

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



Services in July in Tring Team Parish

Sunday 3rd July

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
8am Holy Communion traditional language **Aldbury**
10am ** Holy Communion with Sunday Club **Tring**
10am Worship for All **Aldbury**
10am Sunday Worship **Long Marston**

Sunday 17th July

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am ** Holy Communion and Sunday Club **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
10am Sunday Worship **Long Marston**

Lots more going on in the parish

Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm Craft and a Cuppa **Tring**
Wednesdays 10am - 12noon Baby/toddler/carer drop-in **Tring**
Social Coffee Fridays, Saturdays 10am - 12 noon, after Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday services **Tring**,
Tuesdays 10.30 - 12noon **Wilstone**
Tuesdays 10.30 - 12noon **Aldbury**
Thursdays 10.30 - 12noon **Puttenham**

Mid-week Services in the Parish

9.15am Tuesdays Holy Communion **Tring**
10am Tuesdays Alternates weekly either Holy Communion or Morning Worship **Wilstone**
10am Thursdays Holy Communion in traditional language **Tring**

Worship for All and Communion Together

At these services we all worship together but there is more provision for children, however they are for everyone. Worship for All doesn't have Holy Communion, Communion Together does.

They are a more relaxed style of worship and are a bit shorter.

Holy Communion with Sunday Club in Tring

There are also times when it is important to have age related worship. We all worship in different ways so we have a Sunday Club in Tring. The children (0 - 11 years old) go upstairs during the first hymn to have activities then re-join the wider congregation to take communion.

Everyone is welcome to join us at any of our church services.

Sunday 10th July

8am **Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Worship for all **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
3pm Piano and More Concert **Tring**
6pm Celtic Evening Prayer **Long Marston**

Sunday 24th July

8am ** Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Communion Together **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
3.30pm Team Parish Evensong traditional language **Puttenham**
6pm Holy Communion **Long Marston**

Sunday 31st July

8am ** Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Communion Together **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
10am Holy Communion **Long Marston**
** Denotes streamed service on our website or YouTube Channel

Great is God's faithfulness



So is it raining or is the sun shining? We all know about the unreliable British summer. We all look ahead to the summer months with hope and on occasions we get those long, hot summer days, but we have also learnt from experience that it's wise to take a jumper and a raincoat if we are heading out for the day.

At St Martha's we recently sang the old hymn, 'Summer suns are glowing'. It's a hymn that always makes me think of hot summer days and how bright the world can look on those days. It puts a smile on my face and I give thanks to God for the beauty of his world and the

good things that he gives us. Rather than being about the beauty of creation however, the hymn is actually using the idea of the summer sun to speak about 'God's free mercy', of how his love and radiance shine across the world. Just as the sun shines across the land on those beautiful summer days, so God's love and mercy shines on our world and can lift our spirits.

The wonder of God's grace, however, is that unlike the 'summer suns', God's love for us is not unreliable. We don't need to worry from one day to the next about how God might be feeling, whether we might meet goodness or absence, grace or punishment. As we come to him, in God we will always find love and mercy shining on us.

The book of Lamentations was written at a time of struggle for God's people.

Jerusalem and the Temple have been destroyed and the people are having to face up to the fact that they have not been faithful to God. Yet through all that, Lamentations gives us these words: 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.'

Despite all that they were having to deal with, God's people were still able to trust in God's steadfast love and faithfulness. The same is true for us.

So whether 'clouds are drifting dark across our sky' today, or 'summer suns are glowing', I pray that each of us may know God's grace, mercy and love shining on us and know that they will never come to an end.

Rachael Hawkins
St Martha's Methodist Church

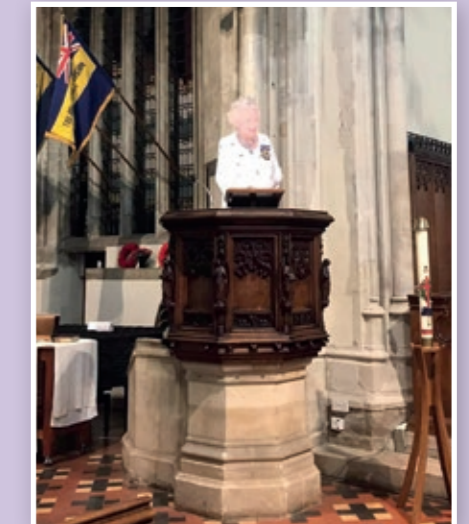
Editorial



Were you able to enjoy the celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee last month in Tring or further afield? Did you celebrate at a street party, the churchyard at St Peter & St Paul or even in church? I understand it was a wonderful occasion for everyone (except perhaps our Prime Minister!) and brought people together as it has done on many other royal occasions. Like Christmas - there are always a few 'Bah, humbug!' people - and I am sorry if you are one of those. In Tring, I know much was made of it, and a huge amount of work went into bringing joy to many. Thank you to all those who made it possible. You may have gathered that I was not at

any of the events from the subjunctives in the previous paragraph. It passed me by almost completely apart from a little on the TV - because it was over those same few days that we said 'Au revoir' (not goodbye) to our little boy after seven months in our home. He became the fourth child that we saw happily settled with new 'forever' parents, the fourth one that we 'let go' of so that he could have a future with so many more possibilities than before, and the fourth one that brought such incredible joy to a family who had longed for a child of their own. And once again we lose a child but gain two more adults in our extended family.

We do say goodbye, at least for now, to Channel 202, 'Paw Patrol', the Tombliboos and Upsy Daisy - and some fairly excruciating programmes about toy cars that were his favourite viewing! I will miss him - and all the wonderful



story books we got to read together! He had his first Christingle, Christmas service, pancake races and Easter celebrations at St Peter & St Paul's Church and attended the Toddler Drop In there. Hopefully in the future he will know that church is a welcoming place for him.

The Editor

Quiet Place

**Need space to
contemplate?**

Pop in to
St Martha's Methodist Church
Chapel Street, Park Road, Tring

Every 3rd Saturday of the month between 10.00am and 3.00pm
(circumstances may cause variations in times)



Feedback



Reading Erica Guy's article in the June edition of *Comment*, I was reminded what a thriving organisation was St Peter & St Paul's Young Wives in the 1970s. Its Babysitting Group and regular pattern of other meetings and activities encouraged

friendship and mutual support among all of us young mothers. I'm sure that other churches in the town had similar organisations and found them equally valuable.

Erica also mentioned New Mill School. In the mid-60s I was lodging and working in Berkhamsted. Tring wasn't really on my radar. I knew that buses went there, but the train service, before the electrification of the line, was very limited, outside 'rush hour'.

It did register with me, however, that some of our 11-year-old new arrivals at Ashlyns School had come from New Mill School and that there was also a St George's Church. By the time I came to know Tring, the school at New Mill had closed, as Erica mentioned, but perhaps Erica and other readers of *Comment* can tell us a bit more about life in New Mill when both the school and the church were open and active?

Carole Wells, St Peter & St Paul

Tring Park news



I am writing this just after my pupils have completed their first GCSE RS paper. I am unsure who was more nervous, as this is the first time there have been actual exams in two years. Suddenly, I found these words coming to me:

*Lord of Everything
In the whirlwind of exams; let your peace take over
In the worry about what the future holds, let your peace take over
For their families, facing the ups and downs of teenage angst, may your peace take over
May peace prevail in every way, shape and form.
Amen*

It has been very good to hear that Classic FM has been having some dedicated revision broadcasting for six weeks on Sunday evenings, sharing both advice as well good tracks to soothe the soul. The line-up of guest presenters includes Tring Park alumna singer-songwriter, Ella Henderson.

In further alumni news, we are thrilled to share the news that Dance Course Alumni Casper Mott will be joining Netherlands Dance Theatre 2 in August. The 50th anniversary tour of Jesus Christ Superstar is touring the US, with alumni Drew McOnie being recognised for his outstanding choreography. Five former pupils will be performing in Matthew Bourne's New Adventures production of 'Car Man' at The Royal Albert Hall in June, as part of this iconic venue's 150th

anniversary. We have many links to this venue. Tring Park Choir has performed in the Good Friday 'Messiah' and our younger ones have had the great experience of being in ENB's 'Swan Lake' in the Round in previous years or an 'in the round' production of 'Romeo and Juliet'. In the well-received quirky film 'The Duke', telling the story from 1961 of Kempton Bunton (played by Jim Broadbent) stealing the Goya portrait of The Duke of Wellington from The National Gallery, alumna Aimee Kelly features as his son's girlfriend.

Tring Park on Film

'Operation Mince meat', extensively filmed in school, has been fascinating to watch on all levels. It tells a version of the incredible true story of how the Allies broke the Nazis' hold over Europe in World War II, by planting false papers on a corpse that washed up on the shores of Spain.

School Life

Come September, our Tring Park Prep will be taking in its first cohort of Year 3 pupils to cover the whole of KS2.

A second collection for the Aylesbury Foodbank led by 6th Former Henry, resulted in 78kg of food being donated.

Annalise, one of our Lower School Dancers, is in the title role of the London Children's Ballet production of 'Anne of Green Gables'. The company's Artistic

Director is former pupil Ruth Brill.

By entering pupils into the national UKMT Junior Mathematical Challenge, the Maths Department are aiming to stretch and challenge them. The questions are designed to make pupils think deeply about mathematical questions and develop their enjoyment of problem-solving in maths. Pupils in Tring Park Prep (KS2) and the Lower School (KS3) achieved a record total of 17 awards with 2 gold, 4 silver and 11 bronze! Mr Anderson, Principal, said: 'What very impressive results and with such a high number of pupils. Many congratulations to them and of course all staff involved.'

On the 2 & 3 July, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' will be brought to life in the beautiful open air surroundings of the Tring Park's grounds. This enchanting production will involve dancers, singers and musicians from all of the four vocational courses at Tring Park, promising to be a theatrical treat for all the family.

**Sarah Bell
Tring Park**

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Christian Aid sponsored Mega-Stick Walk



With lockdown behind us, it's that time of year when a few hardy souls don their favourite walking boots and trek the thirteen-plus miles around the Tring Team Parish, raising money

for Christian Aid, taking in the churches of Aldbury, Puttenham, Long Marston, Wilstone and Tring. It's an excellent walk around these delightful parishes, but it's quite a challenge to get around all within a set time limit for the welcoming BBQ that awaits at St Peter & St Paul's Church at the end. This year, those hardy souls walking from Aldbury Church were Ian and Rachel Munro, Sarah Marshall and her son Noah, John and Alex Brown with their friend Tom. It was quite a group, not least the more impressive as the boys are all in their first year at Tring School.

It was a great day for walking, at least at the start, with high spirits and a constant stream of important topics to discuss en route, not least the manner of Halton House's Year 7 football team wins in the recent house games at Tring (that covered most of the ground from Aldbury Nowers down to the canal on Marshcroft Lane). Seeing the canal in such vibrant health was amazing, from the spring to summer growth of the hedgerows and flowers, to the many families of geese and goslings. People were everywhere enjoying the delightful countryside we live in, with a few even more energetic types running or cycling past with urgent business to attend to.

We turned down the peaceful Aylesbury branch of the Grand Union Canal on our way to our lunch stop at Puttenham. These are the hard yards at

the front end and a packed lunch was eventually had sitting on a bench in the idyllic Puttenham churchyard, looking out over the Buckinghamshire arable fields. It was here, however, that the light rain started, which then stuck with us for the second half of the day. Still, with our well-prepared raincoats on, we slipped across the fields to Long Marston (where we had a cheeky cuppa in the church) before crossing fields of sheep, then corn, down to Wilstone. We were delighted to be joined by a fresh crowd of walkers at Wilstone for the last leg past the reservoirs and down to Tring.

We made great time to ensure we were there for the very welcome BBQ and no one got too damp at all. It's a delightful day out, if perhaps quite a challenge at half a marathon, but you get to see how beautiful our Team Parish is. I'd thoroughly recommend joining us next year, if you have a spare hour or five.

**Ian Munro
St John the Baptist, Aldbury**



The town where I was born...



The Rose and Crown, Tring, one of the great and among the earliest inns of England, will have a fond place in the heart of more people than we can imagine, given its centuries-old history. From the passengers who desperately needed and received respite and relief when their great horse-drawn coaches pulled up in front of its Georgian façade for their first stop on the way from London to Leamington and points North and West, to the head of General Motors who would never forget being addressed as 'My Duck' by the legendary waitress, Evelyn, or the hard-boiled thespian who, thanks to Dorian Williams and his festival, insisted that the name was just a lazy Tring corruption of Hamlet's friend.

But surely there's no fonder heart-place than mine, for I have washed dishes in its kitchen, danced in its ballroom, I live on its tennis court, and I was born in its laundry.

As the Rose and Crown was so busy in the heyday of coach travel and the latest and improved vehicles were too big to go through the entrance to the hotel yard, additional stables and a coach house were built on land at the back of the Plough Inn, next to the old straw plait market house, side on to St Peter & St Paul's Church. The double stable block had a billiard room on the floor above, with an amazing skylight as big as a conservatory. Unfortunately, over time this began to leak, and I remember Peter Metcalfe demolishing it and replacing it with a plain and waterproof tiled roof.

Coinciding with the new buildings, even more space for Rose and Crown guests was made available by moving the in-house laundry and equipment

to the grey (now white) painted single-sided house in the courtyard next to the stable and billiard room block. And there it continued to operate until Lord Rothschild rebuilt the Rose and Crown, and my grandfather took over the property of the Plough Inn for his antiques business.

By 1939 my parents had converted, and were living in, the laundry. And that's when and where I was born, at 4 o'clock on the very hot morning of the 27 May.

The laundry had been occupied and run from the beginning by an aptly named, considering her proximity to a cemetery, Mrs Gravestock, who died on the premises. When Virginia and I took over the property in 1970 we soon found we were not alone. Doors would open against the draught, the staircase would creak as if being ascended, from time-to-time a presence was felt... until one night (or rather morning) at precisely 2 o'clock we both sat bolt upright in bed to see a three-dimensional shadow in the shape of a large cottage loaf enter the bedroom, pause at the foot of our bed and then drift out through the window and into the darkness. Strangely it was not alarming at all, but quite peaceful and somehow reassuring, as if we were being given her approval. Thereafter we never saw or experienced another visit, so we must have passed muster. But we will never forget Mrs Gravestock, the Laundry Lady.

My parents named their new home Plough Cottage in preference to Ye Olde Laundry which I think was a wise move, for there was no longer any connection with the hotel, and until the 1950s, the entire courtyard complex was hidden from view by an enormous pair of solid wooden gates, in common with all other yards of the time and similar to those extant at the Bell Inn and Almar's yard, except ours had a small door through which easy personal access was made, providing great entertainment for me

as I played at being a sentry on duty, with visitors calling out with disguised voices.

The years of the Rose and Crown that I remember best and most fondly are those when it was run by just three and then four people, irrespective of any Trust House manager.

Evelyn the waitress, Ted the concierge, Charlie the barman and later Sadie, the second waitress. But more of them later.

For now, some closing random thoughts on the Tring I remember.

As in any moderate-sized town in the post-war years, shopkeepers lived over their shop. This meant that, in the event of someone running short of a supply of virtually anything after hours, an SOS phone call would be met with a welcome invitation to come round and collect, often with the offer of a cup of tea and always a chat.

Tring had its YMCA, Red Cross, bowls, squash, tennis and cricket clubs, AmDram and other beneficial groups and societies, and 'early closing' day was Wednesday. The Mansion was already home to the school founded by Grace Cone and Olive Ripman and was still known by their joint names before becoming the Arts Ed. There were no shops, cinema, or football on Sundays but the churches were always full. Market day was every Friday. There was a general sense that if the A41 were closed at each end of the town, all would be well. Given the proximity and access to all types of agriculture and produce, Tring might be self-sufficient once again, just like Saxon times; indeed there was a palpable community spirit.

We are so lucky now to have Tring Together, FOTCH, our charity shops, Tring Radio and lively new businesses recreating that same atmosphere in the town today.

John Bly

The Millennium Education Foundation

The Millennium Education Foundation usually gives grants to two or three students per year. They can be anywhere between £500 and £3,000, most towards the top range.

This coming autumn we will be helping four students, two of whom will

benefit greatly from the difference it makes.

The people we like to help are those whose families would really struggle to help them through their studies. The advert we place in *Comment* (opposite) enables us to get the word out that help

may be available, but it is often people like the teachers at school, youth leaders or local clergy who direct the students to us. If you know anyone who needs help in this way, please get in touch.

Elaine Winter, St Peter & St Paul

How did hymns/songs originate?



Hymn comes from the Greek *Humnos* – a song in praise of a god or hero. So hymn and song are really interchangeable terms when singing in church.

The first Songs in the Christian tradition were the Psalms, which were Jewish songs. Other religions do not have the same history of communal singing, although some have communal chanting. Although there is now Islamic religious music and song, it was originally common that pious Muslims who 'enjoined what was good and forbade what was bad' in accordance to Islamic law, destroyed liquor and musical instruments.

In the 14th century BC, we know that there were Levantine 'lifted-hand' prayers sung to the God Enlil-Banda with musicians providing music, and it is likely that early Jews of the same period sung similar songs to Yahweh as the first Psalms were written at this time. Fifty-three times in the Old Testament the word *YaDaH* is used for 'praise' derived from *YaD*, the word for hand/forearm. Lifted-hand singing is common in Baptist and Gospel Churches – nothing is new! Psalm is derived from the Greek *Psalmoi* meaning music. There were various categories of Psalm, and one category was 'hymns' praising either Yahweh or Mount Zion (other categories were laments, royal psalms and thanksgivings).

The early church sang psalms and hymns from the start. Colossians 3:16 says 'teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit' and in Acts 16:25 we are told 'Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God'. Ephesians 5:19 says 'sing and make music from your heart to the Lord'. In doing this they were simply following the age-old Jewish tradition. In 1 Chronicles 13:8 we read 'David and all the Israelites were celebrating with all their might before God, with songs and with harps, lyres, timbrels, cymbals and trumpets' – a full orchestra!

Later, as church services became more formulaic and ritualistic, singing was mainly by a choir. By the Middle Ages most hymns were 'plainsong' or



Gregorian chant and were sung by choirs, or by monks and nuns in monasteries. Congregational singing did not really start again until Martin Luther encouraged congregational singing around 1525, and in 1526, the first handbook of psalms and hymns for congregational singing was published, made popular by printing copies on a printing press – invented 100 years earlier. In the 18th century in Britain, Isaac Watts and the Wesley brothers wrote hundreds of hymns and popularized lusty congregational singing.

Congregational singing has non-religious benefits too. Research collated by Tom Shakespeare, PhD, a professor of disability research at Norwich Medical School, indicates that communal singing creates

a feeling of wellbeing, it also exercises the lungs, improving health, and has a positive effect on mental wellbeing.

According to the BBC, the most popular hymns are: 'Jerusalem', 'How Great Thou Art', 'In Christ Alone', 'Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind', 'Abide With Me', 'I Vow To Thee My Country', 'Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer/Jehovah', 'Amazing Grace', 'Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord' and 'I, the Lord Of Sea And Sky', although they vary year by year. My favourite is '10,000 reasons (Bless the Lord O My Soul)'.

Sadly, communal singing has been shown to help the spread of Covid-19, although current regulations do not forbid communal singing. Most of us would still want to sing our favourite hymns at full volume! The benefits may well outweigh the disadvantages.

John Allan, High Street Baptist Church

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MILLENNIUM EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Are you hoping to go to University or College in 2023, but are concerned that financial resources might not match up to the requirements?

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To see if you would be eligible for a grant, apply to Tring Charities' Millennium Education Foundation for information and an application form.

Website details: www.tringcharities.co.uk/education

Telephone: Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees
01442 827913 Email: info@tringcharities.co.uk

Please note that the closing date is 15 November 2022 to lodge a completed application for grants payable from Autumn 2023.

Fifty-seven years of Easter Monday pilgrimage!



Having had two years off for pandemic reasons, it was back! This year I turned 70 and wondered if I could still walk the seventeen miles from Tring to St Albans and not be a burden to other walkers. That will be the year I will stop!

The day dawned fine and reasonably warm as seven of us left St Peter & St Paul's Church at 7.00am: four adults and three Youth Café members. We were sent off with a prayer from Huw, who wasn't walking at the start as he had to go lambing for the morning. We made good time and met the three from Tring Station at Cow Roast on the canal, and eventually were joined by the Munros from Aldbury.

Our next brief stop was at Waitrose in Berkhamsted. We were hoping for a loo stop but sadly they were out of order. However, Jane Banister, who was support driver, met us with bacon rolls and hot cross buns which made up for it. Then on along the canal through Boxmoor and Hemel Hempstead until we got to Sainsbury's, where the toilets were open to the relief of us all. Huw joined us



here as the lambing stint was over, along with Nettle and Mungus, the dogs. Our route took us off the canal and up Bunkers Lane and out onto the St Albans Road – not a nice experience on narrow bends and fast roads. Then we turned off across the fields where we glimpsed the tower of the Abbey; the end was just in sight!

This year the pace had been reasonably fast and we made it to the Abbey in time for a picnic lunch before processing in. Our number had grown by this time and had more than doubled with friends and family joining us for the service. We were



time, which is a much shorter route, but we did walk both ways. My brother was there, but as he is six years younger, he's a number of years light. It was not continuous for me as I had time off when the family was younger, but in recent years it has become a bit of a personal challenge. We had a number of first-time walkers and supporters and all agreed they would be back.

So how do you fill the seven hours' walking time? In various ways, chatting to various people about all sorts of subjects;

taking time walking by oneself enjoying the countryside and appreciating God's creation; remembering past walks and conversations with old friends; by supporting others when the going gets tough; and contemplating why ten green bottles were hanging on the wall!

Janet Goodyer
St Peter & St Paul

in varying physical states, with blisters, stiffness and aching limbs, but all relieved to have made the seventeen miles. I was in better shape than normal which was a blessing.

The service was a wonderful uplifting celebration of Easter with three bishops taking part, and the Dean preaching. The clergy do a round up of who has walked the furthest and although we can't ever get the prize for that one, our seventeen miles was not shabby by any means. They then asked who started coming the longest ago and I was pushed forward to collect the prize as I started about fifty-seven years ago! In the early years it was from Kings Langley where I lived at the



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60 not out!



This is part 2 of an article which began in the June edition of Comment, continuing the sixty years of Ian Ogilvie's ministry.

After our period in the USA, my next job was more traditional, as Chaplain of Malvern College, a public school overlooking the Malvern Hills. Teaching, Confirmation classes and pastoral care of the boys were my top priorities. Many boys sent to board in schools come from unhappy homes and while they may not be economically deprived, many were emotionally deprived. Confidential counselling was a big part of the job.

I introduced twice a term what we called Open Pulpit, rather like Sunday at 8 at Sevenoaks, when boys could ask questions of Christian speakers. The best we ever had was Sir Alec Douglas Home, the former Prime Minister, who spoke on Christianity and Politics. He had been Neville Chamberlain's aide at the famous Munich Conference with Hitler in 1938. Our Head Boy was studying the 1930s for A Level and was over the moon at meeting someone who was actually at Munich!

I also set up exchanges for a week between our boys and boys from a Comprehensive School in Coventry and that went remarkably well. I was on the Diocesan Education Committee and was elected Chair of the Governors of the local Malvern C of E Comprehensive School after some time as a Governor; and after seven years at Malvern was

appointed Head of a Christian Comprehensive School in Harpenden.

St Georges School had begun as an independent school and then a Voluntary Aided School, but with two boarding houses for girls and boys. Like many state schools in the 80s, it was short of funds and many of the buildings were run down. I started a Redecoration Scheme among the parents, and twice a term about fifty or more parents would come and redecorate classrooms, corridors etc. I bought large offcuts of carpets from wholesalers and had them properly fitted in classrooms as I wanted the boys and girls to work and enjoy themselves in decent surroundings. The parent volunteers worked in shifts and it was so successful that our local MP, Peter Lilley, told the story in the House of Commons.

Academically I appointed a Head of Sixth Form who built up a new tradition of trying for Oxbridge places; and we spent money on improving facilities for the special needs children. We had a chapel and a chaplain who did really good pastoral work with our children from difficult homes. I also started a secular version of Open Pulpit for the Sixth Form and invited speakers of all persuasions including Ken Livingstone and three of the women from Greenham Common, as well as our Conservative MP. Computers



were not universal for all pupils in those days but we raised money for our first computer room with the help of Cecil Parkinson MP, whose wife's father was a local businessman and gave us money for it.

My next role was as Chaplain to the Bishop of St Albans and chairing the Diocesan Committee for the Church Urban Fund, set up by Archbishop Runcie to raise money for the church in the inner cities. We managed to reach our target in 18 months and many of the churches really put their backs into the project. I also had to organise Desmond Tutu's visit which I have written about elsewhere.

The final part of my ministry was in the world of charity as I seemed to have spent much of my time raising money for good causes from the Cheshire Home to the Church Urban Fund. I became Fundraising Director for MIND, the mental health charity. At that time it was very hard to interest people in mental health, though things are better now. My next job was a similar one with the British Deaf Association, helping those who are profoundly deaf and communicate in sign language. My own attempts at learning to sign were pretty poor but we had a lesson in the office most weeks!

Our patron was Princess Diana – and who could ask for a better one? You only had to organise an event and say she was coming and the tickets went immediately. She was so easy and relaxed to meet and always went to the least attractive deaf person in the room and chatted with an interpreter. She learnt a few words in sign to open a speech which thrilled the Deaf Community. She joked about the children: 'William is very serious, Harry is the naughty one at home' – has anything changed?!



My last job was Director of Fundraising for the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen. Very much a Christian organisation, it was a joy to work for. Fishing is the most dangerous industry in the country. We ran centres for fishermen, helped when they were brought in from vessels that sunk, and had a pastoral role in the scattered fishing communities around the UK. It continues to be very active and those of you who have watched 'The Trawlerman' on BBC1 will realise just how tough deep sea fishing really is. I created 'National Seafish Day' on a Friday annually in November and we were supported by hundreds of fish and chip shops, fishmongers, trawlermen themselves and many companies related to the industry. Morrisons Supermarkets gave us generous sponsorship and, at our third attempt, we made over £100,000 on the day. We held events in London and I used to preach about the Mission at services around the country in churches of all kinds. I enjoyed working there and there was a real Christian presence at the heart of all our work.

On retirement I anticipated being put out to grass, but reckoned without the Bishop of Buckingham in the Oxford diocese, who turned out to be one of my former pupils at Sevenoaks many years ago. I began by continuing to help at St Peter & St Paul and also did

eighteen months looking after the Gaddesdens in our own deanery. Then came the Bishop of Buckingham's request to become Acting Rector of Aylesbury on a three-day-a-week basis; then off to Princes Risborough for a year; and then finally looking after Stewkley and three linked parishes where there had been major problems: I spent much of the time pouring oil on troubled waters. Never having been a full time vicar, I found it a great privilege to work and worship with such an interesting group of Christian people.

I now wander around different parishes most Sundays. I do not want to run anything, but love preaching and celebrating in vacancies and to cover for absences, holidays etc. One gets to know the CofE at its strongest and its weakest. But ministry must continue and I see it as a great privilege to be invited to carry mine on even at my ancient age, albeit in a very part time capacity.

The Tring Team is well served with clergy, but I have enjoyed doing locum work here after John Payne Cook and Frank Mercurio moved on and hope to



Elliot Morley – Fisheries Minister (Right) thanks Ian Ogilvie Director of fundraising for RNMSDF for all his hard work over the years!

continue in different parishes where I am needed. Sixty years since that wonderful moment in Southwark Cathedral has given me many opportunities to serve the God in whom I believe and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

Ian Ogilvie
Tring Team

The Skylight



This poem is part of a longer sequence (*Glanmore Revisited*) and appeared first in a collection in 1991. It is in the form of a sonnet – the theme

(the cutting-out of a skylight) is proposed in the first eight lines and is answered in the remaining six (the dramatic effect of the alteration). This pattern is echoed in the rhyme scheme – the first eight lines have a neat, clear rhyme, the next six dissolve into looser rhymes and rhythms which describe the dramatic change when the light is let in – 'sky entered'. The language is straightforward, descriptive and uses the compound adjectives which Heaney used often for textural colour. What first appears as a one-sided conversation about a domestic home improvement can also be read

as a metaphor for poetic inspiration. Like most poetry it is best heard read aloud.

Seamus Heaney was born in Northern Ireland in 1939, the oldest of nine children. He was brought up on a farm in Northern Ireland and won a scholarship to a Catholic boarding school. He studied English at Belfast University and became well known for his poetry, for which he won countless awards, including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995. After a spell at an American university he and his family moved to County Wicklow in the 1970s to allow more space for writing. He was a prolific poet and also translator of early Irish works, Anglo-Saxon (Beowulf) and Latin and Greek writers. He is considered one of the

You were the one for skylights. I opposed Cutting into the seasoned tongue-and-groove Of pitch pine. I liked it low and closed, Its claustrophobic, nest-up-in-the-roof Effect. I liked the snuff-dry feeling, The perfect, trunk-lid fit of the old ceiling. Under there, it was all hutch and hatch. The blue slates kept the heat like midnight thatch.

But when the slates came off, extravagant Sky entered and held surprise wide open. For days I felt like an inhabitant Of that house where the man sick of the palsy Was lowered through the roof, had his sins forgiven, Was healed, took up his bed and walked away.

Seamus Heaney

most influential of 20th century poets, and was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford 1989-1994. He died in 2013.

'The Skylight' can be found in The Heart's Time by Janet Morley, pub. SPCK, 2011.

Kate Banister
St Julian's, St Albans

FOTCH Family Fun Day 2022



Back with a Vengeance - Building for the Future

Back in the gloomy days of February Richard Abel and I had some rather tentative

discussions of the “Should we ... Could we... Shall we...?” variety about finally committing to running Family Fun Day 2022. Obviously over the last two years we had all got a bit rusty and confidence was at quite a low ebb.

Sadly some key members of the organising team for previous years had become unavailable (either through absence or illness) which did not help the mood.

We had to face up to the fact that there was a big hill to climb and just get on with it. So were we ‘glass half full’ or ‘glass half empty’ people? We were about to find out; as it turned out, we were in for quite a big surprise!

The essential tried and tested principle of an event like Family Fun Day is ‘many hands make light work’

We were not sure back in February just how many of our previously enthusiastic activist volunteers were still “up for it” and there were plenty of gaps.

At the end of our discussions we boldly decided to go ahead fix a date and get on with it; and divided the responsibilities for getting things organised between us.

We moved ahead.

‘It all went alright on the night’

The delightful surprise that faced us was that everybody was “still up for it” and the gaps were wonderfully filled by fresh new energy.

As it turned out we really need not to have worried quite so much. The new team members rose magnificently to the task and with Maria Lashley and Andy Hall taking control of the logistics for the first time, Barry and Vivianne Child coordinating the indoor programme of refreshment and entertainment and the fantastically professional Halton High Ropes team under Mal Goodes rising to the Zip Wire challenge – plus all

our stalwart stallholders and activists stepping up – we had all the key components in place. We had so many good people keen to help and get stuck in.

As usual the day dawned misty and damp – it’s seemingly inevitable that all events in the English Spring and Summer have a nail-biting weather pattern – but the sun soon shone through and people came out to play.

What happened on the day exceeded our wildest expectations. The defining characteristic of the day was just what a happy atmosphere surrounded us.

Familiar faces having fun – and lots of new ones!

Of course quite a few of those who came were enjoying a return to a familiar event – and they had really missed it during the lockdown years. Even more importantly a great many of those who came had never been to such an event in the church or churchyard and enjoyed the experience greatly. ‘Are you doing it next year?’ was a very common question. The event was busier than any previous one and people were keen to stay on until the end. It all bodes well for the future.

What was also clear was that those who were organising the activities and event felt that their efforts were really appreciated. People were having fun, enjoying the various stalls, and meeting up with friends old and new in a green space venue at the very heart of their town. In terms of user convenience and being kind to the environment, it ticked every box.

A great return with a great result

As we have said before, the main purpose of the event is not fundraising but making sure all generations in our community can enjoy having fun together in a good cause. It was certainly also good for the funds. Our previous best result was a net revenue for the FOTCH funds of £4200. This year we comfortably exceeded that by some £500 or more and still counting. The stalls were really well used and some actually sold out entirely. Tombolas and raffles were more popular than ever; the Teddies’ Flight zip wire was busy all day – as was the bouncy castle and face-painting was

even going on into the early evening. The musical entertainment brought us a packed church and the Tring Brewery Bar and brilliantly orchestrated barbecue had record sales. People were happy and the answer to the obvious question ‘Went the Day Well?’ was a resounding YES!

Will we be Back? You Betcha!

With everybody’s help and enthusiastic we’ll be back bigger and better than ever next year.

New ideas and new energy

The essence of being successfully back in the future is to keep going forward. That’s where you come in. We started out planning this year in a rather worried state of mind. We are already starting planning next year in a quietly confident mood because we had so much support and enthusiasm from so many people.

We have held our first review meeting and looked at the lessons learned and how we can improve; we already have some great ideas for next year.

All the key team-leaders are enthusiastic about the next steps but one thing is certain – we can do things better. That’s why we need new ideas and energy and new ways of doing familiar things to make them even more exciting, inclusive and FUN!

Join us – it’s ‘All Hands to the Pump’ – and All are welcome!

Come and join us. Let us have your ideas and thoughts now by writing to either Richard or myself. We will be having an Open Planning meeting early next year to start the countdown to Family Fun Day 2023 – 6 May 2023. Please do look out for that and come along and join in.

It’s fun having fun and making good things happen.

As the old saying goes ‘The more we are together – the happier we shall be’.

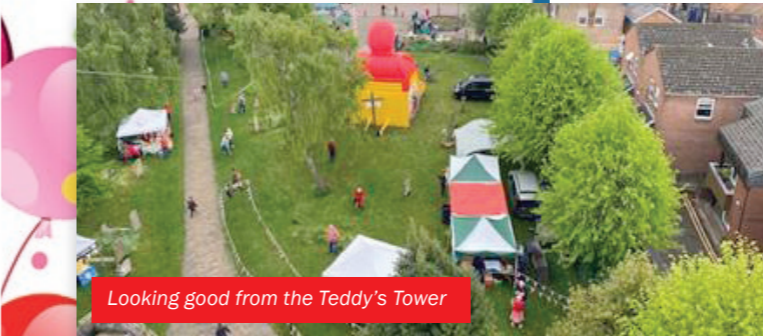
Grahame Senior
Tring Team



Early morning preparation as clouds started to lift



Getting ready for the first Teddy flight - clouds clearing



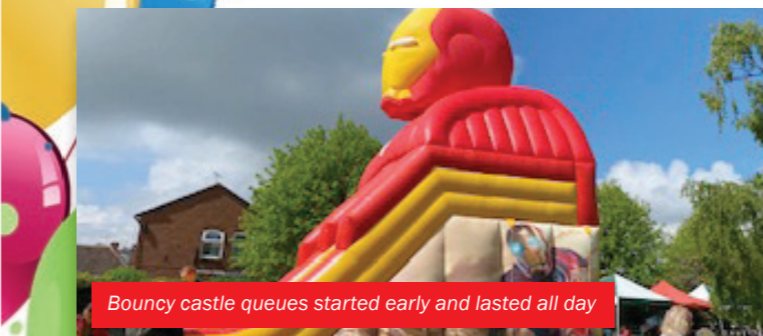
Looking good from the Teddy's Tower



Time for a quick bite!

Family Fun Day 2022

A day when the sun shone and Tring smiled!



Bouncy castle queues started early and lasted all day



Some crafty work on display



PC Lazarus took Teddy Tiger for a ride - then gave him up as a prize!



The stalls got busier and busier



All are welcome – turning towards the light that gives us life



Do you know when and where you were baptized? We celebrate birthdays and many other anniversaries, but there are few of us who include baptisms in that.

Mine is 20 January and it was at the church of St Botolph's, Heene in Worthing, and I was six weeks old.

We very rarely baptize babies that young these days, but in our parish, the majority of baptisms are of children. The baptism service can be part of a main Sunday service, or it can be separate, but that is not a private service. Baptism is about a public commitment, a formal recognizing of membership of Christ's church, which all are welcome to witness.

Sometimes, people will say to us:

'I haven't been baptized but I have been christened'. To all intents and purposes, they are the same thing. The baptism is the actual pouring of water on the candidate and it takes place within a christening service. Other denominations seem to make a difference between the terms depending on the age of the candidate, but for Anglicans, they are essentially the same. And all are welcome to be baptized – we turn no one away.

Over the years, there have been changes in the baptism service in the Anglican church. Infant baptism is the norm but one can be baptized at any age – the 1662 Book of Common Prayer includes a service for those who are of 'riper years'! Other denominations will only baptize adults and refer to it as 'believer's baptism' (see article on p 21), a phrase not many Anglicans would use. Although baptism is the one sacrament that all churches who ally to Churches Together agree with, there is a multitude of beliefs about how it should happen. It should only happen once – it is not something that needs renewing – and for want of a better way of describing it, it is transferable across different churches. The first part of the

old service is asking whether the person has been baptized already, making sure that it is not repeated.

Originally it was important for babies to be baptized early for fear of what would happen to their souls if they did not survive. Not only has the health of children improved dramatically, but thankfully, the theology has also changed. The Prayer Book also speaks of babies being dipped into the water, unless they were 'sickly', in which case water could be put on their head. I don't know when this changed, but have yet to find anyone who can remember babies being 'dunked' in the Church of England. We also now warm the water! The words at the actual act of baptism 'Name, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen' have only ever been modernized so that 'thee' became 'you', and 'Ghost' became 'Spirit' and have not otherwise changed.



The promises made by parents and godparents have the same heart to them – first they reject the devil and all that is evil, and then they accept Christ and all that is good. It is the turning away from that which destroys us, and turning towards the light that gives us life. In the 1662 prayer book, there is only one question to renounce and one to accept. The Alternative Service Book of 1980 changed these into three questions for each, which do have a good rhythm to them, and echo the Trinitarian aspect of baptism. Common Worship in 2000 changed the words slightly, but kept three questions. The most recent change has gone to two questions for each.

What is interesting is that while as clergy we agonize over producing

the right service and the right words, most people do not seem to notice the changes. It is the atmosphere of the service and the symbols that are used that are most important – research into this showed that what mattered to most people was seeing the water poured on the candidate.

The water and the signing with the cross have been the symbols that have remained throughout all the incarnations of the Anglican baptism service (although the 1662 prayer book contains a caveat that the sign of the cross can in no way be seen as Roman Catholic in origin), but others have been brought in, most notably the giving of a candle lit from the Easter candle, and the anointing with holy oil. We combine the cross and the oil. Again, it is recognizing that sometimes we need more than words.

The rules of the Church of England have for many years recommended that a girl has two godmothers and a godfather, and a boy has two godfathers and one godmother. Having said that, it also allows for two godparents and one of those can be the child's parent. What has not changed is that all godparents need themselves to be baptized. These days most people have two or three godparents (only the Royal Family seem to think that more than that is a good idea) but

the complication is that often they are not baptized. While they will take the role of godparent, they are officially known as 'supporting friends' and that is a situation where we would add the parents (if baptized themselves) as godparents. It is a tricky situation, as society has changed, and all of us who have picked godparents for our children know that it is a very difficult decision to make.

This article can only be a very short summary of the place of baptism in the Church of England – for those who want to read more, there is a great deal of literature out there, so do ask!

Jane Banister
Tring Team

Jubilee Big Lunch from The Pie Men



Huw Bellis and Barry Child, aka The Pie Men, created a delicious array of pies to suit all tastes at the Jubilee Big Lunch over the Jubilee Weekend in June. Designed for people that weren't having a street party of their own, nearly sixty people gathered for a delicious lunch and lots of fellowship.

The dessert table literally groaned under the weight of puddings, including the Queen's Jubilee Dessert: a lemon swiss roll trifle.

Thank you to everyone who came, to all those that brought desserts, for those that did the washing up and to Tring Brewery for the beer.

Vivianne Child, St Peter & St Paul



Parish registers

Baptisms

We welcome into our church family all those below and pray for their parents, Godparents and families.

Frances Olivia Shelton

Teddy Taylor

George Parr

Penny Ficek

Iris Elliot-Smith

Constance Zara Mary Odams

Amelia Rose Cooke

Joshua Hunter

Zachary Hunter

Weddings

We offer our congratulations and prayers to these couples as they begin their married lives together.

Nicholas James Ennis Brown & Elizabeth Rose Atkins

James Trevor Tucker & Kimberley Jane Wright

Charles Julius Wills & Louisa Alice-Rose Haggerty

Michael Thomas Westlake & Jordan Casey Zammit

Andrew Martin Meager & Jasmin Louise Saunders

Nicholas George Dumenil & Susannah Rhian Cobb

Creating some new Tring memories

500 people enjoyed a super afternoon and evening together at St Peter & St Paul's to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on Friday 3 June.

There was a lot of mingling and relaxing and smiling going on. I spoke to one lady who reminisced about going up to London at 4.30am to stand in The Mall to see the Queen seventy years ago. (And, of course, she caught the Green Line bus back to Hemel afterwards.) Steve Kitchener spent the afternoon capturing video memories and we heard about someone who had been beeped off the road in Windsor Great Park by 'a lady in a headscarf', as well as several people saying what amazing service the Queen has given us over the last seventy years.

Meanwhile, back in the churchyard, there were plenty of new memories being made around the tea tent, bar, BBQ, art exhibition, live music and children's craft. And let's not forget Martin Hicks' maypole, where many children spent the afternoon literally tying themselves in knots.



The Thanksgiving Service

At 7.00pm, 350 of us went into the church for an uplifting and entertaining thanksgiving service, led by Sarah Marshall, whilst about 200 stayed in the churchyard, enjoying the music and the bar. Then at 8.00pm Jilly and Robin from Tring Music Partnership struck up the live band to keep us entertained until sunset. At this moment, with the church lit in magisterial red, white, blue and purple,

Peter Child lit the beacon, Phil Cartwright was in charge of fire extinguishers and Michael Basford played the bagpipes. Peter said that when the piper started to play, an eerie silence fell over the crowd, which erupted into three cheers for the Queen, led by Huw, to end the evening.

I had lots and lots of lovely comments and thanks from people around town the following week, which made all the hard work worthwhile. Thank you to everyone who helped, whether it be for an hour in the tea-tent or putting away the chairs at the end. But especially thank you to Huw Bellis for encouraging everything that we suggested. Thank you to Sarah Marshall for choreographing a massive service, but

keeping God at the centre. Thank you to Ben Cartwright for hours and hours of physical labour plus caring for our safety. Thank you to Trish Dowden for doing a double role of Church Super-Admin plus Catering Super-Tea-Tent organiser. Thank you to Richard and Jane Shardlow from Tring Brewery for their generosity of time and money.

And thank YOU for coming and for telling us how much you appreciated the Jubilee 'Tring thing'.

Vivianne Child
Tring Together



Rev Sarah Marshall



Peter putting up the banner



More crowds



Trish, Vivianne and Steffi - Tring Together in action



Art competition 1st prize



Jane, the Queen and the Mayor



Crowds in the churchyard



Maypole dancing, courtesy of Martin Hicks



Celebration cake decorated by Laura Chappell

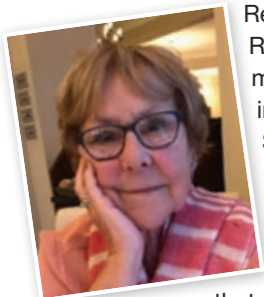


The final moment



Can you see the piper?

No one is a failure...



Recently Dacorum Radio invited me along for an interview... Leslie Stuart Tate was kindness itself and gently led me through the hour-long program that goes out each

Wednesday. He interviews musicians, poets, writers, song writers – you get the drift. I was immensely honoured to have been asked, but also quite nervous. Another first – and it was a little daunting, but I said yes. It was important to tell people not to write themselves off, to encourage a can-do attitude, even if they feel a failure.

For as long as I can remember I drew, copying illustrations from books.

Colour has also been important in my life; and fashion too. I can remember my mother telling me of the day she took me to the cinema to see a 1950's film. I apparently insisted we sit through the movie again until I saw the emerald-green outfit the star was wearing.

My father was a miner until a head injury rodded him of that job. He moved from his home and set up in Bradford where I was born. Both parents came from Crook, Co Durham. They had a very different life in the city. My mother bought a shop with the help of her father who lived with us. It was called The Dairy and my dad became a milkman with a horse and cart. When my brother was born in 1951, it was sold. Eventually they both worked on the buses while grandfather looked after us in the home.

I was devastated when I failed the 11+ but it was the best thing that could have happened (not that I knew it at the time). I went to a secondary modern school and, one day in the assembly, the head announced that those who were interested could apply to go to the Junior Art College. I applied, not telling my parents.

I got a place and, for two years, I was in heaven. Three days of academia, and two days of art and crafts. That was where I started to learn about my own abilities and skills. At 15, with yet another exam, I passed to the senior college.

The first year was a foundation year in which I changed my end game from wallpaper design to dress design; but oh, how I envied the boys that went to the fine arts and graphic department, its

doors opposite the dress department. I longed to be a painter, but my working-class background wouldn't allow that. My parents had never expected me to want to go to college but they supported me when it became apparent that I wanted a career in art.

I think I was very privileged to go to an art college in early 1960s. The tutors were tough and knew a thing or two about skills. I can remember we were not allowed to draw a nude until we could draw bottles of all shapes and sizes. We were taught anatomy, jewellery making, millinery, weaving; we learned about colour, complementary, discords. We had a trip to Liberty's in London to the fabric department where we touched silk, slubbed silk, chiffons, sea island cottons, linens and more. It was a time of bold colours and pattern, and when we were in the dress department, designing and colouring our creations, we used inks because they were the nearest to dyes the manufactures used. The white of our paper gave a back-lit effect to the drawing, rather like a computer does today.

My first job was in St Anne's Square, Manchester in a high-end fashion boutique. I hated it. Working in a sub-basement with poor light and, rather like in Dickens' Day, the seamstress had a magnet on a piece of string, sweeping the floor with it to find any wayward pin that escaped on the wooden floor. Every scrap of fabric was allotted to a hat box with its type written clearly on the side: 'Waste not, want not' was the message (but I wondered if they were just mean). It was a feeling of 'them' and 'us'. And I didn't want to be the 'them'.

I managed another two jobs before I found Patefields Ltd Mail Order Manufacturing. I loved it, but there was always an insecurity as a designer, pattern cutter. Plus, the directors were inclined to lunch for three hours and more responsibility fell on my shoulders. If things went wrong, who was the fall guy: me! Mail order companies like to have fresh ideas and change designers often and, after some time, I was beginning to think I could run a company myself. There I learned all I needed to start my own business: how to cost, who to buy cloth from, the buyers' names, the agents' names.

I was 21 when Flairwear was born: four second-hand machines and a sample hand, £250 which would keep me

a float for two months. For fifteen years, it was my life, while managing two children, as at that time we moved to Lancashire and I was still running Flairwear, driving 500 miles a week with two young children on the back seat. I told my children stories for the journey which I wrote down. That's where the inventions began.

Moving south with my husband to further his career was the right thing to do so I closed down that part of my career. But the company, with my parents' help, continued for twenty-five years and employed eighteen people, who were like family.

When our third child was 5, I decided to retrain and become that painter that was still fighting to come out. I had never stopped painting but I think the phrase or title was a Sunday Painter. If I had a spare minute, the watercolour box or oils would come out.

St Alban's Art College taught me about ideas and concepts. I was not always open to them because suddenly artists didn't do it themselves, technicians who had the skills did the work. Of course, that happened throughout art history. Studios were workshops with many talents. Two years later I was painting and selling my work locally.

Travelling as I did, I was always struck by the beauty and depth of history there was in the land. I had a connection with it. Whether my ancestors who were agricultural labourers were prompting me, who knows? But it excites me – all the counties in England have differences, but the openness of moors, rolling hills, forgotten footsteps, move me to paint. My fourth child was born in 1985.

Nine years later I spent another four years on a part-time course improving my skills in design at the Wycombe College, Amersham. Starting a late career was not easy. Women generally wear many hats and some at the same time. I took on the role of teaching, running workshops, going into schools, while exhibiting at galleries: BAS, Bucks open Studios, Napa, selling on the net.

In 2008 I was diagnosed with tonsil cancer. I went through a period of painting in blacks and browns and I turned to writing poetry. I am dyslexic and writing is so much harder because I am word blind. But I like stories, and painting with words is so similar to painting with paint. It's all in the mind.

Plus, I've never liked being beaten.

Thanks to technology and spell checks I can write: it just takes longer.

I paint colour, emotion; and parts of history, patterns, shapes and marks on the land tell the stories of cattle, drovers, ditches for drainage, hedges, negative shapes, positive shapes, rhythms. I look for a way into the landscape, pointing the way to the horizons that lead to a new landscape that's just over the brow of a hill. The colour should tell the story. Skies don't have to be blue and grass

doesn't need to be green. You have to paint the emotion, the movement of the wind, listen to what the scene is saying; shadows that help the composition balance. You use anything and everything to make the painting work, but most of all you have to listen to the painting because it will tell you how to make it work.

My writing is cross-genre, fantasy romance. My stories have a moral message about good triumphing over evil and the redemptive power of love;

of angels, demons, ghosts, and mortals. Once I start writing, the story seems to be fed to me from another place. Ideas and scenes come into my head, and I paint them with words. In my mind, the people I created became real friends and foe. I lived in their now.

Nobody's a failure: we all have strengths – we just have to find them and sometimes take a risk.

**Brenda Hurley
St Peter & St Paul**

Making sense of lives that make sense of the world



According to Rowan Williams, John Milton's 'whole life rested on the presumption that words rightly used could both capture all that could be understood and change what was possible for human beings' (page 72 of 'Luminaries: Twenty lives that illuminate the Christian Way'). That presumption could, I suppose, be the motto of the Parish Book Group: we seek to explore and strengthen our faith together using the power of written words. Williams' book was the focus of our latest meeting. The book is quite short and so the characterisations are terse. They range from St Paul – a 'A man of passions' in the subtitle – to Archbishop Oscar Romero (murdered by government agents in San Salvador in 1980 for speaking out on behalf of the poor). The book encompasses familiar figures like St Alban, Charles Dickens, Thomas Cranmer, albeit casting them

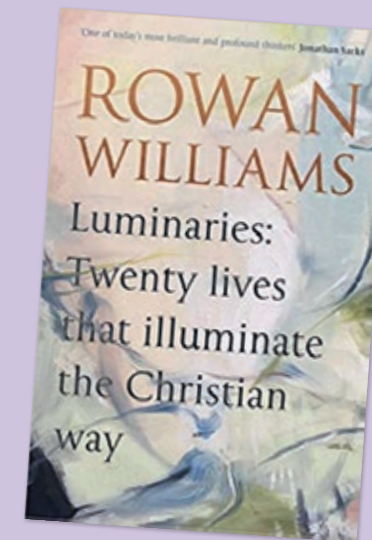
in a new light – e.g. Dickens as showing 'The truth of exaggeration'. It also tells of less famous luminaries, like Elly Hillesum, who kept a journal for two years before being killed in Auschwitz in 1943, and who emphasised her compulsion to kneel: 'There must be someone to live through it all and bear witness to the fact that God lived, even in those times. And why should I not be that witness.'

'Luminaries' is assembled from talks and sermons given by Rowan Williams in the decade or so before the book's publication in 2019. A couple of the book group's members were a bit put off by this, feeling the style of a sermon is too sparse to translate to a written

The Violence of Love

The violence we preach is not the violence of the sword, the violence of hatred. It is the violence of love, of brotherhood, the violence that wills to beat weapons into sickles for work.

Oscar Romero 27 November 1977



piece. However, the rest of us were absorbed by the profiles, accepting that they are short insights and appreciating new perspectives on a range of historical figures. It has whetted our appetite to find out more about several of the luminaries, like John Milton or Simone Weil. One of our loyal members gave a definite verdict: 'I usually pass on to a friend of mine books we have read, but this one I shall keep – Williams writes so beautifully.'

Get in touch if you'd like to know more about the Parish Book Group.

**John Whiteman
Tring Team**

TRING CHARITIES

(Registered Charity No 207805)

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From time to time, one and two-bedroom bungalows become available to let, for people who currently live in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone.

Applicants, one of whom must be aged 55 or over, must not own their own home or have significant savings.

Applicants will be asked to supply personal financial information to prove their beneficial status.

The average weekly maintenance contribution (equivalent to "rent" for housing benefit purposes) is £107 for a one bedroom property and £126 for a two bedroom property.

If you would like to be considered for the Waiting List, please telephone Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees, on **01442 827913** (weekday office hours only), for an application form or email info@tringcharities.co.uk

Our baptisms



After reading the article in the May issue, showing Vicky Baldock's and her dad's Certificates of Baptism, I thought I would send mine in.

My mother and father shared the same birthday, 13 September 1925. I still have the edition of the Parish Church magazine which contains my father's birth announcement! My father, Cyril Roy George Goodall, was baptised at around the traditional age of 8 weeks in St Peter & St Paul's and was a choir boy in the 1930s.



My mother, Vera Edith Welling, however, was baptised when she was just 13 days old, and on a Saturday too, which was most unusual on both counts. I can only think the reason is that her father, Thomas Robert Welling, who was a regular in the Royal Navy, was allowed home on leave around the time of the birth of his daughter, but had to return to his ship soon after, hence the fast-track baptism of my mother on a Saturday. My mother was baptised in St George's



Church, New Mill, and confirmed in St Peter & St Paul's in June 1943 – I also have the parish magazine recording that event and the one announcing my parents' marriage in St Peter & St Paul's in June 1946.

My mother was a regular churchgoer from a young age until her death in 2014. She attended St George's Church as a child, where her mother played the organ (it may have been a harmonium or piano). She later attended St Martha's Church until it was transferred to the Methodists, and attended St Peter & St Paul's thereafter. The funerals of both my parents were in the Parish Church.



My aunt Kath worked in the National Provincial Bank, later Nat West, in Tring High Street for nearly forty years, so might be remembered from there by some readers. Aunt Kath and her husband, Jack, lived in a newly built house in Friar's Walk from October 1958 until her death in 2010.

I was born in 1951 and lived at 29 High Street, above the Wool Shop, for the first three years. Then I lived for fifteen years in Langdon Street before moving to Beaconsfield Road,



where my parents lived for almost fifty years, until my mother's death, my father having predeceased her. I was baptised and confirmed in Tring Parish Church, and attended the Junior Sunday School, run by Mrs Hollands at Gravelly School, then moved up to St Martha's Sunday School, run by the Curate, Mr Preece.

The photos are of my own Christening Day, one showing my parents and grandparents. My mum's parents, Thomas and Edith Welling, are on my mum's left and my dad's father, Sydney Ernest Goodall and his stepmother, Dorothy, are next to my dad. The other is a group photo of those who attended. Unfortunately, I cannot name everyone, but those I can are, from left to right: Kath Harding – aunt and godmother, Sydney Goodall, Kath Wilson (nee Akers), Betty Gower and children Terry and Hilary Gower, Cyril Goodall, Joyce Whittaker (nee Warwick), Vera Goodall – holding me, Ron Wilson, godfather, Minnie Price and son David 'Podge' Price, Gladys and Edna Kitchen and son Roger, Edith and Thomas Welling and Shirley Double (nee Price).

I have been a reader of *Comment* and its predecessor, The Tring Parish Magazine, for as long as I can remember, as my mother always took it.

Clive Goodall
Loyal Comment reader!

My baptism – by full immersion



The article a few months ago in *Comment* caught my eye – 'Your Baptisms'.

I don't have a baptism card, you see. I can remember it as if it were yesterday. As a Baptist, I was baptised as a teenager, by full immersion on profession of my faith. I didn't come from a Christian family, but

the children next door went to Sunday School and my parents were happy for my brother and I to go along with them. I now realise they were happy to have a quiet Sunday afternoon to themselves.

The Baptist Church was where it all happened in our area of London. Girls' Brigade and Boys' Brigade, lively Sunday School, girls' netball team, boys' football team – lovely people who gave their time and energy and demonstrated to us their faith in practice.

I listened and learned and came to

faith. I talked to the minister and asked to be baptised, as a public affirmation of my faith. So it was that on Easter Day seventy years ago, I was baptised.

So where would it lead? To places many and various, both here in the UK and overseas. At Missionary Training College I met my husband, who was on a similar path, so we went together to Congo where we worked for fifteen years.

Jennie Sugg
High Street Baptist Church

Another baptism story



I am unable to call this a memory, as I was only six months old at the time of my baptism. I was a war baby, born some two months after D-Day and baptised some two months before the declaration of Victory in Europe (VE Day). It is likely that the baptism was delayed due to wartime circumstances.

It took place in Christ Church, Swindon, which was my parents' parish church, where they were married in 1940 and fifty years later celebrated their golden wedding. My family has had long connections with both the Great Western Railway, which had its main works at Swindon, and Christ

Church, where numerous members had their baptisms, weddings and funerals in the church and interments in its large graveyard. The church was built in 1851 to a design by George Gilbert Scott in an elevated position, enabling the spire to be an unmistakable landmark. It is listed Grade II*. I must assume my baptism took place in the elaborately decorated font near the south door. The notice of listing describes it as 'Font: West end of aisle, alabaster, square with octagonal corners on columns, 1905'. It also has a very tall conical cover.

My parents' 'baby record book' states that I was baptised on 18 March 1945 with close relations present, of whom four were listed as godparents. This was noted as being six days after the appearance of my first tooth! Looking at the list of family members



present, I was reminded that such an occasion is also a rite of passage of significance to the baby's parents and relatives, who hopefully will share the care for and raising of the new Christian, with the guidance and support of the wider church.

Martin Wells, St Peter & St Paul

Coronation Day 1953



One of the most unusual experiences of my life was my attendance at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth. I spent the day on the Victoria Memorial opposite Buckingham Palace with a group of Army Cadets!

Membership of the Cadet Force was then almost mandatory at my secondary school and I rose to the exalted rank of Company Sergeant Major in my last year. The school had an allocation of five tickets to attend the coronation and I was one of those lucky enough to get one! I remember marching my contingent of

four from the Underground station to The Mall!

I have not been able to find an image of the Memorial on the day, but this is an early picture of it. It stands at the foot of The Mall immediately in front of Buckingham Palace. I spent my day on the balcony in centre, apart from a brief trip to the toilets in Green Park which is off to the left of the image.

The weather was not good and there was light rain at intervals during the day. There were many goings from the Palace in the morning which we watched from the left hand side of the Memorial and many comings back in the afternoon when there was a major carriage procession which we watched from the right hand side.



My main memory of the day is of Queen Salote of Tonga, who was driven by in an open carriage – her own choice, apparently, despite the weather, which was, as I said, mainly dull and drizzly. She was really enjoying the event, waving to the crowd as she passed!

Queen Elizabeth was in her coronation carriage, very serious looking, and I recall clearly how tiny and vulnerable she appeared to be.

Bill Bradford, St Peter & St Paul

The Creeds



What should Christians believe? I wonder how readers of *Comment* would answer! I suggest some would refer to the creeds, very familiar to some because of their frequent use in worship.

There are two creeds likely to come to mind. One is the Apostles' Creed and the other is the Nicene Creed. Anglicans who are still familiar with Morning and Evening Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer will know that the Apostles' Creed is to be said daily at both services. Common Worship has, however, dropped this frequent recitation. The Nicene Creed is the longer of the two – to be used every time in the Holy Communion Service of the Prayer Book. In fact, it is only used on Sundays and then often shortened versions are sometimes used. In other words, the use of these two creeds in worship has been reduced in Anglican liturgy.

Anglican devotees of the Book of Common Prayer may also know that the Creed of St Athanasius is appointed to be said instead of the Apostles' Creed at Morning Prayer thirteen times a year, at thirteen Feasts of the Church. However, this instruction has for a long time been almost universally ignored. I would be interested to know if any readers have ever used it in worship.

So three creeds – why? And how often should we use them? Do we need frequently to affirm our faith in our worship? The answers depend in part on which Christian tradition we belong to. Further there are other statements of belief which are not creeds. Perhaps here one may mention that the Roman Catholic Church has also a Creed of Pius IV of 1514.

But what are the origins and purposes of these creeds? We do well to start at Matthew 28:19, when Our Lord instructed the Eleven Apostles to go and teach the Gentiles and to baptise them 'in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. So converts would be asked 'Do you believe in the name...?' three times and immersed three times in water or

have water poured on them three times. From these questions arise the creed we now call the Apostles' Creed. There is a pleasing but unhistorical account of how the Apostles met together before setting out on their missionary journeys to agree the basics of the faith they were to teach. This they did by each of the Twelve contributing a phrase or sentence. The Apostles' Creed is in origin a baptismal creed: 'Do you believe?' becomes 'I believe'. In fact, little is known for certain about its early development. In any case the Apostles' Creed belongs to the Western Latin part of the early Church.

The Nicene Creed originated in the Eastern Greek part of the Roman Empire and arose largely to deal with heresies; or rather to make sure that people believed that Jesus is true God and true Man. There were many controversies to deal with what we should believe about Our Lord's nature. Soon after Emperor Constantine conquered the Eastern Province of the Roman Empire, he called a Council of bishops at Nicaea (now Iznik in Turkey) in AD325. As a basis for discussion the church historian Eusebius put forward a creed used in his local church at Caesarea as a basic document for discussion. The problem was the Arian heresy which denied the full divinity of Jesus. So the bishops added certain phrases to make it clear – 'God of God', 'very God of very God' and so on. They also added curses on those who disagreed with them! Fortunately these anathemas were omitted when the creed was expanded at another Council in Constantinople in AD381. So strictly our Nicene Creed is the Constantinopolitan Nicene Creed! Hence, the Nicene Creed we use and which is the one accepted by most, if not all, the Christian traditions arose out of much discussion about Our Lord's nature. This Creed, in its original Greek started 'We believe', but in Latin this was translated as 'I believe'. Now we use 'We believe' again. So we have a personal declaration of belief in the Apostles' Creed and a corporate one for liturgical worship at the Eucharist in the Nicene Creed.

The third Creed in the Book of Common Prayer is the Athanasian

Creed, also known more accurately by the first two words in the original Latin – *Quicumque vult* or 'Whosoever will (wishes to) be saved'. It isn't a creed in the sense of a confession of faith but rather a statement of belief essential for salvation. It is not by Athanasius, who wrote in Greek, but is a statement in Latin of what we should believe in order to be saved. The first part covers the doctrine of the Trinity and the second the Incarnation.

Apart from its length, we are not keen nowadays on its damnatory clauses, and so it has fallen into disuse. The doctrine expressed is good and fine as theological statements but we do not like to say that those who do not keep the faith whole and undefiled shall perish everlastingly; nor do we like to say 'This is the Catholic Faith which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved'. Although such strong language about the need to believe to be saved can be found in Scripture we prefer to leave judgment to God and not to damn people! As to its author, various Latin-speaking theologians have been suggested, but while it seems to have originated in the south of France in the 5th century, it remains a mystery – there are clues but as to 'whodunnit?' no satisfactory culprit has been found!

Having mentioned earlier the Creed of Pius IV in 1564, I should add that this is a profession of faith in the doctrines of the Council of Trent to be accepted by Roman Catholic clergy. There are many other professions of faith which are not in the form of creeds but are summaries of what should be believed by various Christian traditions. So we have the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion for Anglicans, the Methodist Deed of Declaration, Baptist Confessions of Faith, Quaker 'Chief Principles' and so on.

There is obviously a need at times for such declarations of belief but the one used as a basis for ecumenical discussion is the Nicene Creed, as used at the Eucharist in some traditions. How we put our faith into succinct and meaningful words is an intriguing subject for consideration.

Martin Banister
St Albans Cathedral

Who will marry same-sex couples?



There are many Christian denominations and each may hold slightly different official views on all kinds of practices. The fact that there are three

Baptist churches in Tring (and used to be seven) probably testifies to the fact that it's not just a matter of capacity within a building, but other matters that make people choose to worship in one rather than another. Of course, it may simply be that they always have worshipped there and see no reason to move; and it may also be that the official view is not necessarily held by all members of the worshipping community. So much for the caveats.

In putting this in *Comment*, I will almost certainly omit a denomination accidentally – and if so, please feel free to tell me or, better still, write your addendum to this article!

Although there was a generally positive reaction to the idea that the Church of England should marry same-sex couples in church in our recent discussions in the Tring Team, there were some who were still unhappy at the idea and others who were ready to leave the church if the decision were not taken soon to do so.

But the Church of England, in exploring the 'right' decision to make, is not alone within the Christian faith in having dragged its heels up until now or felt it was not consistent with the teaching of the Bible. I thought it might be helpful to trace the timeline others

had taken to reach the position they now hold.

Parliament introduced The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act in 2013.

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches is a progressive and liberal religious movement who appointed the first woman minister in any denomination in 1904 and welcomed same-sex marriage in their churches in 2013.

Quaker same-sex weddings took place in 2014.

The United Reformed Church, a Protestant church with roots in Presbyterianism, voted overwhelmingly to allow same-sex couples to marry in its buildings in 2016. Individual churches are not forced to comply.

The Scottish Episcopal Church voted to allow same-sex couples to marry in church in 2017.

The Methodist Church, the largest denomination so far to do so, voted to change the definition of marriage at the Methodist Conference in 2021. Freedom of conscience clauses mean that ministers are not forced to

conduct such weddings if they oppose the move.

In 2022, the Catholic Church, the Church of England, Baptist churches various, Pentecostal churches of all varieties, the Salvation Army, New Wine and Vineyard churches, do not marry same-sex couples in their church buildings.

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

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Giving a smile to all



Our granddaughter visited us in the May half term. She is a 6th form teacher in a school near Southampton. Information had been sent to the carers of the ninety-six children in that year, inviting them to a three-day PGL holiday costing more than £300.00. The replies came in, including several parents asking if they could pay for a child to go who could not afford it.

Wow! That seemed so lovely.

I expect this is happening elsewhere, and people would feel embarrassed for it to be mentioned. Such lovely news, to give a smile to us all.

We were also told that this Southampton school has several Afghan refugees. The child in our granddaughter's class, one of three classes in Year 6, settled quite well, but when there was a loud bang, she immediately got under her desk and cried holding her hands over her head. She was given a lot of love and care by the class.

At the end of May the school had their own Jubilee Street Party in their school grounds. As a treat a helicopter was to land on the grassed area. All teachers had been told to explain to the Afghan children that it is a friendly helicopter, and nothing to be afraid of.

I think the only warning my teachers had to give us when at school was to know how to cross the road safely.

I know we have some Ukrainians now living in Tring. I hope we can give them the love, support and welcome they need.

Pam Russell, St Peter & St Paul

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Tweet of the month



It is now summer with the breeding season well under way. I have been seeing young birds for the last few weeks. Having recently discussed sex in birds and covered parenting strategies in a previous tweet, it now seems a good time to mention young birds and their different approaches to growing up.


The two basic types of chicks are nidicolous and nidifugous. Nidicolous, or altricial, chicks are pretty much helpless, like human babies, when they hatch. They don't have feathers, aren't mobile and have to be fed by their parents. They stay in the nest until they have grown feathers and either fly or are close to being able to fly. Nidifugous, also known as precocial, chicks are hatched in a fairly advanced state and are able to feed themselves within a few hours of hatching.

Waterbirds such as ducks, geese and swans (see the Mute Swan cygnet in the photo), and also shorebirds like Lapwing and Ringed Plover are nidifugous and leave the nest soon after hatching. Wildfowl typically head for the water, which is comparatively safer than being on land, and also a source of food. For some this can be an easy journey and literally involves hopping out of the nest into the water or a short walk from the nest to the water. For others the journey can be hazardous and potentially fatal. Mandarin, Goosander and Goldeneye are tree-nesting ducks so the young birds jump out of the tree from the entrance hole to the nest. Somewhat surprisingly Barnacle Geese nest on cliffs that can be hundreds of metres high, which is obviously a safe place to sit on the eggs but presents a challenge to the flightless young. Basically, they have to weigh much so they jump off the cliff and spread their wings, feet and bodies to slow their descent and hope they don't bounce off the cliffs too many times. Most survive this and then they walk to the water with their parents and start feeding. Young Lapwing and Ringed Plover walk about feeding on land and will lie down and rely on their camouflage or run back to their parent if a threat appears.

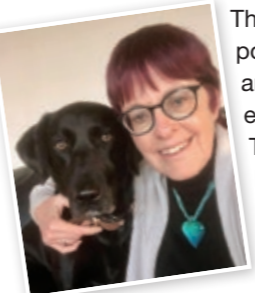
Nidicolous songbirds such as Blue Tit, Wren and Blackbird will stay in the nest being fed until they have feathers and are ready to fly. This obviously places a greater burden on the adults to find their food but then they rely on the nest's location to provide some protection as they have to leave the young alone. Some of the larger birds will leave the nest before they can fly. Tawny Owls will certainly do that and, if you are lucky, you can see them sitting in a tree or clambering around it.

So, we can see some young birds reach adulthood by being adventurous and others by trying to hide away until they are bigger. We know some children are far more daredevil than others and will leave home as soon as they can whereas others don't – although this can be for various good reasons. Christian development can also vary like this – for some it is dangerous and life-threatening and for others it is safe and relatively comfortable, but ultimately both should take you to the same place.

Roy Hargreaves
St Peter & St Paul



Letter from Orkney



The restorative power of music and people is extraordinary. The Orkney Folk Festival was held recently for the first time since 2019, and although I know to some people the folk tradition means sandals, beards and pints of beer – and we won't even think about what the men are like – along with endless diddly-do music, this was the first live music event Mac and I had attended since lockdowns 1, 2 and 3 and however-many more there were.

We sat in a concert hall and the emotional high I felt took me by surprise. The buzz of conversation, an energy and anticipation I hadn't felt for ages added to the atmosphere. The music started, ranging from melodious to mournful and then joyful: it was just fabulous.

This feeling was only exceeded a couple of days later when, as part of the Orkney Rocks Community Choir, I performed at the Pickaquooy Centre, the main concert venue in Kirkwall. The shared experience with my fellow choir members, the culmination of weeks of rehearsal and an appreciative audience, illustrated the power of music to lift and inspire the soul, especially after the dark times of the last two years. Community choirs, even for people like me who can hardly read music, struggle to find and hold a note and have little confidence with singing, are a magical and wonderful thing. There are always people there who know exactly what they're doing, and you just get swept along in their wake.

It will probably be a long time until we take events such as this for granted and that is a good thing. I can only imagine how everyone involved feels, from the musicians, sound and light technicians, front of house and back stage staff. I am just so glad music and live events in all their forms are opening up again – and thank God for that.

By the way, folk music is definitely not just diddly-do stuff (though some of it is, I have to be honest), but it is often complex, poignant, rousing, loud, frantic and tells stories of time and place. I love (most) of it.

Carrie Dodge
St Mary's, Stromness

Living a life shaped by love



It may be July – but can you remember Maundy Thursday? Can you imagine being in that room, the scene of the Last Supper, with its strange atmosphere –

friendly, yes - friends eating a meal, perhaps also slightly edgy: the things Jesus has been saying lately have been even more intense than usual.

Judas has just left the room. We've not quite got to Peter's betrayal. And Jesus says, 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.'

These words shine out against the dark backdrop of betrayal.

The command isn't a random thought from Jesus. He doesn't just rattle it off as a nice idea like a fridge magnet motto. Just as his own life and death express God's love, so he wants his followers to carry on embodying that same love.

Jesus intends that in our love for one another, the heart of God's love for all is seen. But it's a huge demand. How on earth can we love one another when 'one another' includes everyone?! Jesus must understand how much he is asking of us because he promises to help. 'I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth.'

God's Holy Spirit is in it with us. We're not doing it alone.

The commandment to love isn't exactly new. Most of Old Testament law is designed to shape Israel into a loving community, treating its members with justice and care. But in John's Gospel the connection is made explicit and unavoidable. Just as Jesus shows the nature of God, so we are called to show others that same nature.

This commandment can fill us with a sense of hopelessness and failure. How can we possibly show the love of God? But this commandment is given to disciples who don't seem to understand a word that Jesus is saying, and who are soon going to betray him.

Jesus' love for his disciples is entirely realistic. He knows the kind of people he's chosen – then and now. To ordinary, fallible people, Jesus entrusts himself and his message. Jesus trusts us to

show the love of God. Jesus believes in us: we ordinary, fallible people are worthy because we are loved. That's our qualification – we are loved.

That's where we start. We don't have to generate this love ourselves, because it's given to us.

Christians are, basically, people who know that God is love; and we know it, not because we're better at loving than anyone else, but because we know that God has loved us and trusted us.

But how can we love one another when 'another' includes people who wind us up and drive us bananas? How can we love one another when 'another' includes people who are ideologically opposite to us, or when 'another' includes people we find downright offensive? How can we manage to love one another...?

In our 'feel good' and romantic culture, it's usually assumed that genuine love will 'just happen' as long as we're sincere and do what comes naturally – both romantic love and 'loving your neighbour' type love. It's a convenient thing to believe: if it feels right, it must be right, and so no moral hard work is needed.

Is this what love is? Does moral effort have no place in love? Is love really only about feelings? What is genuine love?

If you try to treat someone you can't stand as though you care deeply for them – if you try to imagine what it's like to live inside their skin, to walk in their shoes – then it might lead to genuine interest in them, and then real affection, and finally, genuine love.

We might say, 'You mean, I've got to pretend that I love people?!' The very fact that this sounds so 'inauthentic' suggests that ethics have become separated from our notion of loving others. The love Jesus speaks of isn't necessarily prompted by our emotions, but comes from the will. This love will grit its teeth and act as if the emotions were in place, trusting that they'll follow in good time. It's not pretending to love someone, but deciding to love someone. Genuine love can be about will as much as emotions.

In Matthew's Gospel we read, 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the

good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.'

We are called to love one another – including our enemies, those people we can't stand, those people who offend us, ideologically, and in person. Loving our enemies is part of the call to live in the kingdom of God – here and now.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu offers us help in this in his teaching of ubuntu. Ubuntu is a worldview originating from the Zulu and Ko-sa (Xhosa) people of Southern Africa. Maybe you're familiar with it. It's a difficult word to translate, but it means something like 'a person is person because of other persons'.

Desmond Tutu, who of course lived through the brutality of apartheid, says this, 'You cannot be human on your own. You are human through relationship. You become human. Psychology tells us that we wouldn't be able to speak without other humans, we learn to walk by imitating other human beings. Ultimately, we are human only through relationship. We're made for interdependence.'

Tutu says that the completely self-sufficient person is in fact sub-human. Ubuntu says that you are human because you participate in relationships. Ubuntu says a person is a person through other persons.

Ubuntu is a cultural concept, enmeshed in Desmond Tutu's theology because it so deeply points to the practice of community and inclusion. Tutu describes it as 'my humanity is bound up in yours'.

Through Jesus' teaching to love one another and love our enemies, ubuntu becomes even more meaningful. Dehumanising our enemies gets us nowhere, and is contrary to the teaching of Christ.

It's not easy, though. It requires humility and courage. To love one another as Jesus loves us is to live a life shaped by a love that knows no limits, a love that brings us closer to God, to Jesus, and to others, a love that brings new possibilities of community.

It's hard, this Christianity business. Thank God we're strengthened and inspired and encouraged by his love. Thank God the Holy Spirit is here to help us... to love one another.

**Michelle Grace
Tring Team**

MBEs for two ex-Tring residents

I discovered by accident that two friends from long ago, former Tring residents and members of St Peter & St Paul's Church, had been honoured in the Queen's New Year's honours. Rachel and Nigel Poulton have both been made Members of the British Empire by the Queen for services to fostering, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.



For years we have received Christmas cards from them, often with a small photo of their multi-racial family, but ever changing! They met in Thailand while volunteering in a refugee camp and shared a desire to help children and refugees. Living now in York, they have seven adopted children from various war-torn countries around the world and have been foster carers with the City of York Council for more than twelve years. When we last saw them on a visit to York, they were about to adopt a little Polish boy they had been fostering. Now they have shifted their

focus to care for teenage refugees who have fled countries such as Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan. During the lockdowns of the last two years there were twelve of them living at home. The first five of their adopted children are now grown up with homes and families of their own, but Nigel and Rachel had opened their home to others aged from 3 to 98 (the

latter a friend who had no family and now lives with them permanently). They have welcomed children having to flee their homes and countries, having been through horrendous situations, seeing close friends or family killed or drowned at sea. Some suffered horrible injuries themselves. Friends also helped during the lockdowns, with the local church organising a hot meal for ten each evening when the family had to isolate due to Covid-19.

This year Nigel and Rachel have been caring for five refugees aged 14-17, alongside their youngest two adopted children who have helped the newcomers settle in.

More recently they have appeared on TV encouraging others to offer homes to Ukrainian refugees. They are as ordinary as any of the rest of us and yet the most amazing and inspirational people I have ever met, with hearts as open as their home.

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

Crossword

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ACROSS

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- Paul - Used to be called (4)
- and 8. (4) (2) (1)
- Not very often (4) (4)
- Money (4)
- Carve (4)
- English (8)
- Said you certainly would (8)
- Strap (4)
- City of France (4)
- Improved (8)
- Almost identical (7)
- Canvas (4)
- Communion (4)

DOWN

- Flower root (4)
- Method (4)
- Those at school (8)
- Hill of Jerusalem (4)
- Holiness (8)
- Lake (4)
- Forms of worship (7)
- Small bright gem (7)
- Believer in mankind (8)
- One who is your religious duty (8)
- Period before Easter (4)
- Girl's name (4)
- Usual (4)
- God (3)

Answers on page 30

Turning knowledge into action



There is so much news today coming to our attention and so many appeals for help and urgings to take practical action that we, especially if we are elderly, can easily feel overwhelmed. The result often is that we then do nothing. So when I read an item online in Independent Catholic News dated 25 May, which they invite the reader to share, I thought readers of *Comment* may be interested. The source for their item is Vatican News and it reports on what Pope Francis had to say recently during his General Audience with pilgrims in St Peter's Square, Rome.

'During the General Audience Pope Francis urged older people to resist the temptation to accumulate knowledge without turning it into action. Reflecting on the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes, he noted how its refrain "everything is vanity" represents a particular temptation in our own day and age.

'He said the wise man Qoheleth bounced back and forth from sense and meaninglessness in his quest for knowledge of life, saying he teetered on non-sense when leaning toward knowledge detached from "passion for justice".

'Qoheleth concluded his book with an indication of how to get out of the trap: "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole

duty of man."

'Pope Francis said each of us has been tempted toward indifference when we see that our efforts seem to produce no results and reality appears to turn everything – both good and bad – into nothingness. He added that "a kind of negative intuition" especially tempts people advanced in years, possibly leading them to disenchantment.

"The resistance of old age to the demoralising effects of disenchantment is decisive: If the elderly, who have now seen it all, keep intact their passion for justice, then there is hope for love, and also for faith."

'The Pope said our contemporary world believes it can "measure and manipulate everything", which then results in "a collective demoralization of meaning, love, and goodness."

'The Holy Father went on to reflect on why knowledge detached from action is so harmful to a person. A supposed "truth", which limits itself to registering the world, also registers its indifference to opposites and consigns them, without redemption, to the flow of time and the fate of nothingness. In this form – cloaked in the trappings of science, but also very insensitive and very amoral – the modern quest for truth has been tempted to take leave of its passion for justice altogether. It no longer believes in its destiny, its promise, its redemption."

'Pope Francis said modern culture "combines knowledge and irresponsibility" in an attempt to take away the moral impact of our actions, and takes us down the path of "paralysis

of the soul". "Qoheleth", said the Pope, called this temptation "a delirium of omniscience", something the early monks of the church called "acedia" or a "surrender to the knowledge of the world devoid of any passion for justice and consequent action".

Pope Francis noted that giving in to this temptation "opens the door to the aggressiveness of the forces of evil" in the form of ideologies. "This affective and irresponsible reason also takes away meaning and energy from knowledge of truth," he said. "It is no coincidence that ours is the age of fake news, collective superstitions, and pseudo-scientific truths."

'Pope Francis concluded by calling on the elderly to help younger generations turn away from the "delusion of a truth of the mind devoid of a desire for justice. Elderly people rich in wisdom and humour do so much good for the young! They save them from the temptation of a sad worldly knowledge devoid of the wisdom of life."

'So by reading and hearing about the needs of the world which are crying out to us now all the time, given the wonderful means of communication which we have at present, we should not just let this knowledge accumulate in our minds or be "put on the back burner" but seek to do something practical. As the Pope says the elderly, in particular, have gained wisdom during their lives and now is the time to show the young that they can do something practically to help.'

Michael Demidecki
Corpus Christi Church

Thank you for *Comment*

What a brilliant magazine *Comment* is! I was born in Tring in 1946 and married Gerald (Ged) Baldwin in St Peter & St Paul's Church on 22 March 1975. My brother-in-law, Robert (Bob) Baldwin and his wife, have been sending me the magazine as I now live in Wellington, Somerset.

My father, Lindsay Yates, (on the right in the photo) was a Reader until his death, sadly at 67, in 1980. My mother, Eva, was a member of the Mothers Union and The Red Cross under Nora Grace, and also one of 'Mrs Rodley's Ladies'. She lived in Beaconsfield Road until she died in 1998, aged 83.

I have enjoyed the articles regarding some of her friends. Recently, in the May issue of *Comment*, there was the

obituary of Peggy Bainbridge who used to visit my mum after her husband died. I also remember Gwen Hewison as being one of Mrs Rodley's Ladies.

Keep up the good work.
Mary Baldwin, nee Yates

Thank you so much for your encouragement, Mary!

I love to have stories about the churches in past days because it is so easy for people to forget that, while life may have been a little different a generation or two ago, there were still people like them eagerly serving the churches and the community before they did. Those older people, maybe a little frailer than they were (including



me!), were once the activists making sure everything happened to keep people together and encouraging one another in a different set of difficult times. It's particularly sad when we only hear about what this or that person did for their community at their funeral – when it's too late to ask them about it. More please!

The Editor

In memory of Ted (Edwin) Tapson

My dad was born in Hammersmith Hospital before his family moved to South Harrow in 1942 in the middle of the war. He was the middle son of three boys. Frank, Dad's younger brother, vividly remembers their father taking up the floorboards in the front room of their small house in South Harrow and building a heavy duty steel bomb shelter. Dad initially refused to go in it but when the bombing was felt in nearby Harrow, he didn't need persuading.

Dad joined the Navy voluntarily to avoid conscription into one of the other services. He served on HMS Ganges, Vanguard and Vengeance during his four-year period in the Navy, during which time he completed his engineering apprenticeship.

Mum and Dad met in 1948 at a British Legion dance in Harrow when Dad was on de-mob leave. Mum is convinced she was his third choice that evening after trying his luck with two other ladies, but I'm sure that's not right!

Dad's charm obviously won Mum over though; they got engaged on her 21st birthday in August 1948 and later married on 1 April 1950, April Fool's Day, a rather strange date to marry, but they were no fools – as they recently celebrated their 72nd wedding anniversary. I understand the real reason for this choice of date was apparently because it was tax beneficial. I must admit that does sound like Dad.

Their marriage was clearly a long and happy one, as Mum frequently reminded him, but what you would probably call a fairly traditional one, with clearly defined blue jobs and pink jobs: Mum doing all the domestic chores and Dad doing maintenance, DIY and gardening.

When Mum broke her wrist a couple of years ago, Dad did actually peel and chop an onion and change a pillow case – both for the first time in his married life, although his contribution to the domestic chores didn't continue once Mum was out of plaster. That said, Mum and Dad's devotion to each other is clearly an inspiration for us all.

Mum and Dad spent the first forty years of their married life living in Wembley, Dad working for Watson's and GEC Medical, installing and maintaining X-Ray and dental equipment in hospitals.

During Dad's career he travelled abroad extensively and on one of his trips to Nigeria, I clearly remember going to Heathrow to meet him, only to be told that their plane had been hijacked. The

plane had made an emergency landing in Amsterdam where the hijackers were eventually overpowered. We were obviously extremely worried while we waited for news, but when Dad finally arrived, he seemed more upset that he'd left his shoes behind on the aircraft when he came down the emergency chute.

In 1969 Dad went with Mum and my sister Gill to work on a contract in Nairobi for two years, which was a fantastic opportunity for them. When Dad retired, he became a hospital volunteer driver, as he always liked to help other people.



In 1991 Mum and Dad moved to Tring and quickly threw themselves into the numerous activities the town had to offer. They both played golf, were regular members of U3A, for whom Dad arranged numerous trips to several destinations both in the UK and abroad. They were also keen members of the local rambling club.

More recently Dad helped with the cleaning in St Peter & St Paul's Church, and up until very recently, also helped with the Foodbank. They have also enjoyed many strong friendships, some of which go back over seventy years.

Dad's real pleasure in life has always been his family, and my sister Gill and myself have always been grateful for all his love and support in so many ways. Dad would find any excuse to get on the floor with his six grandchildren when they were younger, and more recently, with his seven great grandchildren. All of them will always remember him for his sense of fun. Even as recently as last Christmas, he enjoyed acting the fool to the great grandchildren's amusement, playing silly games.

Dad became fairly familiar with using an iPad and used it regularly for watching

football, which was another love of his life. He was a lifelong Arsenal supporter. At the beginning of the pandemic, we introduced him to FaceTime so we could do their online shopping. However, when we tried to contact them, they couldn't understand where the ringing noise was coming from! It became quite an amusing ritual trying to get them both on screen at the same time and frequently asked Dad to move over, or raise the screen so we could see them properly. Dad always started the shopping list with his favourite salmon terrine and prawns, closely followed by gingerbread men for his great grandchildren.

During the last few months, Dad's health started to deteriorate, but he was determined not to use any aids to help him, always insisting they were for 'old' people. Even when he was in hospital, he was visited by the Occupational Therapist, and flatly turned down ramps, grab rails, a wheelchair or any other aids that were offered. He did eventually, however, and reluctantly accept a walking frame.

Dad's brain was sharp, though, right through to his final days, recently insisting that when I went to the corner shop for him, I bought the TV guide that cost 72p and not the one that cost 2.49! When one of the paramedics was asking him questions, she asked him if he knew who the Prime Minister of England was and, looking at her rather indignantly, he announced, 'Boris Johnson, of course!'

In Dad's last few weeks, he was under the care of the Rennie Grove Hospice Care Team in Tring, and the Care By Us Team, alongside several other organisations that he had been referred to. During a visit from two nurses the evening before Dad passed away, Mum didn't fail to notice the close attention he was giving one of the nurses as he stroked her arm and admiringly gazed at her very long eyelashes.

All of these organisations, including the overworked hospital doctors and nurses at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and Watford General Hospital, and the team at Rothschild House Surgery, have all been extremely kind and helpful. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to every one of them and the marvellous committed people that work for them.

Dad was 96 when he died, a long life that should be celebrated. That's exactly what he would want us to do.

Steve Tapson, son

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Articles, photos and publicity adverts for the next edition should arrive with the Editor no later than the 1st of the previous month.

COMMENT DEADLINES

1 January
1 February
1 March
1 April
1 May
1 June
1 August
1 September
1 October
1 November

NB There is no magazine for January or August

Crossword puzzle answers From page 25

ACROSS	DOWN
1. BEAM	1. BULB
5. SAUL	2. MODE
7 & 8. ONCE IN A BLUE MOON	3. SCHOLARS
10. CASH	4. ZION
12. ETCH	5. SANCTIFY
14. ANGLICAN	6. LOCH
16. PROMISED	9. LITURGY
17. YOKE	11. SPARKLE
18. LYON	13. HUMANIST
19. ENHANCED	15. GODCHILD
22. SIMILAR	18. LENT
23. TENT	19. EMMA
24. MASS	20. NORM
	21. DEUS

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Growing in the message and challenge of God



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zoom

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Pass code: highstreet

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Wednesdays 2-4pm

Fridays 10am-12 Noon

Coffee & chat

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Pepper Show
Band

Saturday 9th July
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