no hire company would hire me a car, so we had to drive our car to Scotland! Another event presented itself sooner than expected putting pressure on our journey planning. We would need to stop off in Liverpool, so that was the first stay over going north.

My cousin Frank in Liverpool died and it was essential we went there. His funeral was both a Civic and Military affair due to his long service in both. With piper, trumpeter, regimental flag bearers. Frank had requested a small close family group of his wife, myself and Phyllis

and cousin Sandra to accompany him to the crematorium....to 'I Vow to Thee My Country'. I have written about this because everything fitted into place and we experienced pipers and ceremonial in Scotland too.

We drove to Liverpool for the funeral staying two days, meeting family and then drove north, with a short stop at Gretna Green where a wedding was taking place as we arrived, then onwards staying overnight at a motel just south of Glasgow. From there to Perth, visiting Scone Palace where the crowning of Scottish Kings took place. Then driving through to Inverness via the beautiful Cairngorms National Park. We spent a few days in Inverness....then Dufftown where I had booked, via *cottages.com*, accommodation for 8 of us for a week.

We arrived on the Friday at what had been the Police House in Dufftown. What very fine accommodation it had been converted into! The cell was a rather nice bedroom. The next day was the Highland Games in Dufftown...in the field next to the Police House! What a magnificent spectacle with various pipe bands marching in all regalia. For a few days there was a family get together, ceilidh and other events. Dufftown is in the centre of the Whisky trail and Glenfiddich Distillery is there....ten minutes walking distance from the Police House...A tasting ensued at this amazing, huge distillery with 1000s of barrels maturing. Our group tour tasted 5 different Glenfiddich products and we all said the 18-year one was preferred. Only £96 a bottle but at the supermarkets £80 (I purchased one at the supermarket at Loch Ness which I have no intention of opening!). The wedding was a great affair in the open air with lovely scenery and sunshine. Siji is from African descent and the family members, including Phyllis and me, all danced with acclamation into the reception with the happy couple.



After 6 days in Dufftown we drove to Loch Ness staying there a couple of nights to include a short cruise on the Loch, then on to Fort William for four nights. The weather so far had been great but now turned. We took the train daytrip to Mallaig, through wonderful scenery. Wanted to see Ben Nevis but weather was too misty. A short cruise on Loch Linnhe and how the weather changed during that! Our next place was Oban and that was lovely. We had a cruise around the coast and sampled the fresh fish produce on the stalls at the harbour. From there we stayed at a lovely place at the north end of Loch Lomond and then drove on the Loch road and headed south to England staying at Ullswater in the Lake District. Again, a lovely area. Then as a finale (to recuperate), we had 4 days in Blackpool with some of Phyllis' family. There the weather was gorgeous too!

All in all, a very fascinating and enjoyable time with appetite wetted for seeing it all and more again. We plan to get to Aberdeen which we missed on these trips and the Edinburgh Tattoo too!

Eddie Bestwick

RIDE AND STRIDE

Saturday 12 September



Ride and stride is the annual fundraising event for Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust. Half the money raised remains with the trust and half is returned to the parish. Participation in this event may be helpful when we apply for grants from the trust in order to carry out repairs to our churches. This year we held a **sponsored exercise-bike ride** outside the charity shop in Prestbury High Street with half-hour slots for the riders.

At the time of going to press £823 has been raised! Thank you to all.

Pictured is Gill Wood after her half-hour ride.

For info contact – Helen 07814 638990

Lunch at the Beckford Inn - Wednesday 16 September

Linda Biggs organised a lunch for 23 people mostly from St Nicolas. Here they are tucking into their desserts.



VOLUNTEERS' BRING-AND-SHARE AFTERNOON TEA

Sunday 6 September 2.30pm



Everyone from across the team, who volunteers in some way to assist in the life and maintenance of our churches, was invited to the afternoon tea at St Nicolas Hall. This was a chance to say a huge thank you for all that they do.

*Helen Mann
Pictures from Virginia Pocket*

Samantha's Skydive Update

Thank you so much for the donations from the church collections, here is a message from Samantha (whom we first knew as a Brownie at St Nicolas).

“Anyone who knows me, knows I’ve not had an easy time getting to where I am now. I’ve had a variety of mental health challenges which I’ve overcome and my struggle with my anxiety has been a tough experience for me and for my family.

As you may know, earlier this year, I completed a skydive for a charity called Dingley’s Promise. All donations help them continue to provide a safe and fun place for children to grow and develop. Dingley’s Promise provide places where children, from birth to 5 years, with special educational needs and disabilities come to develop skills through play. More than this, it is a place where their parents/carers are welcome, where they can make friends and share experiences. I am super proud to be a part of this and even prouder to say I’ve raised over £1,000 for them.



I completed the 10,000ft tandem skydive to challenge my anxiety and to raise money for a charity very close to my heart.

Today at work, I was awarded the fundraiser award. I could not have done it without my family’s support and for all the donations I received.

Thank you so much, I am super grateful 🧡 🌈 🧡 ”

Samantha Walker



Connections with Scotland

My grandfather, Adam Galt, was born in 1876. He was a chorister at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. Later he designed and made beautiful furniture for Cavendish House.

My grandmother Ann Galt was born in 1878. She painted pictures and quickly completed crosswords.

My mother, Margaret Logan Galt, was born in 1917. I was born in April 1947 and my brother was born in April 1953.

I spent my first eleven months in Broadway. My brother and I grew up in Winchcombe. I now live in Cheltenham.

I have been at the Edinburgh tattoo. I have also been at Oban, Mull, Inverness, Glasgow and Paisley. I have visited my Scottish cousins.

Marion Godden



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The Lighthouse Stevensons

Author Bella Bathurst, Published by Flamingo, Edition year 2000.

A comprehensive study of the Scottish Stevenson family of engineers covering the period 1790-1971. Intriguingly the engineering part of the story starts with Thomas Smith, a lamp maker in the rapidly developing area of New Town, Edinburgh, who married an independent-minded widow Jane Stevenson. Jane already had a son Robert who fortunately, for many of us who have ventured out on ships, did not take to a classical education but was enthralled by his stepfather's iron works. Thomas took Robert on as an apprentice. At this time there were few lights around the Scottish and English coasts. Thomas and Robert badgered the Northern Lighthouse Board of Scotland (England had and still has Trinity House) into establishing more lights around the coast, vital in this era as sea trade rapidly grew and wrecks were frequent and usually resulted in loss of all hands, and more importantly (to the traders) loss of cargo and profits!

Thomas and Robert, in particular, set out to rectify this situation. It was a hazardous and often dangerous job. Their workmen were at the mercy of the sea, not only from landing on the dangerous storm-washed rocks, but often having to build perilous barracks raised on steel stanchions above the high-tide waves. Alan Robertson once spent two weeks trapped with his men in a metal barrack, with no relief, constantly in danger of being swept away. In addition to these dangers was the danger of attack by the local clans and indigenous people who relied on wrecks, not only for a few luxuries washed ashore but the very timber for their protection from the extreme weather.

I found Bella's presentation of these challenges fascinating, proving that 'fact is often stranger than fiction'. A great celebration of ingenious engineering overcoming adversity to the benefit of all sea goers.

John Moles

With thanks to my sister, Jen Church, for recommending and lending this book to me.

Footnote:

Gaelic

I have a great respect for the communities that continue to preserve their original languages. As Keith Knightly's song, 'Roots', goes, "Seed, bud, flower, fruits, never going to grow without their roots".

Scottish Gaelic (as opposed to Irish Gallic) has been the traditional language of Scotland since the thirteenth century. As Roddy Maclean, a Gaelic speaker made clear on the radio programme 'Word of mouth' 27 August 2026, Gaelic is unique in its structure of verb-object-subject. His example was 'The cat ate the rat' becomes in Gaelic 'Ate the cat the rat'.

Now returning to 'The lighthouse Stevensons': The Stevensons like most of the Edinburgh entrepreneurs of the 1800 spoke only English or Lowland Scots. This led to an additional demand to those already mentioned in my article when it came to erecting lighthouses on the Highland Coasts. Here it was necessary to employ either bilingual foreman or an

interpreter. Just try arranging and instructing your children, grandchildren or friends 'verb-subject-object'. This required great skill by those foremen and interpreters and diplomatic skill by the Stevensons, themselves, when working with skilled Highland workmen.

As we have been exploring lighthouses, many on islands, the author of 'Treasure Island' therefore seems a suitable footnote.

Yes, Robert Louis was part of the Lighthouse Stevenson family and, as per his siblings and forbears, he trained as an engineer, but ill health precluded him from following this physically demanding profession and so he turned to his next love, literature, and so therefore, once again, the Stevensons demonstrated their dexterity of mind to our benefit. Robert senior to lighthouses, and his ancestors to the development of the building and the modernisation of the lights themselves, and Robert Louis to great stories inspired by his family's monuments and travails.

John Moles

Scottish Holidays

I have enjoyed several holidays in Scotlandone which stands out in my mind was in 1967. My husband, in-laws and I drove all around Scotland. My husband did all the driving some 2000 miles if I remember correctly. The holiday was in June for approximately 2 weeks. It was B & B and the most expensive was £1 10s (equivalent to £1.50) which included supper. The weather was very kind and the venues were varied. One that was special was a night spent near Balmoral Castle with a lovely view of the Castle grounds. We visited Crathie Church (no service that day) and the Village Shop where our dear late Queen used to purchase her special items.

I dread to think what that holiday would cost nowadays and am more than happy to join Lochs & Glens for their organised coach holidays!!!!

Marilyn Powell

Marle Hill WI

We met on Monday 7 September 2026.

We celebrated our birthday with a bring-a-plate-of-food party and invited two members from nearby WI's.

Our speaker was Daiziel Ellis whose talk was entitled "Poetry, but not as you know it". She was very entertaining with poems she had written and finished with limericks.

Our monthly lunch and book club dates were given out to the members.

Do come and join us and have some ME time and enjoy the company of like-minded ladies.

Our next meeting is on Monday 5 October 2026 and our speaker will be Helen Plumb whose talk is about Glorious Gemstones.

We will have the usual Bring and Buy table with items left over going to the charity shop.

If you want any more information, contact Sara Jefferies.

Sue Davies

Book Review:**Unwinding Anxiety by Judson Brewer, MD, PhD**

If you have spent hours worrying or feeling sick about problems that don't actually exist, or even worse, carrying around a sense of dread where you have no idea what it is you're worried about; that's the sort of thing *Unwinding Anxiety* by Dr Judson Brewer is about.

His contention is that habits, including anxiety, exist because at some point they provided a reward that was sufficiently compelling to make the habit-following part of your brain seek that reward. You were getting some benefit (a sense of control, a sense of being prepared, temporary reassurance, etc.) out of the anxiety reaction, which is why the anxiety habit formed in the first place.

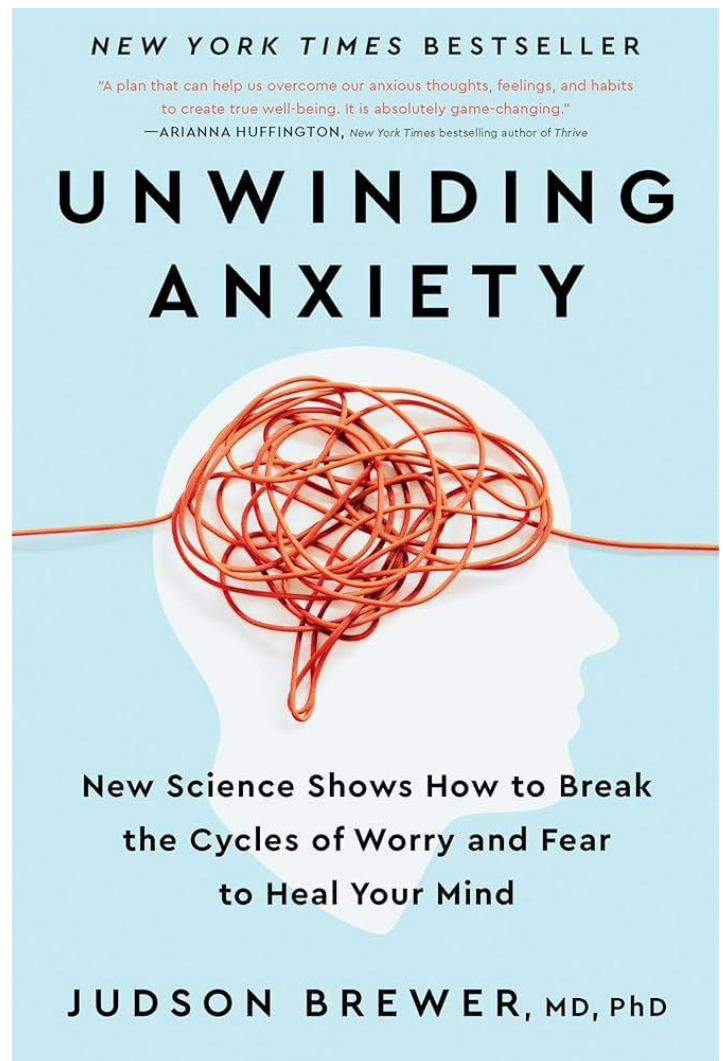
Brewer claims that raw willpower is not a useful way to break habits in general and anxiety habits in particular. In order to displace the habit, you have to retrain the part of your brain that runs habits on autopilot. Attempting to override it with wilful effort is exhausting and likely to fail.

Brewer suggests letting the habit happen but then focusing (via mindfulness) on how following the habit makes you feel, whether it improves your sense of well-being or worsens it, and whether other actions produce different feelings. The goal is to provide feedback to the habit-following part of your brain that can dislodge the habit. If the habit is recognized as no longer rewarding, it will weaken.

Brewer demystifies anxiety without minimizing it. He gives readers real tools like the "trigger-behaviour-reward" loop and mindfulness hacks that can be integrated into daily life. One of the most powerful insights from the book is this: when we meet our anxiety with curiosity instead of fear, we interrupt its grip. Curiosity becomes a tool, and not just a trait.

Unwinding Anxiety doesn't promise instant calm. But it does offer a path forward. This is definitely a book I recommend for anyone who is struggling with anxiety or even just wants to understand what it means.

Nick Hunt



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BLASTED OUT OF A CHURCH GRAVEYARD

- not some Ghoulish Tale or Terror Plot?

In the centre of the village of Stoney Stanton in Leicestershire stands the 12/13 century Grade 2* starred church of St Michael. It is surrounded by a graveyard which for many years has been closed because it became full, and the 'new' cemetery is nearby.....itself now nearly full. There is evidence of an earlier church building, and a Saxon Tympanum is incorporated in the building over the Vestry Door.

As the name of the village suggests the ground on which it stands is of granite and it is surrounded by farms. The main industries were farming and quarrying. The quarry workings finished in the 1920s. The quarries produced, as well as great wealth for their owners, granite for making setts and other stonework, roads. There was a quarry railway between the main quarries to sidings alongside the village leading to the main Birmingham and Leicester railway line. Those quarry lines and the slag heaps have all disappeared long since. One of the largest quarries, Lanes Hill Quarry, became filled with water over the years and is now Stoney Cove, a national deep sea diving centre (132ft deep at its deepest) with training facilities and is a busy mecca for deep sea divers. St Michael's Church is built on a granite outcrop in the centre of the village, and its walls are clad with granite.

When Phyllis and I moved to Stoney Stanton in 1978, at the church, we met Harvey Abbott, Lay Reader and Churchwarden. He, in his early years, had been a supervisor at Lanes Hill Quarry. He told us about how they solved the problem of providing grave space for burials in the churchyard. They obtained dynamite from the quarry and blasted out the grave space required but, he said, the bones in the adjacent graves would be blown out with the blast! I am sure everything was shovelled back and no one was the wiser? I am sure Faculties didn't exist then.

The graveyard monuments only go back to the 1700s. What happened to the earlier ones? There was a small population then of a few hundred souls. Another interesting fact is that Stoney Stanton is only about 3 miles from The Fosse Way, the route of the ancient Roman road. Did the Roman military get road surface materials from the area?

I often thought how undignified and disrespectful the blasting of grave spaces was to the adjacent grave inhabitants...but then I recalled visiting Rothwell Parish Church some years ago. Rothwell is a large village between Market Harborough and Kettering both of which I visited in my work. Rothwell Parish Church is of 12C origin with evidence of an earlier church building on that site. It has a subterranean crypt, the charnel chapel. I did manage to visit it seeing all the skulls and bones on open shelves around the walls. But what happened to the rest of the bones of each occupant? All there seemed to be for each was a skull and a few bones. Perhaps the blasting out at Stoney Stanton all those years ago and losing adjacent bones was not considered so bad after all. It was a practical solution to the essential need to bury folk at their church.

This reminds me of when I started conducting audits and visited a large Funeral Director premises. By inspection, I was verifying the large stock of coffins and funeral accessories. Rather naively, I told the manager the coffin stock was about 10 short. With a smile he said, 'You haven't been in the mortuary...you need to see and include the work in preparation'. I was led into the mortuary where there were about 10 bodies laid out being prepared alongside their coffins. The stock was all correct....and I didn't have my lunch after that.

Eddie Bestwick

Forthcoming Events

Harvest Festivals

Sunday 4 October in St Mary's Church; and

Sunday 18 October in St Nicolas' Church

Bereavement Friendship Group

**We will be meeting in St Mary's Church, Prestbury
on Monday 19 October at 2.15-4pm**

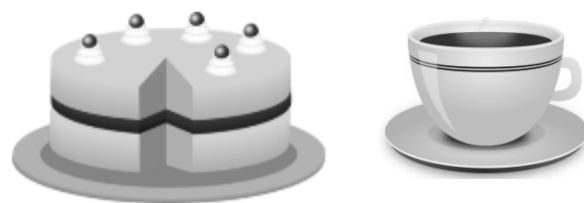
If you have lost a loved one and would like to talk to others in a similar situation, please come along. You will be most welcome, whether you are new or have come before.

Light refreshments will be provided.

Sue Challenger

Welcome On Wednesday

**Wednesday 21 October at 2.30pm in the
St Nicolas Room.** There will be home-made cakes, tea or coffee for £2 and the chance to meet friends and have a friendly chat. So please come along, maybe bringing a neighbour? Give it a try!



The editor hopes you have enjoyed this issue with its Scottish theme.

You can see and learn more of the culture of Scotland if you have satellite television or a good broadband service by watching BBC ALBA (pronounced al-la-ba). Using the iPlayer is more convenient as you can watch programmes at times to suit yourself.

The programmes on ALBA are mostly with speech in Gaelic (they pronounce as garlic) with English subtitles and are especially good if you enjoy traditional Scottish music. BBC Scotland is broadcast in English.

Whisky Tasting at The Royal Oak

*Friends of St Mary's Church, Prestbury
Accompanied by Cake and Cheeses*



*6 Whiskies will be Available to Try
An Expert will Introduce each one
Cheese and Biscuits
& Fruit Cake*

**Monday 16 November 2026
7.30pm Royal Oak, The Burgage
Tickets £25**

Tickets: Text/WhatsApp Helen Eagger 07765 903406

TIMES OF REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

St Mary's Church, Prestbury

Sunday		0800	Eucharist
	1st Sunday	0930	Breakfast Celebrate! – All-age worship
	Other Sundays	0900	Breakfast Celebrate!
		1100	Sung Eucharist
	1st Sunday	1830	Evening Prayer at Capel Court
	2nd Sunday	1800	Benediction
	Other Sundays	1800	Evening Prayer
Thursday		1030	Said Eucharist

St Nicolas Church, Prestbury

Sunday		0930*	Sung Eucharist
Tuesday		1000	Said Eucharist

All Saints Church, Pittville

Sunday		0800	Holy Mass
		1030*	Solemn Mass
Weekdays			Holy Mass usually on 3 days, check noticeboard
Saturday	1st Saturday	1000	Holy Mass for Our Lady of Walsingham

St Lawrence Church, Swindon Village

Sunday	1st Sunday	0930	Family Communion
		1700	Evensong
	2nd Sunday	0930	BCP Holy Communion
	3rd Sunday	0930	Holy Communion
		1700	Evensong
	4th Sunday	0930	Holy Communion
	5th Sunday	1000	Benefice Holy Communion
			alternates with St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene Church, Elmstone Hardwicke

Sunday	1st Sunday	1100	Holy Communion
	2nd Sunday	1100	Family Service (no communion)
	3rd Sunday	1100	Holy Communion
	4th Sunday	1100	Holy Communion
	5th Sunday	1000	Benefice Holy Communion
			alternates with St Lawrence

* These services are usually streamed on the internet. These and other services are recorded so may be accessed live or later on the Team's YouTube page -

<https://www.youtube.com/NorthCheltenhamTeamMinistry/streams>

Parish Directory *continued*

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Safeguarding Officer

Linda Biggs 07769 581822

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St Mary's C of E (VA) Schools

Executive Head Teacher: Mr Matt Ferris
01242 383817

Hall Letting

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bookings@prestburyhall.com
St Nicolas Hall, Swindon Lane
hallhire@northchelt.org.uk

Parish Giving Scheme

76 Kingsholm Road,
Gloucester GL1 3BD 0333 002 1260
info@parishgiving.org.uk

Copy Dates and Themes for Future Magazines 2026

Issue	Copy Date	Theme
November Sunday	11 October	Wales
Dec / Jan Sunday	15 November	Memorials

Prestbury Parish Magazine is usually published on the last Sunday of the month. The copy date is usually the Sunday 2 weeks before this, but there may be scope for some flexibility.

Copy may be sent in a clearly marked envelope to 'Prestbury Parish Magazine'
2 Honeysuckle Close, Prestbury, Cheltenham, GL52 5LN
or preferably by email to magazine@prestbury.net

November 2026 Magazine Theme: Wales
Please send copy by Sunday 11 October 2026
or very soon after



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