

A Candlelit Christmas Evening

Tuesday 16th December 2025

with

Dominic West and Lucy Fleming

and

**The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford
conducted by Mark Williams**

at Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire

This event is organised by Autism at Kingwood and volunteers. Autism at Kingwood supports autistic people to live successfully in their own homes. All proceeds from this evening will support the charity's vital work.

Registered charity number 1041924



The Henley BOAT CLUB



Luxury Membership Boating
with Hobbs of Henley

Antaris Connery 25 'Aquavir'



Alfastreet 23 'Evo'



Olympic Class



Exclusive membership boating on the Thames at Henley.

Enjoy a fleet of luxury self-drive launches whenever you like, for a one-off annual fee.
For incentivised, hassle-free boating, call us today.

Hobbs of Henley is also open for river trips and self-drive hire by the hour or day.

Hobbs of Henley
Station Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 1AZ.
Telephone (01491) 572 035 • boats@hobbsofhenley.co.uk • www.hobbsofhenley.com



A Candlelit Evening of Christmas music and readings



The Choir of Magdalen College Oxford, conductor Mark Williams, Organists Drew Sellis, Henry Morris, and Sea-Am Thompson. With Lucy Fleming and Dominic West.

Audience Carol

Once in Royal David's City

Words Cecil Frances Alexander, music
Henry Gauntlett, arr. David Willcocks
v.1 Solo, v.2 Choir, vv.3&4 All
Words on page 11

Readings

St John 1:1-14

An excerpt from Let it Go

Dame Stephanie Shirley

Choir

Bogoroditsye Dyevo Sergei Rachmaninoff
I Wonder As I Wander Carl Ruti

Choir

O Adonai Roderick Williams



Readings

From: For the Time Being W H Auden

From: Sketches by Boz Charles Dickens

Choir

In The Bleak Midwinter Becky McGlade
Sussex Carol Trad. arr. Timothy Parsons

Reading

**A Yorkshire Nativity: from Head Over
Heels in the Dales** Gervase Phinn



Choir

Gaudete Trad. arr. Brian Kay
Follow that Star Peter Gritton
Balulalow Benjamin Britten

Audience Carol

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

Trad. arr. David Willcocks
Words on page 21

Choir

Carol of the Bells Mykola Leontovich

Reading with Choir

The Twelve Days of Christmas

John Julius Norwich, arr. Edward Watson



Readings

A Carol for Children Ogden Nash

An excerpt from Let it Go

Dame Stephanie Shirley

Choir

Still, still, still Trad. arr. Bob Chilcott
Winter Wonderland Felix Bernard,
arr. Robert Rice



Reading

From: In Memoriam Alfred Lord Tennyson

Choir

Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas
Hugh Martin & Ralph Blane, arr. Grayston Ives

Audience Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Trad. arr. David Willcocks
Words on page 28



Organ

In Dulci Jubilo BWV 729

Johann Sebastian Bach

DOMINIC WEST



DOMINIC WEST is an internationally renowned actor whose film credits include: *The Square*; *Pride*; *300*; *Downton Abbey*; *Colette*; *Tomb Raider*; *Testament Of Youth*; *Mona Lisa Smile*; *The Awakening*; *The Forgotten*; *Johnny English Reborn*; *John Carter*; *Centurion*; *Chicago*; *Rockstar*; *28 Days*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Surviving Picasso*; *Richard III* and *Three Joes*. Dominic can most recently be seen in Simon Curtis' *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale* and we will next see him on the big screen in Pablo Trapero's *& Sons*.

In television, Dominic won a BAFTA award for *Appropriate Adult* and was BAFTA nominated for *Burton & Taylor*. He was nominated for Golden Globes in *The Crown*; *The Affair* and *The Hour*. He starred in *The Wire* for HBO; *Les Misérables*; *SAS: Rogue Heroes*; *The Pursuit Of Love*; *Call My Agent* and *Stateless* at the BBC. He has played Dr. Chris Cox in all six seasons of Joe Gilgun's hit comedy *Brassic*. Dominic can be most recently seen in Steven Knight's *Rogue Heroes* and the Paramount+ series, *The Agency*, in which he guest stars alongside Michael Fassbender and Richard Gere.

Dominic's theatre career began at The Almeida in *The Silver Tassle* followed by a year in Peter Halls company at the Old Vic in *Waste*; *Cloud Nine* and *The Seagull* for which he won the Ian Charleson award. He performed in *The Voyage Inheritance* at the National Theatre and in *De La Guarda* at the Roundhouse. At the Sheffield Crucible he starred in *The Country Wife* for Michael Grandage and Daniel Evans' *My Fair Lady* and *Othello*.

In the West End he starred in *Butley* at the Duchess; *Rock N Roll* at Duke of Yorks and opposite Helen McCrory in *As You Like It* at Wyndhams. At the Donmar Warehouse he starred in Calderon's *Life Is A Dream* and Christopher Hampton's revival of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Last year, Dominic performed in Arthur Miller's *A View From The Bridge* at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London.



LUCY FLEMING



LUCY FLEMING has extensive performing experience in theatre, television and film.

Theatre: *When Did You Last See My Mother*, *As You Like It*, *Richard II*, *A Patriot For Me*, *Hay Fever*, *A Kind of Alaska*, *Our Song*, *That Good Night*, *The Constant Wife* and *As Good a Time as Any* at The Print Room.

Her many TV appearances include *Richard II*, *Smiley's People*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Avengers*, *A Dance to the Music of Time*, *Mr Bean*, *Rosemary and Thyme* and *Law and Order*. She played Jenny in the 1970's series, *Survivors*.

On film Lucy featured in Ken Loach's *A Misfortune*, as well as *The Sorrows*, *Katherine Mansfield*, and *The Boat That Rocked* among others. She played Lady Wavell in *Viceroy's House*.

On Radio 4 she is Miranda Elliot in *The Archers*. Recently she filmed *Gifts of the Heart* written and directed by Chris Craymer and was in *Love, Sarah*- a feature film starring Celia Imrie.

Lucy and her husband Simon Williams perform '*Posting Letters to the Moon*' round the country. They read her parents' wartime letters.

Her parents were Celia Johnson of *Brief Encounter* fame and author and explorer, Peter Fleming.

postingletterstothemoon.com



The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford



The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford was founded in 1480, as one of the largest choral foundations in late-medieval England, and this historic legacy has been preserved and maintained over five centuries. The Choir exists primarily to sing the daily services in Magdalen College Chapel, and also sings at a number of special occasions throughout the year, including the famous May Day celebrations, an ancient tradition dating back to the 16th century. The choristers are educated at Magdalen College School, and the Academical Clerks are ordinarily undergraduate members of the College, studying a range of subjects.

The Choir has appeared in the BBC Proms and at venues across the UK, Europe and the USA, as well as collaborating with a number of orchestras including Britten Sinfonia, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. They have won a Gramophone award, and appeared on film and TV soundtracks.

The Choir has recorded for Harmonia Mundi and Opus Arte, and since 2024 has released a number of albums on CORO, the recording label of The Sixteen, one of the world's leading choirs, founded and directed by former Academical Clerk and Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Harry Christophers CBE.

Choristers

Ayan Chowdhury
Vladimir Brundukov
Enqi Fang
Raymond Chen
Matthew Liu
Evan Liu
Atharv Shanmugaraj
Anthony Vinal
Nikolai Brundukov
Joe Xing
Ethan Pant
Philippos Dimitriou
Etienne Durodie
Aryan Arora
Aditya Guru Murthy
Frankie Cheng
Jude Lau

Academical Clerks & Organists

Altos

Sadie Boshier
Kavin Ravishankar
Beth Stenlake
David Caldarella

Tenors

Aidan Atkinson
Jack Bowley
Jack Evans
Elliott Gregg

Basses

Gabriel Armstrong
Cornelius Nowicki
Ioan O'Reilly
John Morshead

Organists

Drew Sellis
Henry Morris
Sea-am Thompson

MARK WILLIAMS



Mark Williams has been *Informator Choristarum*, Organist and Tutorial Fellow of Magdalen College since January 2017. He was responsible for introducing to the Choir the first female Academical Clerks in the College's history and, for five years, he oversaw a project to replace the Chapel's organ with a new four-manual instrument by Hermann Eule Orgelbau of Bautzen, Germany, which was unveiled to wide acclaim in January 2023.

Mark studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was for six years Assistant Organist of St Paul's Cathedral and Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral School. Between 2009 and 2016, he held the post of Director of Music, College Lecturer and Fellow at Jesus College, Cambridge. He has appeared as organist, harpsichordist and conductor internationally and on disc with many of the UK's leading ensembles, including Britten Sinfonia, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the City of London Choir; the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Cambridge Singers, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, The King's Consort, The Sixteen, Arcangelo, and the Gabrieli Consort and Players. He appears on over 40 discs and a number of soundtracks, and has appeared as a broadcaster on the BBC and as a recitalist, conductor, visiting speaker and lecturer in the UK, USA, India, China, South Africa, Zambia and several European countries. He is the Artistic Director of the William Byrd Festival which takes place annually in Portland, Oregon, USA, and a trustee of a number of charities focused on musical education both in the UK and abroad. He has worked with pop groups, crossover artists and appeared on major Hollywood film scores, and has acted as musical consultant for various television programmes, including the ITV crime drama, *Endeavour*.

Further information about the Choir can be obtained from Griselda Sherlaw-Johnson, PA to the *Informator Choristarum*, at Magdalen College:

email: choir@magd.ox.ac.uk

Tel: **01865 286701**

www.magd.ox.ac.uk

www.magdalencollegechoir.com



DAME STEPHANIE SHIRLEY CH

The Autism at Kingwood family were deeply saddened by the death of our Founder Dame Stephanie Shirley this year.

Dame Stephanie, or Steve as she liked to be known, established Autism at Kingwood in 1994, initially to support her late autistic son Giles, who had spent 11 years in a psychiatric hospital.

Dame Stephanie and her husband Derek bought a house in the village of Kingwood Common in Oxfordshire, where Giles could live and – for the first time in his life – be supported to make his own decisions about his life.

Steve said that it took years to 'de-institutionalise' Giles, but gradually he flourished, enjoying walks, painting and his pet cat. After a time, Steve and Derek felt that the home could support another young man, James, who we still support today.

This was Autism at Kingwood's model for supported living; another home was opened in Reading and then another in Abingdon, all enabling the autistic adults to live successfully in their own homes and to access their community. Now we support approximately 100 autistic people – many with learning disabilities.

Autism at Kingwood is the first of three autism charities that Dame Stephanie established. In 1999, she set up Prior's Court School, a residential school for autistic children and young adults, which, she said, would have been the school her son Giles would have gone to, had such a school existed. Her third autism charity Autistica, was founded in 2004 to fund research into autism.

Steve had a remarkable life. She arrived in Britain as an unaccompanied five-year-old child refugee on the Kindertransport in 1939. She and her sister were fostered by a loving couple, and Steve went on to study mathematics at university. In the early 1960s, she began a career path in computing, but now married with a baby, was frustrated with the low expectations and inequality that women faced in the workplace.

So, in 1963 Steve started her own company, Freelance Programmers, selling software, recruiting other women



and pioneering 'working from home'. The company was hugely successful and was floated in 1996, making 70 employees millionaires through the company's generous employee share scheme.

Steve went on to set up The Shirley Foundation, a charitable trust that enabled her to found Prior's Court and Autistica and support many other ventures and charities in the field of technology, women and technology and autism.

In 2000, Steve was made a Dame in the Millennium Honours List for services to the computing industry. In 2017, Steve was appointed Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour, a membership limited to only 65 individuals globally, for her services to the IT industry and philanthropy.

Not one to miss out on a party, Steve loved to celebrate our milestones with us! In 2024, on our 30th anniversary, Steve spoke of being 'enormously proud of Kingwood' and was genuinely excited about our plans to forge a stronger bond with her 'second' charity Prior's Court, as we support young adults who are leaving the school and starting their journey into adult social care with us.

Sarah Butcher MBE, CEO at Autism at Kingwood said: "Steve's enduring legacy is defined by her unwavering drive, passion, and commitment – qualities that will continue to inspire and guide our work with autistic people."

**Dame Stephanie Shirley CH
16 September 1933 – 9 August 2025**

A new model of support for young autistic adults



The funds raised this evening will support a major project that we have embarked upon this year – to create a purpose-designed house that will support ten high-need young adults with learning disabilities as they leave school and enter our adult social care.

All too often, high-need young autistic adults 'fall off a cliff' when they transition to adult social care. After being ably supported at autism specialist schools, families go through the fraught process of seeking appropriate support within their local authority for their loved one. Specialist autism school Prior's Court in Newbury reported that over the last few years, 35% of adult placements resulted in a placement breakdown or some kind of difficulty.

Prior's Court found that local authority Adult Social Care departments were often unprepared for the young adults coming into adult social care. We also know there is a lack of specialist providers with appropriate environments and skillsets to support these young adults.

Autism at Kingwood has been delivering specialist supported living care for over 30 years. We will be working closely with Prior's Court, other schools and family members to ensure that young adults coming into our care will continue to receive the individualised support they are familiar with. We will work to seamlessly bridge the gap between the more formal education setting the young adult will be familiar with, and the growth, development, and lifelong learning they require as they transition into adulthood.

We will start to welcome young adults in early 2026 and will have a full house by June.

Dame Stephanie was thrilled about this project. If you would like to support our project further, please scan the QR code below.





Improved Hearing Is Improved Quality of Life

Take control of your hearing health today

Your local independent hearing and ear wax removal specialist

Wax Removal

Professional ear wax removal using microsuction, irrigation and instrumentation

Hearing Aids

Latest technology hearing aids

Hearing Consultations

Comprehensive hearing evaluations

Custom Ear Protection

Custom made solutions to protect your ears while swimming or in excessive noise

Look no further, expert advice is now not far from you.

Book online or give us a call.

Home visits for ear wax removal are available in Didcot, Wantage and Abingdon

Website: www.resonatehearingcentre.co.uk - **Phone:** 01235 838515

Harwell Innovation Centre, Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Building 173, Curie Avenue, Didcot OX11 0QG

ARDINGTON BAKERY

We are delighted to support Autism at Kingwood.

Wishing everyone a joyous festive season!



www.ardingtonbakery.co.uk

Once in Royal David's City



Audience carol

1 Solo

Once in royal David's city,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby,
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little Child

2 Choir only

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall:
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy

3 All

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above:
And He leads His children on,
To the place where He is gone

4 All

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him: but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high,
Where like stars his children crowned,
All in white shall wait around.

Words C F Alexander (1818-95), music H J Gauntlett (1805-76), arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015).

Proud to support Autism at Kingwood



For further details about scouting at Clifton Hampden and Burcot,
please contact Ian by email: chab@thameschilternscouts.org.uk



£590
build fee
fully hosted
managed & supported
£54
pm

beautiful & affordable websites for any business

With Idio you don't have to make any compromises on style, layout and content. Everything we do is from scratch and to the highest standards.

And because of our approach, our prices are affordable but our support is still the best in the market.

Find out more and get started now:

sales@idioweb.co.uk

01628 200 614



Proud to support
our suppliers

Proud to support
our community

Have a
wonderful evening!

your
coopfood

St John 1:1-14



- 1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2** The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- 4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 5** And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
- 6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
- 7** The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.
- 8** He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.
- 9** That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
- 10** He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
- 11** He came unto his own, and his own received him not.
- 12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
- 13** Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- 14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth. ✨

Millets Farm

Sharing our passion for food, shopping and entertainment



SHOP

Millets Farm is truly homegrown and has been run by the Carter family since 1952. We take great pride in providing a unique destination for the whole family which we hope you enjoy visiting time and time again.

EAT

Our Farm Shop has a huge selection of homegrown, local and handmade goodies. The Garden Centre offers a wide choice of plants together with inspiring leisure departments.

PLAY

The Farmhouse Kitchen serves a seasonal menu of delicious home-cooked meals using our own produce and other local ingredients. Or enjoy a lighter lunch or relaxing drink in the Café within the Garden Centre.

To find out more about our huge choice of activities and events; from indoor play, farmyard golf and falconry centre to PYO Pumpkins, artisan markets and Christmas Grotto please visit our website or scan the QR code.



VOCO

AN IHG HOTEL

Oxford Thames

Escape to **voco Oxford Thames**, where timeless charm meets modern comfort. Nestled on the River Thames, this elegant retreat offers stylish rooms, tranquil spa facilities, and exquisite dining. **The perfect venue to host weddings or corporate events**, celebrating Oxford's heritage with warmth and sophistication.

General enquiries +44 (0)1865 334444 | oxfordthames.reception@ihg.com

oxfordthames.vocohotels.com

An excerpt from Dame Stephanie Shirley's memoir Let it Go



My earliest memory of England is of Liverpool Street station. It was a grey day in July, a few weeks before the outbreak of the Second World War. I was five years old. My nine-year-old sister, Renate, and I had been travelling for more than two days, on a grim tearful journey from Vienna. We knew scarcely half a dozen words of English between us, and I, at least, had only the vaguest idea of where we were going and why.

There were about 1,000 of us on the train: all Jewish; all children – apart from two young women charged with looking after us all; and nearly all distraught. We had numbered tickets hanging around our necks as if we were lost property. In a sense, we were.

We were among the last – and I was almost the youngest – of around 10,000 child refugees who were saved from Hitler's terror by that great gamble of hope and despair that came to be known as the Kindertransport. For much of the previous year, millions of Jews within Germany and Austria had been struggling to come to terms with the once unthinkable truth that the civilised nations in which their lives were rooted had descended into deadly barbarism. Many calculated – correctly – that staying-put was equivalent to signing their families' death warrants...and some families, including mine, via the Refugee Children's movement, decided they had no choice but to send their children away to Britain to be fostered.

It is almost impossible, from the comfort and safety of today, to imagine the mental agonies that such parents must have endured.

...It is hard, after all these years, to be certain how many of the remembered details are real and how much I have added to my mental picture from other sources. ...I am pretty certain that children slept on the floor – there were large strips of cardboard that they used as mattresses. I presume that I slept too, although I cannot remember doing so. I think our parents had given us sandwiches for the journey; but, again, I may be wrong. ...I know, too, that I clung grimly to my favourite doll...we eventually reached the Channel and I vaguely remember a nauseous crossing in a cabin below deck...some children slept on luggage racks...and scarcely a moment in those two-and-a-half days of travelling when our miseries weren't exacerbated by the sound of people's crying.

What about my sense that, when we finally arrived at Liverpool Street, the platform was silent? It seems somehow implausible, and perhaps I have merely projected the numbness of my emotions on to the past...our coats still bore the yellow stars we had been forced to wear in Austria.

I do not know how long we sat there. Eventually, however, Renate and I were summoned and led outside by a serious-looking, gruff-voiced, middle-aged man...A big red Morris car was parked nearby, with a middle-aged lady, wearing lots of make-up, waiting in the passenger seat. We all got in and drove off to our new life. 



Autism
CHAMPIONS CIC



Neuro-affirming autism support services in and around Oxfordshire

**Sign up for our monthly mailing list!
Be the first to know when our flagship
parenting course has launched online.**



From: For The Time Being by W H Auden



Well, so that is that. Now we must dismantle the tree,
Putting the decorations back into their cardboard boxes –
Some have got broken – and carrying them up to the attic.
The holly and the mistletoe must be taken down and burnt,
And the children got ready for school. There are enough
Left-overs to do, warmed-up, for the rest of the week –
Not that we have much appetite, having drunk such a lot,
Stayed up so late, attempted – quite unsuccessfully –
To love all of our relatives, and in general
Grossly overestimated our powers. Once again
As in previous years we have seen the actual Vision and failed
To do more than entertain it as an agreeable
Possibility, once again we have sent Him away,
Begging though to remain His disobedient servant,
The promising child who cannot keep His word for long.
The Christmas Feast is already a fading memory,
And already the mind begins to be vaguely aware
Of an unpleasant whiff of apprehension at the thought
Of Lent and Good Friday which cannot, after all, now
Be very far off. But, for the time being, here we all are,
Back in the moderate Aristotelian city
Of darning and the Eight-Fifteen, where Euclid's geometry
And Newton's mechanics would account for our experience,
And the kitchen table exists because I scrub it.
It seems to have shrunk during the holidays. The streets
Are much narrower than we remembered; we had forgotten
The office was as depressing as this. To those who have seen
The Child, however dimly, however incredulously,
The Time Being is, in a sense, the most trying time of all.
For the innocent children who whispered so excitedly
Outside the locked door where they knew the presents to be
Grew up when it opened. Now, recollecting that moment
We can repress the joy, but the guilt remains conscious;
Remembering the stable where for once in our lives
Everything became a You and nothing was an It. ✨



From: Sketches by Boz by Charles Dickens

Christmas time! That man must be a misanthrope indeed, in whose breast something like a jovial feeling is not roused – in whose mind some pleasant associations are not awakened – by the recurrence of Christmas. There are people who will tell you that Christmas is not to them what it used to be; that each succeeding Christmas has found some cherished hope, or happy prospect, of the year before, dimmed or passed away; that the present only serves to remind them of reduced circumstances and straitened incomes – of the feasts they once bestowed on hollow friends, and of the cold looks that meet them now, in adversity and misfortune. Never heed such dismal reminiscences. There are few men who have lived long enough in the world, who cannot call up such thoughts any day in the year. Then do not select the merriest of the three hundred and sixty-five for your doleful recollections, but draw your chair nearer the blazing fire – fill the glass and send round the song – and if your room be smaller than it was a dozen years ago, or if your glass be filled with reeking punch, instead of sparkling wine, put a good face on the matter, and empty it off-hand, and fill another, and troll off the old ditty you used to sing, and thank God it's no worse....

Who can be insensible to the outpourings of good feeling, and the honest interchange of affectionate attachment which abound at this season of the year. A Christmas family-party! We know nothing in nature more delightful! There seems a magic in the very name of Christmas. Petty jealousies and discords are forgotten, social feelings are awakened, in bosoms to which they have long been strangers; father and son, or brother and sister, who have met and passed with averted gaze, or a look of cold recognition, for months before, proffer and return the cordial embrace, and bury their past animosities in their present happiness. Kindly hearts that have yearned towards each other but have been withheld by false notions of pride and self-dignity, are again reunited, and all is kindness and benevolence! Would that Christmas lasted the whole year through! ❁

A Yorkshire Nativity: from Head Over Heels in the Dales by Gervase Phinn



I arrived at the small Roman Catholic primary school at Netherfoot the week before the school broke up for the holidays. I had volunteered to narrate the Christmas story to the infants but never reached the end. Dominic, a massively freckled boy with spiky ginger hair that stood up like a lavatory brush, positioned himself at my feet on the small carpet in the reading corner. To say he was hyper-active would be an understatement. He was lively and interested and his questions and comments came fast and furious.

I began: 'It was cold and dark that December night many, many, many years ago, and on the hillside, where the icy winds whistled through the dark trees –'

'I can whistle,' said Dominic puckering up his lips.

'And the grass was frosted and stiff with cold' –

'Do you want to hear me whistle?'

'Not now, I don't,' I said, 'perhaps later.' I continued with the story. 'Matthew, the little shepherd boy, huddled in a dry hollow with his sheep to keep warm. The cold winter wind blew about his ears, and high above him the dark sky was studded with millions of tiny silver stars –'

'Miss Stirling gives you a star if you do good work,' said Dominic.

'It wasn't that sort of star,' I said. 'These were like tiny diamonds sparkling in the darkness. This was the night that a very special baby was to be born.'

'Jesus.'

'That's right, it was Jesus.'

'I've heard this story already!' exclaimed Dominic. 'I know what happens.'

'We all know what happens, Dominic I responded, 'and we are going to hear what happens again,'

'Why?'

'Because we are.'

At this point, I caught sight of the priest quietly entering the classroom and positioning himself unobtrusively at the back.

'Now, very soon a very special baby would be born and his name, as Dominic has already told us, would be Jesus.'

'Was he induced?' asked Dominic.

'Pardon?'

'Was baby Jesus induced?'

'No, he wasn't induced.'

'I was induced.'

'Well, baby Jesus wasn't induced.'

'How do you know?'

'Well, I know because it was a long, long time ago and they didn't induce babies then.'

'Why?'

'Just listen to the story, Dominic, and then we will all find out what happens'

'But I know what happens,' he replied.

At this point, a little girl, with long blonde plaits and an angelic face, raised her hand.

'What does seduced mean?'

'Oh dear,' I sighed wearily, catching sight of the priest and the teacher attempting to stem their laughter. 'I will tell you another time – when you are older. Now let's get on with the story. 'And then amidst the tiny diamonds that sprinkled the dark sky there appeared a great shining star, a star that sparkled and gleamed with such a wondrous brilliant light that –'

'How much did he weigh?' asked Dominic.

'Who?'

'The baby Jesus?'

'I've not got to the baby Jesus yet.'

'I was an eight-pounder. My grannie said I was like a plucked turkey when –'

'Dominic!' I said very quietly and slowly.

'Now just listen to the story. You are spoiling it for all the other children.'

'I know how this story ends,' he replied undaunted.

'Then why don't you come out here and tell us all, Dominic,' I said, throwing in the towel.



And so he did. Like a seasoned actor taking centre stage he came out to the front of the class and recounted the Christmas story in such a simple, animated and confident way that we all listened in rapt silence.

'Once upon a time there was a man called Joseph and a lady called Mary and they were friends and they played games together and they had fun. Then they had a wedding and after the wedding they went home and then they had some lunch and a drink and then they set off for Bethlem on their honeymoon and they went on a donkey. When they got to Bethlem there was no room at the inn so they had to stay in a barn round the back and

then Mary had a little baby and she called it Jesus and she put him in a manger and all the animals were around him and the big star shone up in the sky and then the shepherds all came and then the three kings came and they all gave him presents because it was his birthday and baby Jesus had plenty of milk because there were lots of cows about.'

There was silence at the end of Dominic's story, then he looked at me and said, 'OK?'

'OK,' I replied, 'very OK'. 🌟

This extract from 'Head Over Heels in the Dales' is reproduced by kind permission of the author Gervase Phinn.



Creative Catering

ALL EVENT CATERING
WEDDINGS, WAKES,
GARDEN PARTIES,
BUSINESS LUNCHES
& PIG ROASTS

MOULSFORD 01235 850342
SHEILA 07743 368373

 CREATIVECATERINGBLEWBURY
CREATIVE-CATERER.CO.UK

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen



Audience carol

1 God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

2 From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

3 The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway,
This blessed Babe to find:
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

4 But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this Infant lay,
They found Him in a manger;
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray:
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

5 Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All other doth deface:
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.



The Twelve Days of Christmas by John Julius Norwich



With musical arrangement by Edward Watson.

25th December

My dearest darling,
That partridge, in that lovely little pear tree! What an enchanting, romantic, poetic present! Bless you and thank you.
Your deeply loving Emily.

26th December

My dearest darling Edward,
The two turtle doves arrived this morning and are cooing away in the pear tree as I write. I'm so touched and grateful.
With undying love, as always, Emily.

27th December

My darling Edward,
You do think of the most original presents: whoever thought of sending anybody three French hens? Do they really come all the way from France? It's a pity that we have no chicken coops, but I expect we'll find some. Thank you, anyway, they're lovely.
Your loving Emily.

28th December

Dearest Edward,
What a surprise – four calling birds arrived this morning. They are very sweet, even if they do call rather loudly – they make telephoning impossible. But I expect they'll calm down when they get used to their new home. Anyway, I'm very grateful – of course I am.
Love from Emily.

29th December

Dearest Edward,
The postman has just delivered five most beautiful gold rings, one for each finger, and all fitting perfectly. A really lovely present – lovelier in a way than birds, which do take rather a lot of looking after. The four that arrived yesterday are still making a terrible row, and I'm afraid none of us got much sleep last night. Mummy says she wants us to use the rings to 'wring' their necks – she's only joking, I think; though I know what she means. But I love the rings. Bless you.
Love, Emily.

30th December

Dear Edward,
Whatever I expected to find when I opened the front door this morning, it certainly wasn't six socking great geese laying eggs all over the doorstep. Frankly, I rather hoped you had stopped sending me birds – we have no room for them and they have already ruined the croquet lawn. I know you meant well, but – let's call a halt, shall we?
Love, Emily.

31st December

Edward,
I thought I said no more birds; but this morning I woke up to find no less than seven swans all trying to get into our tiny goldfish pond. I'd rather not think what happened to the goldfish. The whole house seems to be full of birds – to say nothing of what they leave behind them. Please, please STOP.
Your Emily.





1st January

Frankly, I think I prefer the birds. What am I to do with eight milkmaids – AND their cows? Is this some kind of a joke? If so, I'm afraid I don't find it very amusing.

Emily.

2nd January

Look here Edward, this has gone far enough. You say you're sending me nine ladies dancing; all I can say is that judging from the way they dance, they're certainly not ladies. The village just isn't accustomed to seeing a regiment of shameless hussies with nothing on but their lipstick cavorting round the green – and it's Mummy and I who get blamed. If you value our friendship – which I do less and less – kindly stop this ridiculous behaviour at once.

Emily.

3rd January

As I write this letter, ten disgusting old men are prancing about all over what used to be the garden – before the geese and the swans and the cows got at it; and several of them, I notice, are taking inexcusable liberties with the milkmaids. Meanwhile the neighbours are trying to have us evicted. I shall never speak to you again.

Emily.

4th January

This is the last straw. You know I detest bagpipes. The place has now become something between a menagerie and a madhouse and a man from the Council has just declared it unfit for habitation. At least Mummy has been spared this last outrage; they took her away yesterday afternoon in an ambulance. I hope you're satisfied.

5th January

Sir,

Our client, Miss Emily Wilbraham, instructs me to inform you that with the arrival on her premises at half-past seven this morning of the entire percussion section of the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra and several of their friends she has no course left open to her but to seek an injunction to prevent your importuning her further. I am making arrangements for the return of much assorted livestock.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully,

G. CREEP

Solicitor-at-law 

John Julius Norwich, arranged by Edward Watson



A Carol for Children by Ogden Nash



God rest you, merry Innocents,
Let nothing you dismay,
Let nothing wound an eager heart
Upon this Christmas day.

Yours be the genial holly wreaths,
The stockings and the tree;
An aged world to you bequeaths
Its own forgotten glee.

Soon, soon enough come crueller gifts,
The anger and the tears;
Between you now there sparsely drifts
A handful yet of years.

Oh, dimly, dimly glows the star
Through the electric throng;
The bidding in temple and bazaar
Drowns out the silver song.

The ancient altars smoke afresh,
The ancient idols stir;

Faint in the reek of burning flesh
Sink frankincense and myrrh.

Gaspar, Balthazar, Melchior!
Where are your offerings now?
What greetings to the Prince of War,
His darkly branded brow?

Two ultimate laws alone we know,
The ledger and the sword –
So far away, so long ago,
We lost the infant Lord.

Only the children clasp his hand;
His voice speaks low to them,
And still for them the shining band
Wings over Bethlehem.

God rest you, merry Innocents,
While innocence endures.
A sweeter Christmas than we to ours
May you bequeath to yours. ✨



At Bluespires, we provide cost-effective, expert IT Support and Cybersecurity Services to local businesses and charitable organisations across Oxfordshire.

If you're looking for a trusted, proactive partner to keep your data secure and your systems running smoothly, or simply need clear, friendly advice, we're here to help.

Our Services

- Fully Managed IT Support
- Cyber Security & Compliance Solutions
- Project Services & Consultancy

Bluespires – Your Trusted Local Partner

✓ Making IT Work ✓ Keeping IT Secure ✓ Supporting IT Better

bluespires.co.uk • 01865 959160 • support@bluespires.co.uk



An excerpt from Dame Stephanie Shirley's memoir Let it Go



I have known failure and heartbreak as well as success, but I have never quite lost sight of two life-defining ideas – both of which I can trace back to my arrival in England all those years ago as a terrified, weeping child refugee. The first is the conviction that even in the blackest moments of despair there is hope, if one can find the courage to pursue it. Sometimes the worst is less overwhelmingly awful than we fear; sometimes the right attitude can create good even from the most terrible situations.

My second big idea is the matching conviction that, even though I ostensibly lost everything when my parents were forced to send me away, I was not just the victim of bigotry and cruelty. I was also the fortunate beneficiary of the unearned generosity of many people:

the Jewish and Christian activists who set up Kindertransport, the Quakers who kept the project going when it ran out of money, the ordinary people who chipped in with the various tedious administrative tasks that allowed the project to function, the Catholic nuns who helped to educate me, and the quiet, middle-aged, nominally Anglican couple who took me in.

Without my being fully aware of what was going on or why, a large number of good-natured strangers took it upon themselves to save my life. It took me some years to digest this fact and its implications. But, once I had, a simple resolution took root deep in my heart: I had to make sure that mine was a life that had been worth saving. 🌟



WM

WHOLEmeal Restaurant

your new go to place to eat at the "HART" of the village

SPECIAL OCCASION
DINING



PROPER SUNDAY
ROASTS



EXCEPTIONAL
SPECIALS



THE PERFECT PLACE WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING TO START YOUR DAY OFF RIGHT WITH OUR SIGNATURE BREAKFAST MENU, FANTASTIC LUNCHES OR CELEBRATE A SPECIAL OCCASION IN OUR RELAXED AND TASTEFUL RESTAURANT

ENJOY 10% OFF

WITH OUR SPECIAL LOYALTY CARD, SIGN UP ON THE WEBSITE

WWW.WHITEHARTHOTEL.COM

THE WHITE HART HOTEL, HIGH ST, DORCHESTER ON THAMES

01865 340074 @WHITEHARTDOT

From: In Memoriam by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be. 🌟



01491 833366

"Flowers, the perfect gift this Christmas"

Door wreaths
Candle arrangements
Hand tied bouquets
Plants & more

Branching Out
FLORISTS LTD

Local same day delivery

www.branchingout-wallingford.co.uk

13 Market Place, Wallingford, OX10 0AD

O Come, All Ye Faithful



Audience carol

1 O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to
Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels:

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

2 God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten not created:

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

3 See how the Shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks,
draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

4 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
In the Highest:

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

Attributed to John Francis Wade.

Acknowledgements

Our most grateful thanks to:

Lucy Fleming
Dominic West
Mark Williams and
The Choir of Magdalen
College Oxford

for their performances this evening.

Special thanks to:

Hilary Colbert and
Barbara and Graham Williams,
without whom this event
wouldn't have taken place.

Grateful thanks for our
companies and individuals who
have provided services and
goods for us:

Branching Out
The White Hart Hotel

Close Care Home
Ardington Bakery
Mid-Counties Coop
Print Room Group
The Ethical Branding Co.

and to our advertisers:

Bluespires
Creative Catering
Hobbs of Henley
Idioweb
Millets Farm Centre
NewMedica
Oxford Voco
Resonate Hearing Centre
White Horse Lettings

We gratefully acknowledge our
team of volunteers:
Andy Barker
Alison Crook

Claire Dallimore
George Darlison
Sue Dickenson and Family
Caroline Dunstan
Sally Fever
Lynn Hart
Jackie Kirby
Mary Pinckney
Ady Riel
Ange Seymour
Maria Skinner
Barbara Talmage
Thames Chiltern Scouts

Thanks to:
Revd Claire Wren
for blessing our evening.

And lastly, thank you for
supporting our event.

YOUR LOCAL PRINT & MERCH PARTNER

SUPPORTING EVENTS, BUSINESSES & CHRISTMAS PROJECTS

» LARGE FORMAT PRINT

Roller banners • Foamex boards • Posters • Exhibition graphics

» SMALL FORMAT PRINT

Leaflets • Menus • Business cards • Table talkers

» BRANDED MERCHANDISE

Lanyards • Badges • Notepads • Pens • Giveaways

» PRINT-ON-DEMAND SERVICES

Warehousing • Fulfilment • Online ordering

**HIGH-QUALITY PRINT. FAST TURNAROUND.
EXPERT SERVICE.**

hello@printroom.co.uk | printroom.co.uk | 01344 452778

printroom
GROUP

An excerpt from from Dame Stephanie's speech at Kingwood's Silver Jubilee celebration



I have been asked to tell you about my son Giles and the beginning of Autism at Kingwood 25 years ago.

Giles was our only child. A beautiful baby who, at first, seemed to be doing well, if a bit slow, in his development. Then at two and a half, he lost the little speech he had and turned into a wild, unmanageable toddler. Not the Terrible Twos. The bombshell diagnosis was that he had autism – a condition then believed to be rare and affecting only boys. And he never spoke again.

I've tried over the years to give a voice to the voiceless. Autism is, quoting Churchill out of context, "A riddle, wrapped up in a mystery, inside an enigma".

Giles was hospitalised at age 13, when our family was in crisis. Then, as 11 sad years passed and as so often happens in institutions, he lost some of his human rights, so we decided to look after him ourselves again. By that time, we could afford paid help.

That was the very beginning of Autism at Kingwood, named simply after its original location on Kingwood Common. Giles was the first resident, indeed the only resident for several years, and he found a quiet, dignified life at Kingwood.

It took a long time to de-institutionalise him. Progress was slow; Giles' distress behaviour was far more than spitting and bad language.

He mostly refused to do anything, he thumped and banged things (including his head) and he occasionally lashed out at people. This was quite apart from his epilepsy, which was reasonably under control.

In between, he was a charming innocent who did his jigsaws and enjoyed his cat, Daisy.

When we were supporting three people (counting Giles) we were able to turn ourselves into a charity and by the time I was able to recruit a chair of trustees, there were ten residents happily integrated into their Thames Valley communities.

In 1998, Giles' unexpected death marked 'the end of the beginning' for the trust.

The death of a child is unimaginably painful. I found it well-nigh impossible regularly to be at Giles's home (my husband Derek never went back) and so I phased a handover of my trustee responsibilities at the end of the corporate year. My last link went in 2003 when Giles' cat died. Daisy was worth her weight in gold. A friend indeed.

The meaning of life is in the daily living of it. Autism at Kingwood understands this. I admire all the staff who continue to achieve by persevering where other services give up. 🌟

White Horse Lettings

Do you have a property to let out?

We're looking for good quality flats, houses and rooms and have tenants waiting to move in



We do ALL the
paperwork



NO FEES!



Long-term, hassle-free
tenancies



Comprehensive tenancy
sustainment support



Carefully vetted
tenants



Damage costs covered to
the value of six weeks' rent
Plus limited guaranteed rent

Contact us today
whitehorselettings@southandvale.gov.uk

01235 422435





Personalised care as standard

At Newmedica Oxfordshire we understand that every patient we see is unique, so the care we provide is truly personalised and inclusive. Our clinic is a calm environment where service dogs are welcomed, lighting can be adjusted, private waiting areas provided, and even your favourite music played during surgery.

Why wait for cataract surgery?

Avoid NHS waiting lists and get fast access to private care.

Call 01865 519 461 to book a free consultation

Visit [newmedica/clinics/oxfordshire](https://newmedica.com/clinics/oxfordshire) to see all our specialist eye care services

Newmedica Oxfordshire Avalon House,
Marcham Road, Abingdon, OX14 1TZ


Newmedica
Eye Health Clinics | Surgical Centres