

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



Services in Tring Team Parish in September

Sunday 5th September

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 Holy Communion **Long Marston**
12noon Baptisms **Tring**
3pm Harvest Celebration Tea **Wilstone**

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

Worship for All is the name we give to our church services where we all worship together but there is more provision for children, however they are for everyone. They can either be with or without Holy Communion. They are a more relaxed style of worship and can be a bit shorter.

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, run by the clergy. Here the children (0 - 11 years old) hear the same Bible Story and sing songs / have a craft and then rejoin the wider congregation to take communion.

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

Until all lockdown restrictions are over we ask you to book; all the services are listed on our Services and Events booking on the website. This gives us the details for NHS Test and Trace and we can let you know if there are late changes to our services. We ask you to wear a face covering while walking about but can be removed when sitting. We have areas in church that allow space for people who want it, please ask as you come in. We now have singing at some of our services and most services will be followed by refreshments.

Sunday 12th September

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Worship for All **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
6pm Celtic Evening Prayer **Long Marston**

Sunday 19th September

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Holy Communion and Sunday Club **Tring**
10am Harvest Worship for All **Long Marston**
10am Morning service or HC **Aldbury**

Sunday 26th September

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Worship for All Holy Communion **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
3.30pm Evensong traditional language **Puttenham**
6pm Holy Communion **Long Marston**

A place to feel loved...



What do you remember about going to church as a child? I remember playing houses under the lady altar, and going to Sunday School where we were given stamps with images of Jesus' life on. I remember the church bag, which was a bag of books and quiet toys that Mum kept for Sundays only, so that we weren't bored with what was in there. I remember reading 'The Table of Kindred and Affinity' in the Prayer Book while the sermon was being preached. I remember congregations who were happy to see us, even if we did not know any of their names, and I remember squash of varying weakness and strength after the services.

Most of us who are part of a regular church congregation now were brought up with some element of church in our childhood – not all of us, but most – and it shows how important it is to enable spiritual growth throughout life. So often, one hears parents say that they don't want to force their child into anything, and they want them to make their own decisions, so they won't do anything about church. Yet as parents they will do all they can to make sure that physically and emotionally, educationally and in sport, their child has all the opportunities possible. For

some reason, spirituality and religion (different things admittedly) are left out of this.

It is something that we in the Tring Team try to promote – to give children a good basis and an understanding so that they can decide for themselves later, but to make sure that they have a starting point from which to 'choose' for themselves. If I think back to my childhood experience of church, then it was a mixture of people and worship, of the buildings and the music, of experience and feelings. It is all those things that we want to offer to others as it was offered to us.

Coming out of lockdown it has been clear that we need to focus on children's work in the Tring Team – not because we value children more than those of other ages, but because our church is unbalanced if we do not offer something for them. It is for the benefit of all if we offer good quality resources for all generations and to do so in a way that is sustainable in the future.

So what is different? For a start, how we view worship and liturgy has changed. It was not that many years ago that having children in church meant telling them what they could not do rather than what they could do; that it was about keeping them quiet and out of the way. The assumption was that the children were guests at an adult event. So often there were concerns about noise, and one of the best training sessions I attended pointed out the

difference between sound and noise – sound happens all the time, but it is only noise that is disruptive. And adults can make noise as much as children can.

Our understanding of worship for all of us has changed – knowing that it includes prayer, music, silence, activities; that repetition and new elements both have a part to play; that it is about both comforting us and unsettling us; that it has to be something that is integrated into our lives, and not just a separate, unaltered event that happens on one day only in the week.

When writing this, I have two images in my mind that come from our re-started Baby and Toddler Group, which has provided a vital opportunity as a place to socialize for a group of infants who have not had the groups to go to. One is of three little children, who had not all met before, sitting in the front pew, chattering away; and the other is of another group, with a pretend picnic (toy food is a vital part of any toddler group) sitting in front of the high altar, having spent the previous minutes just going up and down the steps.

Who knows whether they will remember this as adults? If they come often enough, they may well do. And I hope that they will remember it as a place of welcome and comfort, of fun and laughter, of playing in a place that is unlike any other, and above all, of feeling loved.

Jane Banister, Tring Team

New baby congratulations!

Congratulations to Charlie and Chloe Dickenson, whose first baby, Robyn Joanna Dickenson, was born on 28 July. Charlie was confirmed in St Peter & St Paul's Church a few years ago and Charlie and Chloe were also married there though they live in Wilstone.

Clearly brave souls, Charlie and Chloe obtained a new puppy shortly before the arrival of their new baby girl, a Lhasa Apso named Wookie. Fortunately he mastered toilet training just before baby Robyn



arrived... We look seeing them all soon.
The Editor



All shall be well – 700 years ago in East Anglia, today in Aylesbury Vale



At High Street Baptist Church, we've just finished a series entitled 'All shall be well: looking biblically at wellbeing'. The series title comes from the writings of Julian of Norwich, a 14th century anchoress. The full quote is: 'All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well'.

This wellbeing sermon series used a biblical lens to explore the five ways to wellbeing: connect, be active, take notice, learn, give. (There's more information about the series on our website www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk and YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmSxZC8JcP8sMJbgFO7_WoA)

But why wellbeing? Because one in six of us will experience a common mental disorder during our life time. Our church values the whole person, including our congregation's mental wellbeing. Joe, Ruth and the leadership team wanted to do something to support people and promote wellbeing. We echo the words of Ephesians 3:16 which say 'I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being'.

Ruth gave a sermon during the series that particularly resonated with me. It was about the importance of recognising our needs, addressing them, and, being

replenished, to continuing.

Ruth started by introducing Maslow and his hierarchy of needs. In 1943, Abraham Maslow proposed an idea: that people are motivated to fulfil basic needs before moving on to other, more advanced needs. Basic needs include food, water, sleep, and warmth. When my eldest daughter returned from her Duke of Edinburgh expedition a couple of weeks ago, she needed a bath, a big plate of food, and twelve hours in her own bed. (Having walked 25km over two days carrying a rucksack that weighed just a little less than her, my eldest did not need to feel self actualised, the very peak of Maslow's hierarchy. Even though by striving and being independent and testing herself, as her mum I think she was achieving her full potential as a human that weekend!)

After her expedition, my daughter needed to rest. There are many examples of people resting in the Bible, including 1 Kings 19:4-5: 'When [Elijah] came to Beersheba in Judah, he... went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. Sleep was granted to Elijah. Sleep is as important to our health as eating, drinking and breathing. It allows our bodies to repair themselves, our brains to consolidate memories and process information. Another example of

resting, one that makes me think of my grandmother, comes from Psalm 23: 'He makes me lie down... he refreshes my soul.'

After Elijah had rested, he was fed by the Lord, and once fed, he could continue. 1 Kings 19:6-8: 'All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat". He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank.' God provided what was needed, knowing what was to come. God was giving Elijah his daily bread. Once rested and fed, Elijah was strengthened and travelled for forty days and forty nights.

At this point in her sermon, Ruth referenced Dave Smith's book, 'God's Plan for your Wellbeing.' In some ways I suspect this book is a modern take on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Amazon tells me it's an 'accessible guide for individuals and groups to take next steps towards greater wellbeing. Informative and practical, built upon Biblical principles, this guide acts as a personal satnav in a journey towards greater resilience and a richer quality of life. We discover that God really does have a plan for our overall health and sets us on course for a lifetime of ever increasing wellbeing'.

However we achieve that greater wellbeing, whether it's mindful colouring (my youngest), birdwatching (my eldest), running (me) or fixing 100 year old plumbing conundrums (my husband – but that's a story for another time!), it lifts us and carries us. We are renewing our strength from the inside out; we're being actively renewed.

Ultimately of course, Christians will be physically resurrected as Jesus was, in glorified bodies that will live forever. Illnesses we may have experienced in our lifetimes will fall away. New bodies will be actively renewed in line with his plans for us. From Isaiah 40:30-32: 'Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.'

And that is where Ruth's sermon really resonated with me. You see, sixteen months ago, just two weeks before the first national lockdown in March 2020, I began a new job. I became the CEO of a small charity in Aylesbury called Youth Concern. The charity supports vulnerable 13-25 year olds from across Aylesbury Vale – and increasingly, further afield www.youthconcern.org.uk. And while Ruth was talking, I realised that Youth Concern is enacting Maslow's hierarchy of needs and helping disadvantaged young people to achieve wellbeing.

In December 2020, during the third lockdown, we opened our Next Step project. We have room to house nine homeless or at risk of homeless 18-25 year olds. Often called the 'hidden homeless', young people aren't safe sleeping on the streets. Most of our residents have sofa-surfed in friends' or friends' parents' houses. Some have lived in cars, or up trees, or at protest camps, in self-built homes made from pallets and heavy duty plastic bags. They are wonderfully resourceful young people who just haven't had the opportunities in life that my Duke of Edinburgh Award-

participating children have had.

During their time with us, up to eighteen months, each resident, supported by their Project Worker, identifies the steps they will need to take, and skills they will need to learn to live independently when they move out. This model is called supported accommodation; it relies on residents recognising their needs, addressing them, and, being replenished, to continuing.

Physically and metaphorically, our residents rest, recuperate, eat, gather their strength, and move towards self-actualisation. By the time our young men and women move out, it's our shared ambition that they have the capacity to achieve their full potential. It's a difficult journey for them, and for us, but together we learn from the challenges and own the successes. (Like this one: a haircut made one of our young men feel good about himself. He asked his Project Worker to help him write his first ever CV. There and then he took that CV into town, asked to speak to the managers of three separate pubs, presented confidently and was offered three trials. By 10.00pm that evening, he'd been offered a job and

eight weeks later was in touching distance of clearing his debt so that he will be saving up to move out with friends.)

From our Next Step project, Drop-in Centre and counselling service, Youth Concern helps young people rest, replenish and renew themselves. Please pray for the work our charity does. And if you would like to support our work financially, it would be appreciated enormously. In the top right hand corner of our home page is a green button that says 'donate' www.youthconcern.org.uk. Thank you.

Finally, if you are in need of support or help, please contact your church, our church, or check out High Street Baptist Church's 'Help' page <https://tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/well-being/help/> for a list of local services.

Hannah Asquith
High Street Baptist Church



Congratulations to the Watkins!

Mike and Sandra Watkin of St Peter & St Paul have been blessed with a third grandchild, this time born to their only son, James, and wife Lucy. James has a twin sister, Sarah, and so Mike and Sandra already have two other grandchildren, Jacob and Harry. James and Sarah are ex-Tring School pupils.

The new arrival was born at 00.30 on 24 May this year weighing 7lbs 8oz and they have named her Esther Ruth Mildred Watkin. Mildred was also Sandra's mother's name.

The Editor



What's in a name?

I have noticed a resurgence of older names – names that might have belonged to my long-dead great, great aunts – among the new crop of children being born. Mike and Sandra Watkin have seen a Mildred creep in and we have a friend whose new granddaughter is called Mabel.

I am always intrigued by the names people give to their children and the reasons why. We called our boys good biblical names: Thomas, James, Jonathan and Benjamin. But my husband was delighted when we called son

number two James Peter (Peter after my dad) because it gave him the initials JPR – and those who are rugby fans will know of JPR Williams, even if they don't support Wales!

I am also curious as to why Thomas transcends the generations. My husband's father, grandfather, great grandfather and great, great uncle were all called Tom, as is our son and his cousin. I have two Godsons called Thomas, one in his 30s and the other not yet 2. All four of my sons have close friends called Tom. The Head at Bishop

Wood School has just named his second son Thomas. I have a good number of Toms in my own family history, including some that go back a few centuries!

If you have a theory about the popularity of the name Thomas or Tom – or have a number of Victorian names creeping into your own family; or even a story about naming children, do send in your own two pennyworth for the next edition of *Comment*.

The Editor

Cornwall to Glasgow, via Tring



A pilgrimage relay, organised by the Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN), began on Monday 14 June from Truro, following the conclusion of the G7 heads of government meeting in Carbis Bay. Walkers of all ages are joining in sections of a journey that will extend from Cornwall all the way to Glasgow. They reached Bristol in mid-July and then dipped back south to Salisbury and Winchester on their way to London, where they met a number of church leaders and climate activists on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral. Leaving London on Monday 9 August, walkers reached Tring on Thursday 12 August on the section that will extend to Oxford before heading north to Birmingham, Nottingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Newcastle and on into Scotland.

High Street Baptist Church offered accommodation to the four walkers who did the legs both to and from Tring, and we also planned a welcome event involving Tring churches. A meal was provided by members of Tring's

Justice & Peace Group, followed by a service for the whole community. The service was led by Assistant Minister, Kevin Rogers, who first introduced the Tring Mayor, Councillor Christopher Townsend, who officially welcomed the relay to the town. He told how, as a child, he had realised many years ago that polluting emissions from traffic was a problem but had felt that 'it must be OK because adults are in charge'; however, the consequences of the failure to take necessary action over the intervening years has been highlighted by the latest IPCC Report, published on 9 August.

There was then an illustrated introduction to Tring, and brief presentations from three local groups: Tring in Transition; Extinction Rebellion Tring; and Tring's Justice & Peace Group. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet other Tring groups taking action on the climate crisis. Kevin then interviewed the relay's two lead walkers on the London-to-Oxford leg, Hannah Eves and Adam Eveleigh, and we heard about the four



objectives that YCCN will present to the UK government at COP26, asking that they should: reinstate the foreign aid budget to pre-Covid levels; secure agreement from rich countries to at least double the decade-old promise of \$100bn a year for climate finance; ensure finance for climate-induced loss and damage; and push for debt cancellation so climate-vulnerable nations can better confront the climate crisis and other urgent priorities.

Prayers were written and read by Fern Asquith, Tring School, and High Street Baptist Church:

'Lord, I want to pray for everybody who has walked today and everyone who has joined and will join them. For everyone who supported them and for

everyone from my church who welcomed them into Tring. Too many people would ignore the opportunity, make excuses, try to think of an easier way to support the Earth. But everyone here stepped up, spending a precious summer holiday day – a big sacrifice, I know – to walk and raise awareness. I pray that you give them strength as they continue in their journeys – whether that's through more days' walking or small changes in their lives as we fight against climate change.

'And finally, I want to pray for the world. Lord, we pray for humanity; for those who refuse to accept climate change. For those who nod along as scientists try to impress how severe



the situation is, understanding what is happening but making no change. For those too scared, too busy, too content with their lives to make the effort to save our Earth. If we want change, we must do

and that in the face of the climate crisis 'we're in the same storm, but not in the same boat'.

There was much good conversation after the close of the service, and as some of those who had supported the day's walk from Hemel Hempstead headed home, on the following morning new walkers joined the core team for the leg to Aylesbury. Meeting in the morning outside St Peter & St Paul's Church, our local MP – Mr Gagan Mohindra – was among those who gathered to wish the walkers a safe journey and to talk to them about the relay. There are plenty of opportunities to join the relay walk for a day or more over the next couple of months and you can see the route and sign up to join in with this initiative by visiting the website, <https://www.yccn.uk>.

Nicky Bull and Polly Eaton
High Street Baptist Church



it together. We pray that people start to listen, to understand and stand with us as we fight for change. God, give us the strength to speak out, and then the courage to listen and respond. Amen.

The key messages that the walkers are conveying as they meet and talk with people are that 'we need to act now, tomorrow is too late'



Have hymnbook – will travel



Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, is a very surprising sight, even when the guidebook has told you what to expect. Wrenched out of its usual grey, river-bound location, there stands Notre Dame (Paris), on top of Nob Hill in the blazing California sunshine! (Not quite, but the building takes its inspiration from the famous French cathedral.)

The former church was destroyed in the fire that accompanied the earthquake of 1906. This replacement is constructed, very effectively, out of

steel and concrete, so as to withstand subsequent earth tremors (like 1989, for instance). It is built on a west-east axis to fit in with the approach up Nob Hill, so all reference to the East Window or the South Aisle is actually geographically completely topsy-turvy.

Inside, there are murals along the North and South walls depicting the church's – and specifically this cathedral's – history. This results in a jolly jumble containing, along with many local notables, St Augustine and Queen Ethelburga, Francis Drake and Archbishop Robert Runcie.

The stained glass, to which of course we gave particular attention, is ravishing. Especially lovely is their Millennium Window in blue and silver-white: the Solar System depicted in an outline which unmistakably represents the Virgin. The Universe contained within the Mother of God.

The American Episcopal Church is

part of the Anglican Communion and attending services is always like being at 'home from home'. Almost every last detail echoes our own practice, reinforcing the awareness that 'though we are many, we are one body'.

Music: there was an excellent choir, singing mostly unaccompanied and with awesome precision. The anthem was a setting of that very moving psalm, 'By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept' – paradoxical, the way it laments so beautifully the impossibility of making music in exile and captivity.

Sermon from the Dean (with the anniversary of 11th September imminent): a strong warning against harbouring delusions of moral superiority, either personally or politically. 'He that hath ears to hear...'

Martin & Carole Wells
St Peter & St Paul

Second is the first prize for losers!



I am not the world's sportiest person, but I do quite enjoy sport. As you have probably gathered, I love spending a winter's afternoon in the rain and the mud on Cow Lane watching Tring 1st XV play rugby. You may not know that for three weeks in July I will avidly watch the Tour de France, and if it weren't behind a pay wall, I would happily idle away the hours watching cricket. So, have I been loving the Olympics? No. I am not sure why I cannot get into it.

The BBC coverage is unsurprisingly largely about British medal hopes and medal winners. However, there is a certain hollow feeling when one of the richest countries in the world funds people to win medals. I would love to hear many more stories of how the underdogs succeed. Whilst not watching the games, I have been following them.

From the world of cycling, it was glorious to hear how an unheard of Austrian cyclist won the road race. She is a mathematician, not a professional cyclist. She devised her own strategy and, with no team support, rode away from the main field. She was so far ahead that some of the favourites didn't realise that she was up the road ahead of them, and one even celebrated winning, not realising that she had been beaten by an unknown rider finishing a minute before her. The favourite teams had coaches and nutritionists planning everything for them. Anna Kiesenhofer had to work out when she needed her gels and feed bars herself – somehow she channelled the spirit of the 1947 Olympics when competitors brought their own packed lunches.

In the rugby sevens, one of the GB stars, Bibby, went on air to moan about the 'farcical lack of funding' for their team after they failed to win a medal. In contrast it was interesting to read the story of the Fijians, the gold medalists. One of their team was literally homeless and sleeping on the streets six months before the Olympics. The team came together for a training camp, and then because of Covid-19 were not able to see their families again for five months. After their victory, they prayed on the field and sung a hymn of praise to God. All of them would have been delighted to receive

even a fraction of the farcical financing the GB team benefited from.

Then there is the sad story of Simone Biles. She feels she has been used, and the pressure of winning is bad for her mental health. I suspect this isn't surprising when you have people telling you second is first place for losers. If you have twenty of the world's greatest athletes competing, nineteen of them are going to come away disappointed. It gives the impression that winning is everything. Is it? Do they not love their sport? Do they not just relish the opportunity to compete in something they love doing?

Sometimes it is a joy to see the genuine congratulations and good wishes shared by fellow competitors, but all too often we see the utter dismay of someone who has found out that they are just the fourth best person in the whole world at a particular sport.

I think for me to fall in love with the Olympics I would need a few more stories about the plucky underdog. Instead, I have just heard the excitement caused when a British Gold Medal was won by a woman riding a child's bike (the BMX racing). Before that we had skateboarding – here at least a child won gold in what is obviously a fantastic pastime for children, but an Olympic sport? Really? Don't even get me onto the golf – surely athletic ability ought to be one of the prerequisites for an Olympian; and I have always thought the horse ought to get the medal at dressage rather than the rider. Maybe I am just suffering from grumpy-old-manitis.

As things stand, I will wait until September comes and I can watch some live rugby. The chances of my team winning are remote. If we avoid relegation I will be happy, and even if we go down but the team have had fun on the way, what is to be lost? I was once in a team beaten 150 – 0, but I still love the game.
Huw Bellis, Tring Team

Postscript

It is inspiring to see people working so hard work to achieve excellence. However, the life of faith offers a distinctively different approach. In John 6:24-35, the crowds follow Jesus and ask him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?'. Our natural inclination is to think that we need to do things to get a reward. Jesus' answer is that the work that God wants is simply for followers to

believe in him! Jesus tells us that he is the 'bread that gives life'. The amazing news about following Jesus is that we don't have to earn or work to become a Christian. It is a choice to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and trust that Jesus is what we need to live a full life. This can really release us from feeling the pressure to have to do, work and achieve.

Dr Angela Mak
Licensed Lay Minister at Holy Trinity Shaw in the Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze

Parish registers

Baptisms

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

Georgia Bolton Smith
Noah Cartwright
Finlay Brown
Jesse Brown

Weddings

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

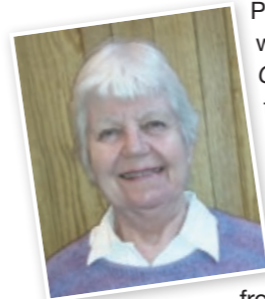
Robin Walker & Olivia Higginson
Timothy Mark Overington-Hickford & Emma Ann Stokes
Matthew Picot & Sophie Ray
Gavin McKay & Mags Forrest
Matthew Rogers & Lisa Herring
Trevor Thumwood & Paula Williams
Richard John Sewart
& Hayley Jenny Annette Guest
Timothy James Harcourt-Powell
& Jenny Primrose Isabel Johnson

Funerals

We thank God for the lives of the departed and pray for comfort for those who mourn.

Alan Garside 63
Jean Simmons
Judy Bean 53
Russell Leonard Arrowsmith 67

My favourite psalm



People have been writing recently in *Comment* about their favourite hymns. I have a favourite psalm, Psalm 121, 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help'. Yes, it must be in the language of the King James Bible!

I suppose, in many ways, this psalm has been interwoven in my life. From attending Church Schools, the psalms were present, and from holiday times we were always taken to walk in the hills. When I started my teaching career at Sunderland Church High School, this

was their school psalm. It was said every week (on a Wednesday, if I remember correctly) and I always thought what a wonderful prayer it was for the students: 'The Lord is thy keeper', 'The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth for evermore'. What a wonderful thing that the students should go out into the wide world with these familiar words.

Having met my husband when walking and climbing in the hills, what better psalm could we have than this at our wedding? Through the thick and thin of life, those words 'My help cometh from the Lord' are very grounding.

Now, in my autumn years, when knees hurt and balance is wobbly, I do my morning exercises ending with this

psalm. I often do them in front of one of the several pictures of hills we have. Towards the end I raise my arms high, lower them to hands in prayer, with the words, 'Lord, be in me today' and then as I try some balances, I say the psalm to myself, with a wry smile in my heart 'He will not suffer thy foot to be moved'... wobble, wobble... and as I roll up the exercise mat, 'The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even for evermore.'

I treasure starting the day with my favourite psalm.

Jill Smith
St Peter & St Paul



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Feedback

The article by Grahame Senior on the Trinity in a previous issue of *Comment* reminded me of a sermon at St Andrew's Church, Lusaka.

The church denomination was the United Church of Zambia, where we

attended the English language Sunday morning services many years ago. One Sunday the preacher was the UCZ chaplain at the University. He suggested during his sermon on the Trinity that (I paraphrase after so many years) when

thinking of the concept of the Trinity we think of an egg, which has three parts: yolk, white and shell – three in one!

We do enjoy *Comment*!
Philip & Carol Scribbins
formerly St Martha's Methodist Church

Reflections on healing



The recovery of the centurion's servant was reportedly brought about by emissaries seeking Jesus' intervention without requiring his presence at the bedside; the centurion believed that Jesus' word alone was sufficient to effect a cure, as indeed was the case.

If illness could routinely be cured by faith matching that of the centurion, there would be much rejoicing. But faith, though rarely sufficient on its own, is an invaluable helper in contemporary healing. Trust in the healer has a powerful influence on symptoms as is known from explorations of the 'placebo' effect. The ethics of how far to stretch from contemporary practice into these less orthodox areas can be debated.

In any event, we now rely for treatments on an accumulated body of scientific knowledge about the causes of disease. With the development of laboratory tools and sophisticated technology, more and more intricacies of physiological processes and their errors have been worked out. Collections of symptoms which at one time made little sense, formerly designated 'syndromes', can now be tied down to basic causes, such as errors in the genetic code or exotic environmental factors.

In the absence of identified underlying causes, doctors are still confronted by collections of symptoms that have varied diagnostic value. Medical students 'die' several times during training as they

identify in themselves six symptoms pointing to a fatal condition, but fail to notice the absent seventh symptom, which is essential to make the diagnosis stick.

With the proliferation of tests, older physicians note the dependence of newly trained staff on lots of tests in the belief that the diagnoses will emerge from the ensembles of results.

In simpler times, the diagnostic process consisted of taking an account (history) from each patient, observing them during the consultation, examining them clinically, and then deciding what special tests might differentiate one possibility from another. Taking a reliable patient history is the essential step. Tying some patients down to a consistent and relevant account can be remarkably difficult.

In rewarding cases, the constellation of symptoms and signs is a pattern that the physician recognises, and for which there is an established treatment or management pathway. It is this pattern recognition that is invaluable. Recognising patterns, dredged up from memory or from first principles is endlessly intriguing.

When I was the duty resident Registrar at a London hospital, a young woman admitted to A&E was confused, had hot skin, slow pulse and wide pupils reminiscent of some sort of atropine poisoning. She eventually admitted taking a folk remedy. Her symptoms matched ones in the footnote of the standard major textbook – on the properties of nutmeg (which she had ground up and taken with alcohol). No toxicology test

would have detected myristic acid from nutmeg.

The thoughtful approach to medicine has been eroded by contemporary training, and the pressure of numbers, exacerbated by burgeoning bureaucracy. It was in the mid-1970s that I last conducted GP clinics, so my experience is spectacularly out of date. One very full Saturday morning clinic in Balham had over twenty patients booked in by the fearsome receptionist, who wanted to get home before midday. But it turned out that most of the attendees wanted documentation for absence from work, and one person with an infected severely swollen knee, a porter at a South London Hospital who had been turned away by their A&E. His was one of the few true medical problems that morning amidst a sea of (legitimate) bureaucratic material. My understanding is that bureaucracy is now different, but nevertheless tending to be grit in cogs of practice. In his book, 'The Tyranny of Metrics', Jerry Z Muller deals compellingly with this epidemic of numbers clogging up honest endeavours.

Rounding off this piece neatly is difficult. The current remoteness of medical advice brought about by the Covid-19 crisis will hopefully fade quickly, but enduring it is proving distressing for some and tiresome for all. In my view the distress will continue if the computer screen is seen as a substitute for personal encounter, and clearing away some of the inessential bureaucracy can help.

Medicine at its best starts with a personal contact.

Dr Michael Sherratt
Corpus Christi

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Justice, hope and the possibility of change



The Methodist Church recently had its inaugural 'Methodist Justice Lecture' online which they hope will become an annual occasion. The lecture was given by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown and a recording of the lecture is available on the Methodist Church website if you're interested to hear it.

I found it an interesting occasion. Gordon Brown came across as passionate and enthusiastic. He talked fast and there was a lot to take in so it wasn't always easy to listen to. He's also recently written a book so there was a small plug for that, but overall it was an inspiring and encouraging occasion. He began by speaking about Methodism's history of being involved with social issues and campaigns. He had clearly done his homework on Methodism and was aware of the work of 'All We Can', the Methodist Development Charity and JPIT, the joint public issues team which involves the Methodists, Baptists, URCS and Church of Scotland. In stating his attempt to not be party political, he spoke about his father who was a Church of Scotland minister and his attempt to keep party politics out of the pulpit, while also telling of another minister who, when the party he supported won an election, would choose 'Now thank we all our God' as the opening hymn on the next Sunday. However, should a different party get in, the hymn would be 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, Forgive our foolish ways,' while if a third party got in, it would be 'God moves in a mysterious way!'

The title of the lecture was 'Justice and Hope' and both of these were there in good measure throughout the lecture. He quoted from Isaiah that those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength, while also commenting that 'You'll never walk alone' was written as an upbeat message giving hope post World War II and he used the quote 'Man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air... but only for one second without hope.'

The lecture took in the refugee crisis, environmental stewardship, vaccines, tax justice, nuclear arms, all areas where we might feel that we need hope and justice at the moment. Interestingly the lecture

took place as the G7 was finishing and he spoke about the meeting as a wasted opportunity. The G7 had promised 1 billion vaccines for poorer countries and yet 11 billion are needed. You could hear the frustration that he felt that making these vaccines available could have been possible, but the leaders did not make it happen. There was a similar frustration in the area of tax justice – a global corporate minimum tax rate has been agreed but he felt that it is too low and loopholes will still allow those in the know to avoid paying the tax they should.

Our interdependence was another theme through the lecture and he stated that we need to stand up against selfish individualism and that the pandemic had emphasised the importance of community. He commented that there is always one Russian and one American astronaut on the International Space Station, cooperating with each other in the running of the station, saying 'they cooperate in space!' His belief is that global problems need global solutions, just one reason why cooperation and recognition of our interdependence is important. 'The real enemy is poverty and deprivation.'

The lecture was the beginning of a two-year project of the Methodist Church called 'Walking with Micah'. Micah 6 says that what God requires of us is 'to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God' and so the project is seeking to ask: How can we be a justice-seeking church? Several of the questions after the lecture asked about how Christians and churches can make a difference. He talked of the importance of working with others to create a movement, but that that movement needed to have staying power and not just be a single issue movement that disappeared when

things didn't change as desired. 'A social movement will worry a politician' was one of the quotes I wrote down. He also spoke of the importance of campaigns and letter writing and highlighted COP26 and the decisions that would be made there around climate change, that the world leaders needed to be encouraged to be ambitious, make difficult decisions now, not later, and honour their promises from the past.

It can be easy for us to focus our minds on the local, to see national and international events unfolding on the news but feel that we can't make a difference, even when injustice is clear. It was good to hear the perspective of a statesman who clearly has a great deal of knowledge in this area and to hear from him of the possibilities that he sees. Not everyone may agree with his views and his beliefs about the way forward, but it was a reminder that change is possible, that we can make a difference, especially when we work together and that hope and justice are vital.

Rachael Hawkins
St Martha's Methodist Church

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A family encounter



For years my late mother had wanted to visit Eilean Donan Castle in the highlands of Scotland. The name Eilean Donan is Gaelic for Island of

Donan and the castle is probably the most photographed fortress in the whole of Scotland. It has featured, for example, in movies such as James Bond (as the Scottish HQ of MI6). My mother's brother, too, had always talked about Eilean Donan Castle, and as a boy I was always fascinated by the castle and stories of our ancestors, the Murchisons.

Murdoch Murchison was castellan or constable of the castle from 1614 until his death in 1618. However, it is because of another Murchison, Sir Roderick Impey Murchison (1792-1871) that my maternal grandfather, his son Terry, Terry's sons Robert and Peter, and Robert's son James, all have Murchison as their middle name.

I have two volumes of a book, 'Life of Sir Roderick I. Murchison based on his journals and letters' by Archibald Geikie, published in 1875. Volume 1 begins: 'Among the Western Highlands of Scotland there is no wilder tract than that which stretches between the Kyles of Skye and the line of the Great Glen... Over this wild region the chiefs of the clan Mackenzie had for a long while held sway – a fierce and warlike race... In their midst, however, lay one or two smaller septs [Clans]... One of these septs went by the name of Mhurachaidh... or, as it is

now corrupted, Murchison.' It is from the Reverend Murdoch Murchison, castellan of Eilean Donan castle, that both Sir Roderick Impey Murchison and I are descended.

Sir Roderick by all accounts was a remarkable man, and I have another book 'King of Siluria How Roderick Murchison changed the face of Geology' by John L. Morton, published in 2004. After an initial military career Murchison took up an interest in science in general and geology in particular. He was the first to differentiate and name the Silurian, Devonian and Permian periods of geological time. He was President of the Royal Geographic Society for many years and was a champion of world exploration, including David Livingstone's travels in Africa. Many geographical features in the world today are named after Sir Roderick including the Murchison Falls in Uganda, and the Murchison River in Western Australia.

My connection with Sir Roderick comes via my maternal great grandmother, Clara Edyth Murchison who was the second wife of my great grandfather, Alfred Paget Humphry – he had married again after his first wife had died. Her line goes back to the second son of Murdoch Murchison of Eilean Donan Castle, while Sir Roderick's line goes back to the first son. So both Sir Roderick and I are descended from Murdoch Murchison of Eilean Donan Castle, this in my case via the second marriage of my maternal great grandfather.

From the first marriage of Alfred Paget Humphry comes another family

link, which I only appreciated when, a few years ago and out of the blue one Christmas, I received a letter from a relative whom I had never known. The letter came from Canada and began 'Hi, my name is Mary Rose Rubie (nee Humphry) and I am doing some genealogy on the Humphry family. I am hoping you can provide me with some information about your parents and your family. As you know, the maiden name of your mother Gillian, was Humphry.'

Mary Rose enclosed a family tree she had made and showed me how she and I fitted in. It showed that Alfred Paget Humphry was great grandfather to us both, though our great grandmothers were different. Mary Rose added 'I figure you and I are step third cousins'. She had demonstrated these family facts using the genealogy website Ancestry.co.uk.

I was delighted to receive this letter and got back in touch.

Mary Rose's part of the family, I learned, had settled in Canada, her grandparents having emigrated there. Seemingly they had planned to travel from England to New York on the Titanic, but in the event, they took the next boat across the Atlantic, the SS Adriatic which sailed on 18 April 1912. Mary Rose gave me a copy of the ship's manifest showing their names as passengers on board. They settled in Unity, west of Saskatchewan.

My wife Jum and I visited my newly discovered step third cousin and her family in October 2015, travelling to their home just outside Renfrew, Ontario about sixty miles west of Ottawa. They made us very welcome and we met other members of their family, joining in a big family get together for Thanksgiving. We planned our visit to coincide with the fall, a most beautiful time in eastern Canada.

Mary Rose and her husband subsequently made a return visit to our home in Tring and we enjoyed showing them around. In a visit to St Peter & St Paul's Church, they were delighted to find in the Visitors' Book an entry by another visitor from Canada who had signed with the surname Humphrey (slightly different spelling). Thinking he may be another relative they made efforts to trace him and succeeded. He turned out not to

be a relation, but the incident just shows how important a Visitors' Book can be.

During their visit here, our two families visited the parish church in Thaxted where Mary Rose had discovered our great grandfather's grave was located. We went to the grave and laid flowers there and had our photo taken, a truly memorable and probably unique occasion. Parishioners afterwards may have wondered who had left the flowers!



During this pandemic it is good to spend time researching one's family history and you never know what you might find or whose lives you could enrich by your discoveries.

By the way, we did take my mother to visit Eilean Donan Castle and my cousin took her father, Terry, there too.

Michael Demidecki
Corpus Christi

Postcard from Orkney



At the time of writing, the end of July, the world is cautiously opening up and visitors are returning to Orkney. There are mixed feelings amongst the population about this as there is a nervousness about 'diseased people' wandering around, after the island being essentially Covid-19 free for a long time. However, the economy is largely dependent on visitors and there's no doubt they bring an energy to the islands.

One lovely side-effect of allowing folk back is that we have had our first visitors at home for fifteen months and that has been a complete joy. Life has had its challenges for us over the last year (Mac's heart attack, followed by a stroke) and it has been wonderful to see friends and relatives from the south. Zoom just isn't the same. Our amateur

bed and breakfast establishment swung back into action, breaking up our routine and enabling us to showcase these beautiful islands once again. Thankfully the weather was spectacular for both sets of our guests. It's difficult to enthuse about Orkney when there's howling wind and rain in June and I have seen friends thinking 'why on earth do you live here?' However, when the sun shines and the light is clear, the colours are vivid and the sunsets extraordinary. It doesn't get too hot and I can see folk thinking 'I understand exactly why you live here'.

As summer progresses the polycrub is bursting with life – both of the plant and bug-like varieties – but we are on a steep learning curve. We now know not to plant broccoli, cabbages or courgettes in there (they have huge leaves which obliterate everything else), and to sow lettuce and spinach seeds sparingly – there is a glut of leaves with which we cannot keep up. We are living on a diet dominated by salads which



gets a little tedious. However, we are encouraged by the scale of growth of the plants (days with twenty hours of daylight help, plus the warmth) and, of course, it is all very healthy, which can't be a bad thing, especially for those who need all the healthy food they can get!

Carrie Dodge
St Mary's, Stromness

Hannah's London Marathon 2021

Gulp. I've only gone and got a place in the London Marathon...

When a place came up to run the (delayed) London Marathon 2021 on 3 October for Youth Concern, and no one stepped forward to take it, what could I say? Bucket list stuff!

I've never worked for a charity where my work, and my colleagues' work, makes such a tangible difference. Every year Youth Concern supports 500 13-25 year olds struggling with homelessness, mental and sexual health, education and work, addiction and debt. Many of 'our' young people are known to social services, CAMHS, the police and the



local pupil referral unit. Every penny you donate will help vulnerable 13-25 year olds live their very best lives.

Here's to twelve more weeks of plodding up hills, doing interval training in the heat, and knocking out those long runs at weekends. (My first long run – thirteen miles – in flat Norfolk on Sunday wasn't too bad. But in a fortnight's time, for a fortnight, we'll be in the Lake District and North Yorkshire. That's going to be tough...)

Thanks so much for sponsoring me.
Hannah Asquith
High Street Baptist Church

uk.virginmoneygiving.com/HannahAsquith



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Farewell to Paula



Teachers tend to hang around for a while at Bishop Wood School. We like to think it's because the school is a fun and rewarding place to work.

So, when one moves on, it's quite a big thing for us. At the end of the Summer Term, we said a fond farewell to Paula Birley, who leaves us after a comparatively short stay of just five years.

Paula, to nobody's surprise, has secured an Assistant Head's role at a nearby village school just over the border in Bucks. This, in fact, was a role she held in an 'acting' capacity for us during the brief interregnum between Linda Hardman's departure and Gary Stanley's arrival. It was obvious then that her skill set was more than capable of playing an important role in the leadership team of a school.

Her primary role at Bishop Wood School, however, has been as a highly competent classroom practitioner, consistently planning interesting lessons for her classes and providing excellent pastoral care along the way.



Nevertheless, her influence on the wider activities of the school should not be underestimated. She has been the primary driver of the development of our house system, which has been an

important part of normality these last eighteen months. Her weekly points bulletins and updates on which house has got enough points for a film in the hall or a pyjama day have been eagerly anticipated! As history and geography co-ordinator, she moved the school's work on British Values forward, and also secured for us The International Schools Award. More recently, she has been PE co-ordinator and advised Gary and the rest of us on how the School Sports Premium might best be used. Oh, and she's been the teacher liaison with The Buddies (our PTA), and also the Teacher Governor.

She's managed all this while both her children have gone through the school and while a number of her friends have been part of the parent body. Both of these must have presented challenges at times, but Paula has managed it all with a calm efficiency.

We will miss her and wish her all the best for her future.

Jon Hall, Bishop Wood School

'I am a little church' by EE Cummings



A poem in which the speaker is a little church. Those who enjoy visiting churches, for whatever

reason, recognise the difference between the mighty, impressive cathedrals with their wealth of architectural detail and stained glass and the smaller buildings which seem to grow, unselfconsciously, out of their surrounding area. Unaffected by the changing seasons or unceasing human activities, these buildings stand fixed, content and calm, a silent witness to Him 'Whose only now is forever'.

The author of this poem is the American poet e e cummings (Edward Estlin Cummings, 1894 – 1962). The son of a professor at Harvard who later became a Unitarian minister, Edward was a prolific writer of poetry, essays,

*I am a little church (no great cathedral)
far from the splendor and squalor of hurrying cities
- I do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
I am not sorry when sun and rain make April*

*My life is the life of the reaper and the sower;
My prayers are prayers of earth's own clumsy striving
(finding and losing and laughing and crying) children
Whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness*

*Around me surges a miracle of unceasing
Birth and glory and death and resurrection:
Over my sleeping self float flaming symbols
of hope, and I wake to a perfect patience of mountains*

*I am a little church (far from the frantic
world with its rapture and anguish) at peace with nature
- I do not worry if longer nights grow longest;
I am not sorry when silence becomes singing*

*Winter by spring, i lift my diminutive spire to
merciful Him Whose only now is forever:
standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence
(welcoming humbly His light and proudly His darkness)*

novels and plays. Between the ages of 8 and 22 he apparently wrote a poem a

day, exploring many traditional poetic forms. He is probably best known for ignoring conventional punctuation, syntax and the use of capital letters. In 1917 he volunteered as an ambulance driver in keeping with his pacifist views and spent three and a half months in a detention camp in Normandy, after being arrested on suspicion of espionage.

Initially his work was not universally recognized though he later travelled widely giving readings. His subjects included love, childhood and nature, but he also addressed social issues ('colossal hoax of clocks and calendars'). He was twice married and spent the last thirty years of his life with another partner. He died of a stroke at the age of 67.

This poem can be found in 'The Heart's Time': a poem a day for Lent and Easter, an excellent selection by Janet Morley, published by SPCK 2011.

**Kate Banister
St Jude's, St Albans**

Tring's new Mayor

As many of you may know, I have been a Tring councillor for a number of years. This year I was appointed Mayor of Tring. I'm thrilled to be able to serve the Town in this way and am looking forward to my Mayoral year.

As a regular member of the congregation at St Peter & Paul's Church, Annette often comes up with ideas for articles I might write for *Comment*. With my new hat on, I really felt it was time I obliged.

The question that I feel most people want to know the answer to is: What does the Town Council actually do? Well, it serves two important roles, in my mind. Firstly, it serves as a conduit for any number of local problems; secondly it makes formal decisions on behalf of residents (what to say about planning applications, and how it spends its own money).

When people have issues to raise they do not necessarily know, nor should they have to worry about, if it is a Town, Borough or County responsibility. They just want 'the Council' to sort it out. And mostly it is the Town Council that is the first port of call, so in this way the Town Council serves as a funnel for any number of local issues, even when the responsibility might lie elsewhere. (Whilst we are on the topic: potholes and schools = County, bins and planning decisions = Borough.)

The Town Council has its own pot of money. In terms of your council tax, this really is minimal (about £30 a year per household, in comparison to over £1,000 for County, Borough and Police). This money is supplemented by 'planning money' known as CIL. This is money that developers are required to pay for any development in the town, and as you know there is a lot of development going on in Tring.

Obviously the Town Council is in a fortunate position to be in receipt of this money, but a key challenge is in fact making sure that it is wisely spent. The rules are quite restrictive on what it can be spent on and it is important that we make sensible plans for its allocation.

There are plenty of really tangible things that we are getting on with. On climate change we are looking at ways to fulfil our commitment to the Mayor's Covenant (how much CO₂ does Tring pump into the atmosphere?) and asking whether the Town Council can put in electric car chargers on its own car park. This is alongside buying new more environmentally friendly street furniture, such as new planters that double as bike racks. We are investigating putting in adult exercise equipment in open areas and improving child play areas. We recently made a grant to the 'Tring Music Project', a wonderful idea from Tring Together which has the broad aim of making Music a positive driving force in the life of our Town, helping us on our way out of lockdown and towards a 'new normal'. Whether it is music or comedy or the theatre, we are so lucky in this town to have so much on offer and it is a privilege for the Town Council to be able to contribute.

Together with these on-going tangible steps that aim to better the town, we also have a long term challenge: the Nora Grace Hall. Perhaps I will provide another article on the history of the situation, but the upshot is that major work is needed on this Town-Council-owned asset. We are facing the difficult choice of 'Grand Project' versus 'Repair and Make Do'. We're currently on a 'Grand Project' track, and the latest step is obtaining quotes from architects to take the project forward. But this is potentially a



monumental piece of work, and with the Town Council only a modestly resourced organisation, it will need substantial support to see it through.

All this is alongside reviewing a continuous stream of planning applications, chairing committees, dealing with quite serious matters that arise (the recent flood comes to mind) and making sure also that we have a good response to the broader planning challenges of Tring (we have spent some money on ensuring we get good professional advice on how to best respond to the large scale plans put forward by the Borough).

The Town Council is there to support you, the people of Tring, to make our town a better place to be. We are open to anyone who wants to help and have committed councillors who do this work on your behalf, along with a small dedicated staff. As I hope I have shown, we work hard and there is always lots more to do. Feel free to come along to any meeting and let us know your thoughts!

**Christopher Townsend
Mayor of Tring**

Mingling is back!

Despite some slightly unseasonal weather in early August, it was great to be able to meet, mingle and barbecue again outside St Peter & St Paul's Church. Friends from churches in the Tring Team shared some lunch together after the morning services and were able to catch up with each other as we used to do before the pandemic. We look forward to more of the same in the next few months.

The Editor



Great to get back together!

Everything was as it always is on the Children's Society Garden Day... The weather forecast was dreadful; storms and torrential rain – so the night was spent worrying about what dawn would reveal in the garden – as normal. All the preparations had been painstakingly put together in the preceding week; the sense of relief was palpable in the morning as it dawned overcast but dry; confidence grew as it stayed dry and the guests started to arrive and greet each other.

The extra gazebos (loaned by Tring Together) gave an added sense of security and we had the stalls safely located inside so they were weather proof.

Everything seemed as normal as we started to relax...

But it wasn't quite as normal. For a start we hadn't met the whole supporter group in the garden for over two years... Last year's planned event was cancelled outright and the original date planned for 2021 in June was postponed... and then postponed again to fit in with the official restrictions. We also had carefully built in some Covid-safe precautions about the fact that no box money was counted on the day (all boxes were safely quarantined); the food and refreshment preparation and service was all carefully controlled so that every guest was served at their table, money handling was managed in a safe and restricted manner, masks were worn as people moved about – all the expected security aspects were in place so not really like the freedom of the old days, but pretty close!

There was a palpable sense of excitement as people rediscovered the simple pleasures of sitting and talking, eating and drinking and mingling in congenial company. Old friends greeted old friends and also chatted to new friends, the garden stayed warm and dry and the sun shone just enough to make us feel welcome without getting baked.

'It is wonderful to get together' was the common theme of many conversations as we all appreciated just what we had been missing in our community over the long lockdown months. I suspect that many felt that their

prayers had been answered in relation to the weather and the fact that we had actually made it cautiously through to some long-awaited freedom. We were indeed blessed.

The main purpose of the day was to thank all the loyal supporters who have continued to contribute to the Children's Society through the pandemic with box contributions and donations. The results were very rewarding. Just short of £1,400 was raised on the day through the event itself and the current total for the boxes counted and donations given stands at £2,646.94 including Gift Aid.



Never more needed than now

The Church of England Children's Society is one of our longest-established Anglican Charities and it has had many names in the past including the rather wonderful 'Waifs & Strays'... It has variously been one of the most significant operators of Children's Homes following the example of its founder Edward Rudolf and also one of the largest providers of adoption services in the country. These days it operates no homes and organises no adoptions but operates at the very centre of the crisis of care that swirls around our most vulnerable young people like a fearful storm.

Suicides, self-harm and corrosive mental afflictions are at epidemic levels within our young people. The growth in these horrible conditions has been exacerbated by the lockdown and extreme isolation that have been such damaging features of the pandemic; and the work and support of the Children's Society has never been more valuable or needed.

What the Society does is deal with each child as an individual, approaching the problems from their point of view, standing by their side and co-ordinating the help and support of all the official agencies such as Health, Education, Police and Probation services and accommodation providers. It stands up for the young and vulnerable and supports them just when they feel most alone – and it sticks with them. It does a good job in helping those who are, literally, the future of our Society and who will be responsible for the well-being of our world.

It can only do that job well with our support. Prue and I have been the local area organisers for the Society for many years (this July's Garden Day was our 24th such event). We are constantly struck by how many of our supporters have been with the programme from the very beginning. We are also so grateful for the fact that so many of the box-holders and donors have yet again confirmed their commitment to keeping on supporting the Society in whatever way they can. Despite practical problems

like lack of ready cash or the almost complete absence of banks, they will keep on finding a way to help.

Children's Society Garden Day 2021

You could say 'A good time was had by all'; you could also perhaps observe that 'A good job was done by all'. Thank you, All!

Our heartfelt thanks to all who supported, attended, organised and donated – and enjoyed the process.

**Prue & Grahame Senior
St Peter & St Paul**

'Topping off' the new build at Tring School

Friday 9 July saw the 'Topping Off' ceremony on the roof of Tring School's fabulous £30m newbuild project. The event was attended by the Mayor of Tring, Christopher Townsend, who said some very complimentary words in front of a number of students, the school project team and the Chair of Governors.

The project to construct the three storey building commenced in April 2020 and progress has been rapid and very exciting to watch. Construction is by Bowmer + Kirkland and will be one of the most sustainably designed and built schools in the country. It will also have additional facilities to support the pastoral care and emotional well-being of the students. A local benefactor committed to fund expanded sports facilities to encourage more participation in physical activity and exercise.

The inside of the building is even more impressive than the exterior. The classrooms, laboratories and all of the other teaching rooms are very spacious with large windows to allow maximum natural light. The corridors and stairwells are surprisingly wide. The large dining room is an atrium at the heart of the school. The four-court sports hall is larger than a normal school facility in order to meet the Sport England specification for a number of sports at national level. The activity studio is equally impressive and includes a large skylight to allow natural light to flood in. The Sixth Form Centre on the third floor enjoys a fantastic view towards Tring Park and Wendover Woods. Much of the mechanical and electrical equipment is already in place along with miles and miles of cabling. It truly is very impressive to see everything coming together and it's making the many, many months of detailed planning and designing time well spent.



Every single teaching space will benefit from new and high quality ICT equipment. The front of the new building will be significantly further back from the road, thus reducing the impact on the local community; this has been a key element in the exterior design and landscaping.

The project is on schedule for us to move into the brilliant new facilities ready for the start of the new term in January 2022. After that the original school will be demolished to be replaced by a carefully designed and landscaped car parking area of greater capacity than the school currently has, together with shelter for students, coach parking and parental drop off zone. This final phase of the project will be

completed in July 2022.

The new school building will be fantastic for the children, the staff and the entire community of Tring. The school is already considered outstanding in many areas and the new building with so many new and innovative facilities will take it to another level.

**Anna Wiltshair
Tring School**

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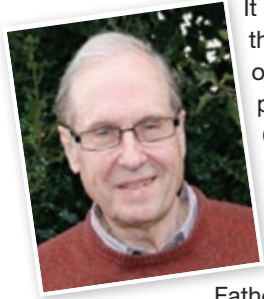
Are you hoping to go to University or College in 2022, but are concerned that financial resources might not match up to the requirements? Are you under the age of 22? Have you lived in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone for at least three years?

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 2021, to lodge a completed application for grants payable from autumn the following year.

Farewell & bon voyage to a much loved priest



It was with sadness that the parishioners of the Catholic parishes of Corpus Christi, Tring and Sacred Heart, Berkhamsted learned that their parish priest,

Father David Burke,

was leaving them in September for pastures new. Cardinal Vincent Nichols had agreed to loan him to the Bishopric of the Forces, where he will serve as an Army Padre in the Royal Army Chaplaincy Department. He will spend his initial time in training for the role at Sandhurst and will be given the rank of Captain.

In the newsletter the week after his announcement Father David wrote about it as follows: 'If this news surprises you, well...you are in good company as it still surprises me too as it hasn't quite settled in yet. After four very happy years as the parish priest of Sacred Heart, Berkhamsted, and Corpus Christi, Tring, I am moving on to a very different ministry indeed: ministering to those men and women (and their families) who serve in our armed forces throughout the world. I am not sure what to expect but I take St Paul's words today to heart: "For it is when I am weak that I am strong..." I thank you for your part in the past four years where you have shaped me, guided me and loved me in order to be a "good" parish priest.'

Father David was ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Vincent Nichols on 27 June 2015, and his first appointment was as an assistant priest at the Church of the Annunciation, Burnt Oak. From there a year later he was

appointed to the Church of St Francis de Sales in Tottenham. It was to take up his first appointment as parish priest in 2017 that he came to the parishes of Corpus Christi and Sacred Heart.

It was not an easy task to replace two former parish priests and to take responsibility for both their parishes. The Mass times in the two churches had in some cases been similar but Father David could not be in two places at once. Eventually it was decided there would be an evening Saturday Vigil Mass in Tring, followed by morning Masses on the Sunday in Berkhamsted after which there would be a later Mass in Tring. Father David had to drive backwards and forwards in his small car and I recall one snowy winter's morning in Tring when we waited at church wondering if Father David's car could make it up the hill of Tring High Street. Thankfully he did appear, having been given a lift from Berkhamsted in a parishioner's 4 x 4!

Then there was the question of where Father David would live as there were two presbyteries available! He chose Berkhamsted and the presbytery at Tring was renovated and let out at a rent which would in time pay for the work on the property.

Father David added to the celebration of important feast days in his own way. At the feast of Corpus Christi in June before the Covid-19 restrictions, he would lead a procession from the church through the town, and in November last year on the feast of Christ the King Father David blessed graves at Tring Cemetery (where three former priests who served at Corpus Christi are buried).



Father David led a busy life in the two parishes despite the pandemic. His ministry took him to St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Berkhamsted (where he was a Foundation Governor), to The Mount Prison, Bovingdon, and to hospitals and hospices. In April this year he was appointed to the board of the Catholic seafarers' charity Stella Maris (formerly known as Apostleship of the Sea). He had joined the charity over seventeen years before as a lay chaplain in the ports of Hull and Goole.

There were two leaving parties for Father David, the first at Sacred Heart Church, Berkhamsted on Sunday 25 July and the second after Mass on Saturday 31 July at Corpus Christi Church, Tring.

In his last newsletter in August Father David wrote: 'This is my last newsletter as your parish priest. Thank you for your kindness and support over the past four years. It has been a privilege and honour to be the Parish Priest of Sacred Heart and Corpus Christi. Please keep me in your prayers, I will need them. Be assured of mine. Fr David.'

We will indeed keep you in our prayers Father and we thank you from the bottom of all our hearts for all your excellent work as our parish priest over the last four years.

Michael Demidecki
Corpus Christi



Early onset Alzheimers

I have shared some of the challenges with Alzheimers that my wife Sandra and I have been through over the last few years in the pages of *Comment* and in talking with friends, but have never been great at putting things into words. Our daughter, Sarah, is however much better at this; so I offer it below with the caution that it is likely to cause an emotional reaction:

*My mum isn't quite the same anymore
Although she looks the same
She struggles with tasks around the house
you can see in her eyes the pain
She used to be the cleaner and cook
She would drive us all to school
She had an amazing career
She dedicated her life to us all
Nowadays she gets quite confused
I've already had to grieve
For the mum who once looked after us all
It's harder than you'd believe
One year on, and lockdown has past
She got worse and was taken away
I saw her yesterday after many months
I'll never forget that day
The polite and gentle lady she was
Was nowhere to be seen*



*The lady who cared for me and brought me up
She was a shell of the woman she'd been
The hitting, the shouting, the distress
Was just heartbreaking to see
Why has this happened to my family
Why did this happen to me
My children have no Nanna now
My dad, he has no wife
It's hard to carry on sometimes
Knowing she's no longer the mum in my life
I've already had to grieve for her*

*The pain is felt everyday
I have so many brilliant memories
But I don't think I'll ever be ok.
Give your mum a hug today
And really squeeze her tight
Sometimes I wish I could do just that
I wish it with all my might
Things will never be normal
Things will never be the same
We will always talk about the lady you were
Not the lady you became.
I wish I could make you better
I wish we could go back in time
But I will always love and treasure you
And thank God that you are mine.*

My prayer is that Sandra will find peace from the Early Onset Alzheimers, this horrible disease that has affected her.

I have been trying to focus on memories of more than forty years we shared together, our family, good times with friends, and the things we have achieved. The support of so many people around the parish and beyond has really made a difference and I hope that I can continue to support others in the same way.

Mike Watkin
St Peter & St Paul

Dementia UK provides specialist Dementia support for families through our Admiral Nurse service



Our mission focus in July and August is specialist charity Dementia UK which is expertly designed to serve the needs of those living with dementia.

Admiral Nurses are expertly trained by the charity to provide a truly specialist and caring service to help people live in the present with dementia and face tomorrow's challenges with confidence.

We can help with donations and fundraising and there are some brilliant ideas on our website (www.tringteamparish.org.uk/our-charities) Please support our summer mission focus however you can.



DementiaUK
Helping families face dementia



TRING TEAM PARISH
Living God's Love

Church: making everyone welcome



As I write this at the end of July, I am struck by an interesting coincidence that occurred when I took the Thursday communion service in St Peter & St Paul due to Sarah Marshall having to self-isolate.

When I arrived the entrance to the clergy vestry, it was completely blocked by a very jolly gang of workmen digging a big trench around the partly subsiding structure: quite literally 'Works in Progress'.

When I gained access and took the service, I was rather taken with the rather apposite theme of the Gospel reading from Matthew 7. 'By their works ye shall know them' is a very famous quotation from this reading and it struck me as entirely relevant to our current situation!

Getting on with the good works

The Friends of Tring Church Heritage (FOTCH), of course, is an organisation with a clear strategy and well defined aims, hoping to support the long term wellbeing and availability of St Peter & St Paul for all future generations in Tring. It is not just a strategic objective but something we work at delivering in a practical sense – year by year. We don't just plan, we actually get things done. When I opened my emails, I had one from Malcolm Rogers, our treasurer, asking that Richard Abel and I should approve the expenditure of the planning costs and the contractor's building costs for the important renovation of the clergy vestry.

These works are being underwritten entirely by FOTCH who have responded to the current financial difficulties of the church in this unprecedented crisis in a very timely fashion. Not only are

we fully underwriting the restoration works but also the completion of the external lighting (such a valuable service in ensuring the church and its green surrounds are a safe environment for all residents). We are also currently working on the important initiative of creating museum quality displays within the church for both the Gore Bequest and the Tring Tiles story. These works are designed not to keep the church in good condition so much as to improve the experience of visiting the church for all who choose to do so.

These 'works' are the latest in a long series of undertakings which FOTCH and the people who generously support it have made possible, all designed to meet the long term objective: 'Maintaining the church in its splendid green setting as an asset for all the people in Tring' is what we set out to do. And we are working hard at it.

Growing our strategy for a 'grown up' Tring

There is no doubt that the character of our town is changing as we build more houses both at the west end of Tring and in the fairly short term on the land between the town and Cow Lane. Living in Tring is a very attractive proposition for those who wish to flee the difficulties of metropolitan life and its hustle and bustle. The town strikes a fine balance between accessibility and the joys of an area of outstanding natural beauty that surrounds us on every side. It's a great place to live. We know that and increasingly large numbers of people have caught on to the idea of moving here.

That is both a challenge and an opportunity. FOTCH recently updated its strategy to focus on presenting our heritage resource as a vital component of the lives of all residents and all businesses in the town. There is no other

space so large, central or well managed and we want everybody to feel a sense of ownership and involvement with this asset. Making 'the heart of Tring' something which everybody feels a fond sense of ownership about is what we will be doing with post-pandemic communications and activities.

Great stuff happens inside!

Keeping the building in good condition and ensuring that things like lighting, sound systems, projection equipment and safe accessibility are all of the highest standard is another part of what FOTCH contributes. The annual Family Fun Day on our 'birthday weekend' each May is the most significant 'open house' event in our annual cycle. It has been much missed over the past couple of years, but like everything else we want to build back better when we relaunch in 2022.

We're also planning another of our inclusive large events for next summer which is a Safari Garden Day. This will feature different events at different times of the day throughout ten or twelve gardens in Tring and is likely to be a very popular event – particularly for newcomers. Also on the agenda are new concerts and new social events to make the most of mingling and getting back together as it becomes increasingly safe to do so.

The key objective is of making everybody feel welcome, that it is 'their church' and there are lots of good things going on. Everybody who supports FOTCH is invited to contribute to communicating what we do, supporting the things that are planned and ensuring that everybody feels equally welcome. It's not about 'them and us' – we're all about 'us' – one town and one community. 'By their works ye shall know them' – is indeed what we aim to deliver – and hope to be celebrated for.

We feel certain there is a lot of pent-up enthusiasm to get involved and make things happen and we look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming events.

With grateful thanks to all the officers, trustees and supporters who have helped to keep things moving along despite the restrictions.

Grahame Senior
FOTCH Honorary President

Talking about earthquake engineering

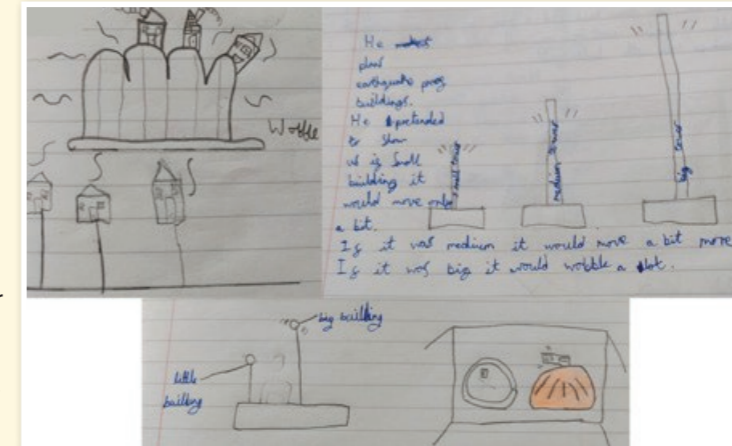


Until the pandemic persuaded me last year that I should finally hang up my professional clogs and retire, I worked as a structural engineer, with the last thirty years of my career spent as a specialist 'earthquake engineer'. This involved me in grappling with the problems of the seismic safety of buildings and other structures like bridges and power stations. The drama of earthquakes and collapsing buildings meant that people took an interest in what I did, and so I did a lot of lecturing in the course of my career, to audiences ranging from community groups, to graduate engineers to primary school children.

My retirement hasn't entirely stopped the flow of requests to talk, but I was still a bit surprised to get two requests for talks, to be given during a single week in June. One was to address a seminar for students at Sheffield University. The other was to talk to the sixty children in Year 4 at Bishop Wood Junior School, who were studying earthquakes. Since I'm a governor there, I could hardly refuse.

The Sheffield seminar had its own challenges and generated a respectable number of fairly conventional questions – mainly, I have to say, from the researchers and post-grads, not the undergraduates. But the Bishop Wood afternoon was

much more fun, partly because it was conducted face-to-face rather than by Zoom, but mainly because of the audience: 9- and 10-year-olds, by and large, are uninhibited, unafraid to say or ask whatever they want to, laugh a lot and engage well with demos involving wobbling jellies, vibrating bits of wire and mini tsunamis. (Yes, I'll admit that this sort of thing also appeals to the 9-year-old still existing inside me). One measure that I was getting through to the children was the fact that there was no lack of volunteers to help with the demos, in the style of Royal Institution Christmas lectures. However, the thing that really impressed me (and made me very proud to be a governor at Bishop Wood) was the way in which at least some of the sixty children engaged intellectually with the subject, in a way that I doubt many in my Sheffield audience really did.



Vibrating wires and wobbly jellies – post-talk work by pupils at Bishop Wood

During the talk, I threw some questions out at the children, such as suggestions for engineering measures to help withstand a tsunami. I'd been expecting someone to come up with the idea of

building a big sea wall as a barrier, and that I would then spend the next five minutes coaxing out other approaches. But not at all; four completely distinct solutions were thrown back at me within a few seconds. Ok, it is just possible that their excellent teachers had briefed them beforehand, and in that unlikely case, it would still have been significant that this had sunk in sufficiently to be repeated (correctly) during the talk. But what really struck me came during questions at the end (and there were quite a few), when one boy asked whether earthquake engineers needed to allow for P-delta effects. Of course, he didn't use that language, but this describes the idea that if a building sways too far over during an earthquake, then gravity, rather than the earthquake, will pull it down to the ground. It's quite a subtle idea; if you want to explore it further, it's described

in some detail in Chapter 5 of my textbook, which I have little doubt that the Year 4 teachers haven't read. So the possibility of having been primed to ask me this is out of the question, but encouraging the habit of thinking about things and coming up with practical solutions to problems certainly seems very much alive and well at Bishop Wood. If I were still working as a structural engineer twenty years from

now, I would be very pleased to be able to recruit a few engineers from among its alumni.

Edmund Booth
St Peter & St Paul

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Mind the gap



What history did you learn at school? 1066 and all that? One of the shocks of old age is to discover that one's grandchildren for history homework ask about things that happened in one's lifetime! That's the present, not history!

History matters because we are the result of it. But we need to realise our limitations. Part of the history of slavery leads to a discussion about what we can or should do to rectify history (if that is possible). It has been well said – 'Nothing is more unfair than to judge men of the past by ideas of the present'.

In one sense for readers of this article the history is the Bible as it tells the history of the People of God or at least parts of it. Here it is worth remembering that while history and story come from the same Greek word, the two words do not mean the same in English. *Historia* meant learning by enquiry, information, narrative, history. We have given 'history' and 'story' different but similar meanings. From Greek too, we have the word 'myth', meaning something delivered by mouth, word, narrative, speech (as opposed to deed or action). For us, myth means a story which is not literally true or historical in the modern sense.

If we turn to the Bible, we can see Genesis 1-11 contains stories, myths, all expressing truths but not historical in the modern sense. Then with Genesis 12 and Abraham we seem to be starting the history of a people and actual events. Indeed, the first half of the Old Testament is the story of the People of God from Abraham to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah in the 5th century BC. Of course, these books also contain a lot of what we would not call history, such as laws. It is a grand sweep of the story of the People of God up to the Exile and the Destruction of the Temple (586BC), and the consequent Return and Rebuilding (520BC). It is the story of a people and is in part history as we understand that word, but told from a very different point of view. The idea of presenting facts and letting the reader decide is not how the authors of the books of the Bible worked. What mattered was people's reaction to God and, even more, God's actions. So history is seen in terms of

obeying or not obeying God; the failure to do that resulted in the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the people. In the Hebrew Old Testament this partisan view of the history of Israel is made clearer by the division into Laws (Genesis to Deuteronomy), Former and Latter Prophets (Joshua to Malachi), which include those we think of as religious teachers whose words have been recorded and handed on in writing, Writings (Psalms, Proverbs etc).

Then we might think about the continuation of the story in the New Testament – but what about the gap? That is the time between the Return from Exile and the rebuilding of the Temple and the time of Our Lord. This gap, historically speaking, is, in part, bridged by the Maccabees, but only in part. We do not have in the Old Testament a set of historical studies, nor do we in the New Testament. Rather, in both we have people and events, stories and rules, poetry and philosophy, all put over from a religious point of view, not that of a detached reader or scholar. They are books of propaganda (in its favourable meaning) to propagate the things of God, written by believers. The selection of which writings went into the Bible is in part obscure and varies from the Jewish or Christian as well as the linguistic point of view. So, we have the Apocrypha, a book written in Greek, not Hebrew, which in part bridges the gap between the Old and New Testaments. The books of the Apocrypha are not accepted as part of the Hebrew canon and Christians have varying views from acceptance as Scripture or rejection or somewhere in between.

To bridge the gap historically we have to turn to the books of the Maccabees, at least the first and second books of this name. The Maccabees were a Jewish family who resisted the attempts to eradicate the Jewish faith which some pagan rulers tried to do. Their story reads like old-style history – kings and battles – but its aim is to show how some were prepared to sacrifice all for their faith. In the course of this history certain ideas of great importance later emerged – the ideas of resurrection and immortality, of prayers for the dead and martyrdom, the value of suffering and so on.

First Maccabees, written about 100BC, tells the history of the Jews from 175BC to 135BC. Second Maccabees covers some of the same ground from 176BC to 161BC and was written later (before 70AD) to show God's care for his people. As for Third and Fourth Maccabees they are not accepted as canonical scripture and can be considered later.

In fact, then, there are considerable gaps in the history of Israel as found in the Old Testament, as indeed there are in the New Testament. What we have is what we need to know. Some gaps we can fill by looking at the history and events described by various ancient authors and the results of archaeological study, including finds from the Dead Sea Scrolls. The gaps remind us of the limits of our knowledge and that some is known from other sources but is not part of canonical Scripture.

Martin Banister
St Albans Cathedral

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TEN YEAR GUARANTEE

Around the world...



This is part 4 of an article that began in the May edition of Comment.

The next day was a trip out of town to the Blue Mountains. We travelled out of Sydney over the suspension bridge and on to Parramatta, the seat of the original Australian Government, passing, on the way, St Ann's Church where the lady who gave her name to the 'Granny Smith' apple is buried. Our first stop, at Windsor, was for the very Australian custom of 'morning tea', something we would term 'elevenses'. We stopped at Katoomba to take a cable car suspended high above the Katoomba falls.

To reach the Blue Mountains, so called because of the vapour given off by the Eucalyptus trees which gives a blue haze to the air, we climbed winding roads through the eucalyptus groves where the scrub was still blackened by the fires which surrounded Sydney in 1994. Although the trunks of the trees are black from the fire they have marvellous powers of regeneration and the branches were already full of greenery again.

Our flight to Auckland the following day was delayed yet again by technical problems, none-the-less Leo and Mary were there to greet us at the airport and whisked us away, first to show us the reception area for Bruce's wedding

on the Saturday, and then to our hotel. Gordon and Dorothy, who had arrived some days earlier joined us for dinner in the evening. That night was one of the hottest we had experienced so far and of course the air conditioning in the room failed!

In the morning Gordon met Elizabeth and Russell off their flight from San Francisco and we all had a late breakfast together. After a certain amount of misdirection we managed, eventually, to find our car hire depot and suitably wheeled we moved off to have lunch with the King family out at Greenhithe to the north of Auckland. There I managed to find and photograph one of the cicadas, the screeching crickets, which are in every tree and bush and which surround you, very noisily, every hour of the day. After lunch while the ladies started to prepare the floral decorations for the wedding the men went off into Auckland to collect their morning suits. That evening we moved to the two timeshare apartments at Mission Bay on the north shore of the harbour.

Bruce's wedding day dawned bright and sunny. Marion went off with Bruce and Phil (the best man) to collect the wedding cake and to do the flowers at the reception whilst Russell and I started to prepare a brunch for everyone before we dressed ready for the wedding. In no time Phil was back to say the car had broken down and they needed help with another car. Russell stayed with the offending vehicle, trying to push it back to the apartments, while

I chauffeured everyone around to their allotted places. Everything eventually got done and with everyone fed we dressed in our finery and drove to the wedding with the temperature reaching an alarming 31degrees!

St Mary's Anglican Church was, like most of the Auckland buildings, of wooden construction with a tin roof and with the exterior painted white. It was set in very pleasant grounds and stood out in stark contrast against the deep blue of the sky. Inside, the church was dark and panelled throughout in wood but very pleasantly cool after the searing heat of the midday sun. After the service everyone congregated outside for the inevitable family photographs and then boarded an open-topped double decker bus for a tour of the city highlights and more photographs of the happy couple posing at various beauty spots along the way. The reception was in a delightful old lodge house set in the grounds of Cornwall park in the heart of the city.

Sunday morning saw us all out relaxing on the beach at Mission Bay collecting seashells which were a delicate coral colour. After a swim in the pool we all left for a BBQ at Greenhithe at Jo's sisters house, again a single storey large white wooden house with a wonderful veranda all round where everyone had collected to shelter from a sudden and unexpected torrential rain shower.

Phillip Lawrence
St Peter & St Paul

Pedal Power

Having just completed a cycle ride following the route of Hadrian's Wall (some ninety miles) my thoughts are directed to the church-sponsored Bike 'n Hike event.

The work that the Romans did all those years ago was a fantastic feat. Not only building a wall but the construction of forts and small towns on route, with military establishments along its 100 miles from coast to coast.

A lot of our church buildings were great constructional feats of their time, taking years and decades to build, which need an increasing amount of maintenance. The Historic Churches

Trust provides grants for this essential work. Our local churches have benefited from this in the past.

Your help is needed

First please consider if you could take part in this event, or provide sponsorship, to cycle or walk around our churches or to sit and welcome people visiting our churches and sign their sponsorship forms.

If you can spare an hour of your time on Saturday 11 September, please



contact Neil Brown on 01442 825956 or email neil@jjanbrown.plus.com.
Neil Brown, St Peter & St Paul

All things bright and beautiful



In the first lockdown I, like most people, picked up a new hobby – photography. I took my Grandpa's camera into the garden during the spring and took numerous photos of nature. Throughout the next year I took my camera out regularly, straying further away from my house – to Marshcroft Lane, the reservoirs and even to some National Trust gardens! But as we've moved closer to normality I sort of forgot about my camera as I got caught up in the spectacular world of social life and it sat in a lonely cupboard somewhere (cue sad music...) until a couple of days ago when I remembered it! So I thought I'd take it out again into the garden and see what I could find...

I spent a futile ten minutes pursuing the elusive birds who enjoyed themselves by ducking behind branches whenever I looked up, before giving up and going in search of something I could actually see... After wandering aimlessly for a while, pointing my camera at some flowers – pretty, but kinda boring – I remembered a small visitor I spotted in the garden recently... a little mouse whom I have named Bramble.

I quickly rushed to the bird feeder before realising that, bright, colourful and completely uncamouflaged as I was, approaching a tiny, timid creature at a run would probably not encourage it to come within range of my camera. Deciding the best strategy would be to get lower to the ground, I cleverly adopted an extremely uncomfortable position lying on the grass, holding my camera up to eye level a few metres away from the feeder. Feeling somewhat ridiculous, I lay there, trying not to shift around too much and waited for my mouse to appear. To my surprise, I spotted it within a few minutes, it's twitching nose wiggling from behind a flower pot.

Excitedly I raised my camera a few centimetres to eye level and managed to get a stunning photo of a muddy pot with some shredded leaves. In the few milliseconds it had taken me to move my camera slightly up, it had vanished without a trace. Afraid I'd blown my chance, I held the camera steady – my aching arms really thanked me for that

– and hoped the mouse would return. Sure enough, I spotted it again, this time descending from a plant stalk above. It sniffed, twitched its tail and snagged a seed from the ground. I managed to get another shot and repeated this process for quite a while – me lying on the ground, and the mouse disappearing and then reappearing in various places.

I was very surprised at how close I could get as long as I stayed still and I could see every little detail from the tip of its whiskers to all the different colours in its fur! Another thing I noticed, as I lay there on the wet grass, was that (as long as I stayed still) other creatures would appear around me too. Mostly birds – though my dog Otto showed up once or twice and scared everything else away – would come and sit on the bushes and feeder just a metre away from me. It felt like I was part of a whole new world as nature surrounded me.

Sometimes I think we don't appreciate the little things in nature enough; we are always attracted to the tallest mountain, the biggest tree and the brightest animal; we forget the beautiful intricacy of a tiny mouse and the complex details in a dragonfly's wing. As the Bible puts it, God gave us 'everything that has the breath of life in it' from the mighty elephant to the tiniest bee. We were taught to live with the creatures and care for them and know them all as they are gifts from God. And what better gift than the voice of the blackbird in the morning or the glimpse of a mouse as it vanishes into the grass?

Fern Asquith
High Street Baptist Church



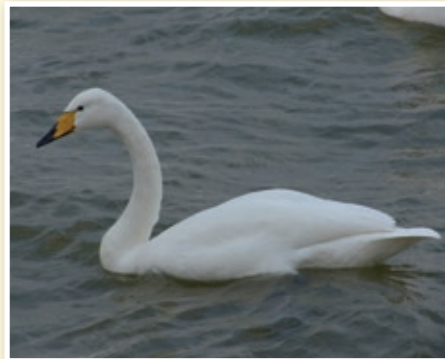
Tweet of the month



How do birds parent?

You might expect that it is the female that mainly looks after young birds and, while that is the case in some species, it is certainly not always what happens – and the approaches to parenting vary quite dramatically.

When I wrote about the Cuckoo a couple of years ago, I said it was a brood-parasite as it lays anything up to twenty-three eggs in the nests of other species and they raise its young as their own. A lot of the Cuckoo species are brood-parasites as are the Cowbirds found in the Americas and Honeyguides found in Africa. The Cuckoos found in North and South America actually build their own nests but will lay their eggs in nests of their own species and also those of other species of birds – so they are partial brood-parasites. The closest human parallel to this for me was foster parents or adoptive parents, although in the case of humans it is done willingly and out of love whereas the birds doing the fostering are unaware of the fact. Brood-parasites normally have to lay a lot of eggs, which generally have to be reasonably similar in colour and pattern to those of the host species. So a lot of effort goes into the eggs, but none into raising the young birds.



Wildfowl, ie ducks, geese and swans, have different approaches to parenting just within that one group. In the case of a lot of ducks the female does most, if not all, of the sitting on the eggs and looks after the ducklings until they are independent a few months later. One of the reasons the males don't sit on the eggs is that a lot of them are brightly-coloured and so are not camouflaged and would increase the chance of the

nest being found and the eggs eaten by a predator. Swans however, although they are bright white, are big and very aggressive in defence of their young. So both parents look after the cygnets and, in the case of a migratory species like the Whooper Swan, the parents and cygnets migrate as family parties to their wintering grounds. They spend the winter together and migrate north again and only when they have reached the breeding areas do they separate and the young birds go off to moulting areas so as not to compete for food on the actual breeding grounds.



In some species of waders, such as Dotterel and phalaropes the males are not only duller than the females but they also sit on the eggs and look after the young birds with the females taking no part in that part of the breeding process. Also it is not unusual for the females to mate with more than one male (known as polyandry), and lay eggs in more than one nest which are then looked after by the different males. Conversely the Common and Somali Ostriches are polygamous and mate with more than one female but then they get all of the females they have mated with to lay their eggs in the same nest which the male then sits on and raises the young until they are independent. This is definitely putting all your eggs in one basket... The main reason this approach works is because a few hours after hatching, the young Ostriches can walk, leave the nest, and start looking for food themselves so the male is there for guidance and protection. Despite its goofy appearance, an adult Ostrich is dangerous and even people have to be wary of them in the wild and they have a potentially lethal kick!

I suspect many of you will have seen on nature documentaries how young penguins are initially looked after by

both parents and then when they get bigger they form crèches watched over by a few adults so that both parents can go and hunt for food for their young. This is not a common thing in the wild but is successful and quite an amazing piece of organization when you think about it.

Finally we have what happens in most cases, both parents sit on the eggs and then raise the young birds but this can have an extra twist to it. Bee-eaters and Kookaburras not only have both parents look after the young birds but they have extra help – either from their own offspring from previous years or unrelated birds; sort of like having a nanny or two around.



The avian world's approach to parenting can be as varied as the ones humans adopt. Certainly birds care for their young in similar ways and will protect them from harm as best they can. However, they don't seem to love them in the same way humans do and aren't as likely to go to the same lengths to protect them and give their own lives if necessary. I think we can do this because we have been given the gift of love by God, and we understand both that and the sacrificial love of his Son for us.

Roy Hargreaves
St Peter & St Paul



Pews and sermons



The two are inextricably linked – as we will see later!

The first churches were in people's houses, although early Christians also attended the synagogue.

Synagogues at that time had no seats. People usually stood – but if they needed to sit they would do so on a cushion or mat, as was the local custom. The early churches followed this in having no seats – people stood for the service. As churches became larger a dais was erected at one end – a 'bema' – where the bishop or priest had a seat and there was an altar for communion. The rest of the church was empty and those worshipping stood – essential as there became customs for processions to take place at different parts of the service.

As churches and monasteries became more complex, wooden stacidia or misericords were fitted along some walls, or small ledges incorporated into the wall stonework. These allowed a person to lean with support against the wall during long services. Before the Reformation the priest would give a short homily (usually around five minutes) and in a large church there would be a central pulpit where the priest could be seen and heard by the

congregation who stood gathered around.

There were exceptions to this. In palaces and grand private houses or castles, there were private chapels and there was usually seating for the king or nobleman and their family. In a few of the larger churches and cathedrals there were also areas where nobility could sit if they were tired – inside a raised wooden wall, in some cases.

With the Reformation things changed. The short homily was replaced by a sermon which was a central feature of all reformed churches. The Second Helvetic Confession in 1562 was adopted in many countries and says 'the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God. When this Word of God is now preached in the church by preachers lawfully called, we believe that the very Word of God is proclaimed, and received by the faithful; and that neither any other Word of God is to be invented nor is to be expected from heaven.' The importance of the sermon meant long expositions which could last for several hours in some churches! As a result the Kirk in Edinburgh introduced a rule in 1587 that preachers exceeding an hour were to be fined 18 pence.

The Kirk in Elgin went further and fined long-winded preachers 6 shillings and 8 pence (a day's wage for a labourer). This resulted in the construction of a large hour glass timer being fixed to the outside of the pulpit which the preacher

had to turn over when he started preaching. The Scots have always been an eminently sensible nation.

The introduction of the long sermon meant that people wished to be, and in some cases needed to be, seated. This led to the construction of pews. In the early Reformation period, many families paid for their own pews to be constructed. Of course, the construction of pews meant that the church could really only be used for church services and meetings – contrasting the early churches empty space which was often used for purposes such as local markets and meetings.

It is interesting that many churches have turned full circle, removing pews and replacing them with chairs that can be removed and stacked. This allows the church space to be cleared and used for communal purposes. The length of sermons has also shortened. A massive survey in America showed Catholic sermons the shortest – at fourteen minutes average, and black Protestants the longest at fifty-four minutes average. At Turvey Abbey, where I am an Oblate, Brother John's homilies are usually under five minutes – and I always remember everything he says! Perhaps a return to standing in church would result in short pithy memorable sermons?

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church



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Music feeds the soul



I was completely amazed when my radio informed me that it had been 480 days since the March 2020 lockdown this week. 480 days!

It can't be!! 480 days without visiting a theatre or a music venue? That's an exaggeration, but the number of musical occasions I've missed in the last 480 days brings me to tears.

A further reminder of the length of time came a week later, when we sang our final hymn (outside) church for the first time in 480 days. Sad to relate, I felt I could no longer sing. Maybe you've felt the same, but as someone that doesn't sing along to the radio, but rather waits for organised events, I feel as if that ship has sailed for me. And that makes me cry too.

But enough of this wallowing. I know I've been blessed during the pandemic; work, family health all well. And there are now some green shoots of musical recovery and – boy! – have I enjoyed them. (Although, there's been quite a lot of crying too, with joy).

Live music feeds the soul. My first return to the concert hall was a small concert of cello chamber music in St Peter's, Berkhamsted and I can thoroughly recommend Clare O'Connell and her www.behindthemirror.org.

I went with Pippa Chappell and, due to Covid-19 rules, there were no refreshments, so we took our own. Blueberries and Maltesers anyone? We were mesmerized by the music and we were the last to leave, desperate

to drink in the atmosphere of the evening.

I was also very blessed to see Tring Park School's outdoor end of term performance of Romeo and Juliet. The music, again, was superbly atmospheric. As dusk set in and the trees behind the stage were illuminated with fairy lights, guess what, I was crying again. With

appreciation for the performers, but also feeling so sad that those magical young performers hadn't had a public audience for 480 days.

Then came the joyous occasion of Tring Together's first live music



concert. Working with Tring School's Robin Schafer, we ran a workshop in the afternoon, followed by a sell-out outdoor concert afterwards. The performers were super, the audience was appreciative, but the best part was simply hearing live music sailing across Pond Close on a summer evening.

Finally, can I encourage you to listen to the Radio 4 programme below, where Leon Bosch articulates the importance of music a lot better than me. Leon lives in Tring and, if you like what you hear, keep an eye out for a classical music festival in Tring in 2022, championed by Leon, Anna le Hair and me. (I'll be the one at the back, crying.)

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000y0jm
Vivienne Child
St Peter & St Paul



Sunday Club is back!



Until a few years ago, we were incredibly blessed with a committed and experienced group of Sunday Club leaders in St Peter & St Paul's who, week after

week (for nearly forty years!), taught and cared for the children who came to church. And we want, again, to express our thanks to Sue, Jenny, Jane, Sandra and Mary for all that they did. But they needed to move on to other things and to have their time back.

Now it feels like the right time to start again, and to do so in a way that is sustainable in terms of volunteers and the whole parish. So we are focusing on the children's work in St Peter & St Paul, and making sure that everyone knows we all share what we have as a team. Children are welcome, as is everyone, at all that we do, but twice a month in Tring, on the first and third Sundays, there will be Sunday Club for children from 0 to 11. To begin with, it will be led by a member of the ministry team, but we would love to have other volunteers joining in.

The children will be in church until just after the welcome and first hymn, and then they will leave to go to either

the Emmy Hobbs Room or the Church Hall, depending on numbers. Parents and carers are welcome to come with little children if they want to. We will take with us a box, and in it will be a wooden cross, a cloth of the season's colour, the prayers for the day, and whatever else we are doing. This means that we can set up together wherever we are, and it reinforces the idea that this is worship.

And what will we do? All sorts of things! Stories and songs, crafts and games, and all on the theme of the readings of the day. This means that, we hope, parents and children can both talk and share about what they have learned. And while how we learn will be age appropriate for the children, what is always important to remember is that the meanings are not dumbed down for the children, nor is it lesser quality. In one of my favourite phrases of the moment, simple but not easy.

We will come back in at 'the Peace', so that the children will have more time with the whole congregation. What we won't be doing is bringing them to the front to 'show' what they have done – we do not do that with what the adults have learned, so why with the children? Also the service will be live streamed and anyone who appears on screen needs to be comfortable with that.

No doubt you are thinking that none of this seems new – it isn't. It is all about helping children to understand about God and worship, faith and prayer, in age-appropriate ways. We are aware that lots of people no longer come to church on a weekly basis, but monthly, or when they are reminded. We don't have as many volunteers as we once did. So what we want to offer has to be organised and clear. And for some, the weekend is the only time when they are together as a family, and so they want to worship together: separating them for the whole service is not helpful. Families are also used to driving to something that they value or want to do, so although it is not the greenest option, it makes more sense to focus this provision on St Peter & St Paul as it means that we can provide better quality and the children can meet each other, and know that they are not the only family who does this.

So please let people know that it is back! There will be new banners on the church wall which will advertise what service is coming up, and the details will always be on our websites. We look forward to welcoming new people and worshipping together as a family.

Jane Banister
Tring Team

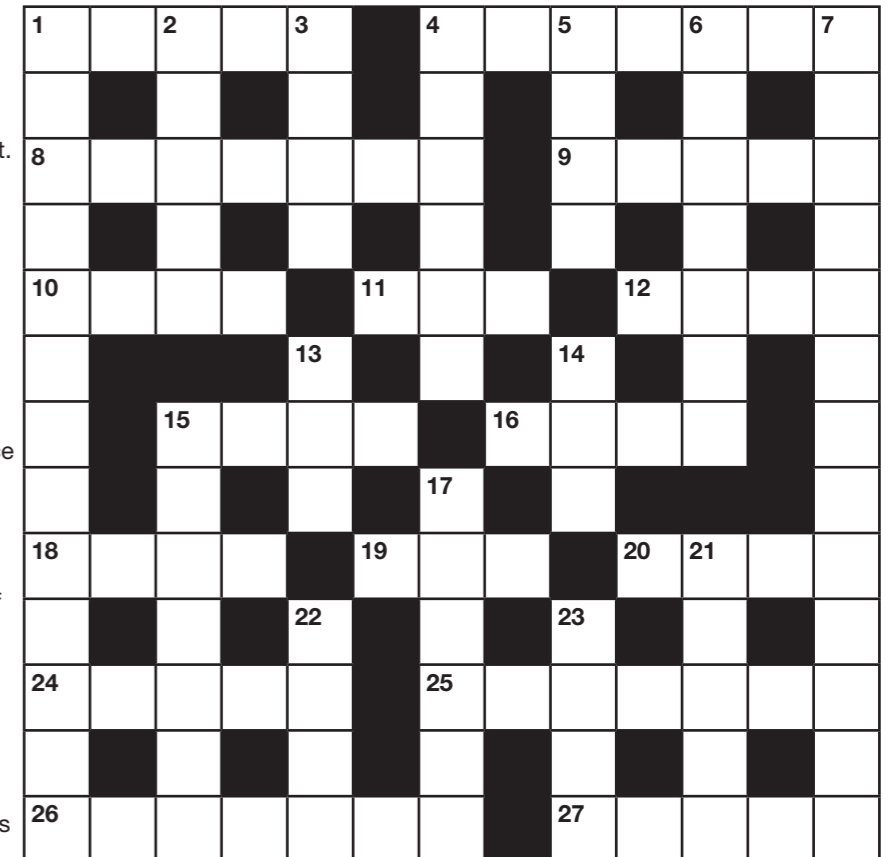
Crossword

ACROSS

1. Constant traveller (5)
4. Father of Isaac (7)
8. One who saw it happen (7)
9. Problem (5)
10. Pretty (4)
11. A seat in church (3)
12. Against (4)
15. Wonder (4)
16. Holy Father (4)
18. Paschal offering (4)
19. Unit of electricity (3)
20. '....' of Bethlehem (4)
24. Moral principle (5)
25. Home for a priest (7)
26. What remains (7)
27. Relating to the sun (5)

DOWN

1. Importance of Sept. (3) (6) (4)
2. Vocal music (5)
3. Pattern of chosen food (4)
4. Reply (6)
5. Ready to eat (4)
6. Word of praise (7)
7. Early church service (7) (6)
13. Request (3)
14. Decline (3)
15. One time capital of Egypt (7)
17. Appear (6)
21. Successive part song (5)
22. eg: vinegar (4)
23. '....' of the Apostles (4)



School leadership and Christian faith



Hello All! I thought it might be interesting to provide my reflections on nine years of being Head of a girls' independent preparatory school (ages 4-11) in Notting Hill, West London with regards to its Christian identity.

Frankly, when I took over Pembridge Hall, I wasn't even clear how it articulated its religious or spiritual ethos. Like most schools, it followed the Christian calendar, with Harvest Festival, carol concerts and Nativity plays and an Easter Bonnet Parade with much fanfare. However, none of the marketing literature for prospective parents indicated whether these were seen as cultural or religious events.

A lot has changed since I was at school in the 80s. When was the last time anyone sung the metaphorical 'Onward Christian Soldiers'? We used to belt it out and never thought for a moment that it was a call to arms! At my senior school, psalms were centrepieces, yet I haven't sung/said a psalm since I was 18! Some of them were fairly turgid, though – a real test of will to stay the course, holding breath at the right moment like a free diver taking a plunge.

I digress. This is my belief as a school Head: children have a fundamental right to have a spiritual education: spiritual/religious or spiritual/secular. It is our duty to encourage them to think beyond Starbucks lattes and 'Love Island', to consider the world which they cannot evidence through their five senses. I have found that children are very open to this, especially if you re-jig traditional Religious Education as a subject and introduce philosophical understanding and create an environment in which it is absolutely OK to say that 'I just don't believe in God'. Ironically, the more open the debate, taking away the stigma of simply not believing, the more likely a child is to find faith in her or his own time.

A study of Christianity and the other central faiths is, of course, required under Department for Education curriculum guidelines. At Pembridge Hall, where I am Head, we are in the process of adapting the RE curriculum, so that key cross-faith topics such as charity, prayer, symbolism, fasting etc. are studied. In

this way, children are more likely to see the communality of faiths, which supports Fundamental British Values. At some point, Christians in education became embarrassed, even apologetic about their faith and in many schools it seems to be so watered down as to be largely irrelevant. At Pembridge Hall, the families are largely international, certainly multi-faith and many are secular. St Matthew's Church, Bayswater, is our local church and we hold a whole school assembly there every Friday. It is our spiritual home. We are blessed to have a wonderful vicar at St Matthew's, Will Coleridge, and though many of the assemblies are secular in nature, he gives sermons to the girls for each of the key Christian events. I usually end all assemblies with a prayer, which I make up on the spot, keeping them deliberately light-hearted and accessible to the girls. I make very clear that the prayer can be whatever the girls want it to be: it's their prayer or their private reflection, Christian or otherwise.

The school's musical programme is really important and our main carol service in December is full of Christian pomp and ceremony, a 'Once in Royal' soloist is hand-picked and I always deliver the John 1 reading, as my Headmaster did back in the 1980s. However, we also like to be unpredictable, so the school rock band usually comes up with a Christmas themed number to sit alongside the traditional carols.

In conclusion, I think very few parents actually object to a Christian identity in their children's school and most actively appreciate it, whether they are practising Christians, agnostic or of another faith themselves. At Pembridge Hall, we actively encourage

the girls to talk about and to celebrate other faiths – this is vital. Equally, despite being a predominantly international school community, we sing the national anthem every half term and belt it out with great gusto, reflecting on Her Majesty the Queen as one of the greatest living role models for girls and boys alike.

Children need to be given what I think of as a 'religious literacy'. Children who do not read books or have never gone to libraries or bookshops are, sadly, unlikely to become readers. In the same way, children for whom churches are distant places of no relevance to their lives may find it harder to explore their faith in later years. Society talks a lot about mental health in children, but doesn't faith have a key role in safeguarding their well-being? I think so, though it is not fashionable to say so as an educator today. I hope and believe that St Matthew's will always be a happy place for Pembridge Hall girls and potentially an anchoring memory in later life from which to explore spiritual dimensions.

Henry Keighley-Elstob
St Peter & St Paul

Postcard from locked-down Sydney

Well, it seems we spoke too soon.

When we last wrote for *Comment*, in late May, we noted how – unlike several other Australian states – New South Wales had managed to avoid full-scale lockdowns for over a year. Within a month of writing those words, on 26 June the whole of Greater Sydney, and neighbouring regions such as the Blue Mountains and Wollongong, went back into lockdown. Initially scheduled for two weeks, we are now – as of 1 August – in week six of a lockdown that will last until 28 August at the earliest, and likely much longer. Australia's run as Covid-19 'lucky country' seems to have hit a stumbling block.

At the heart of the problem is the pace of what some journalists have dubbed the vaccine 'stroll-out'. Critics of Prime Minister Scott Morrison have used against him his repeated comment, earlier in the year, that getting people vaccinated was 'not a race'. As of 1 August – in stark contrast to the UK – fewer than 19% of Australian residents are fully vaccinated. Part of this has been a supply problem – which now seems to be improving – and extremely mixed messaging about the Astra Zeneca vaccine.

In its initial planning, the government relied very heavily on AZ, which can be manufactured here. However, a couple of fatalities from the very rare blood clotting side-effects led to government health advice changing the very day before John was due to get his first AZ shot. Having initially recommended AZ for over-50s, Pfizer for everyone else, the advice changed, with AZ subsequently being recommended only for over-60s. Over-50s' appointments for AZ shots were cancelled, and people needed to reapply for Pfizer appointments (offered at different locations). This highly risk-averse advice was premised on a calculation of the balance of risks in a country where Covid-19 infection rates had become almost negligible because of closed international borders. This situation has now been blown out of the water by the latest outbreak of the Delta variant, and the complete absence here of 'herd immunity'.

On one day earlier this week, NSW recorded 239 new cases of community transmission, the state's highest daily number since the pandemic began. Although these numbers will seem tiny by international standards, the de facto policy of 'Covid zero' has meant that here, this is big news, regularly being

described as a 'crisis'. Now younger people, not yet guaranteed a Pfizer shot, are being encouraged by most health officials to get the AZ vaccine after all: except in Queensland, where the Chief Health Advisor is still saying that she 'does not want under 40s to get Astra Zeneca'. This confused messaging about AZ has led some sections of the Australian media to question why there has been such hesitancy about what they are calling 'the vaccine that saved the UK'.

John eventually got his first Pfizer jab in early July, and if things go according to plan, by the time you read these words, will be fully vaccinated; Sylvie – in a younger age-group – will have had her first shot.



Meanwhile, as the UK finally eases restrictions, Sydney remains in the strictest lockdown we have known since we have been here. We had to cancel a holiday we had planned for Sylvie's birthday in late July, though we enjoyed celebrating both this and our wedding anniversary at home. Overall, we are lucky: we can work from home; have outside space; and don't have to juggle doing our jobs with home-schooling children. We are not in any of the eight worst-affected areas of the city, where lockdown conditions are strictest. For us, one person per household can leave the house once per day to shop for essentials (with a ban on 'browsing'); we can also leave home for exercise, provided we don't travel further than 10km. Fortunately for us, this makes it possible to get into the beauty of the Blue Mountains National Park, which kept us sane for much of last year. We are hoping that a rumoured cut to 5km (equivalent to lockdowns in some other states), which would put the Park out of reach, doesn't come to pass, as the Blue Mountains offer near-perfect conditions for socially distanced exercise.

The Covid-19 war of words between state Premiers – and certain state



Premiers and the federal government – shows no sign of abating. NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian has been much less trigger-happy in locking down than most, and some consider NSW's lockdown conditions to be nowhere near strict enough. Mark McGowan, the Premier of Western Australia, has been repeatedly critical of NSW for not locking down fast enough, and for not doing it 'properly'. McGowan – who a few months ago locked down Perth based on two reported Covid-19 cases – has recently been re-elected by the biggest landslide in Australian political history. On the other side of the lockdown fence, last weekend saw anti-lockdown protests in Sydney and other cities, with thousands gathering illegally. The same was expected again yesterday, but as the ABC reported (in what is surely the headline of the week), 'Sydney anti-lockdown protests fears ease after no one turns up'.

Targets have finally been set for moving between the first three of four phases of Australia's post-Covid-19 recovery. A 70% vaccination target is necessary to get to phase two (which will ease restrictions on vaccinated residents), and 80% for phase three. But even that will not open international borders fully: the roadmap just talks of phase three extending a 'travel bubble' to countries such as Singapore, and the 'gradual reopening of international travel with safe countries'. The full resumption of international travel would require us to get to phase four, in which Australia 'lives with Covid as it does with influenza'. That seems a long way off. As to getting to phase two, only 16.8 million more vaccine jabs to go...

We hope that after the UK's long 'Covid winter', our Tring friends are enjoying the new freedoms!
John Lippitt and Sylvie Magerstädt
St David's Anglican Church, Blaxland NSW (currently meeting online!)
Formerly of St Peter & St Paul

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The rise and fall of the family business



Following my mention of the family brass foundry in 'Two Truths and a Lie', the Editor asked me to write an article about it. In doing so, I'm very

much indebted to my second cousin, Kit Syder, whose detailed research I've been able to draw on. Any inaccuracies are mine.

My great-grandfather John Roby was born in 1818. He was a brass founder and coppersmith and after a six-year apprenticeship he established a foundry in Prescott, Lancashire in 1842. Some years later, in 1857, he bought land in nearby Rainhill, which was situated on the Liverpool to Warrington Turnpike and beginning to benefit from the development of the rail network. The company and the family moved there, building both a foundry and a family home near the railway line. Houses were also built for the foundry workers, made from bricks in the adjoining brickfield.

A considerable variety of work was undertaken at the foundry – everything from pleasure craft to ocean liners and a huge amount of work for the Admiralty – also, according to archive records, for the Dutch Navy. One of the photos shows a cast iron bell holder of the type apparently used on whaling ships. An alternative design is of two eagles, and I have replicas of both in my garden, though sadly without a bell. Other holders, one complete with bell, are in local museums. (An interesting point is

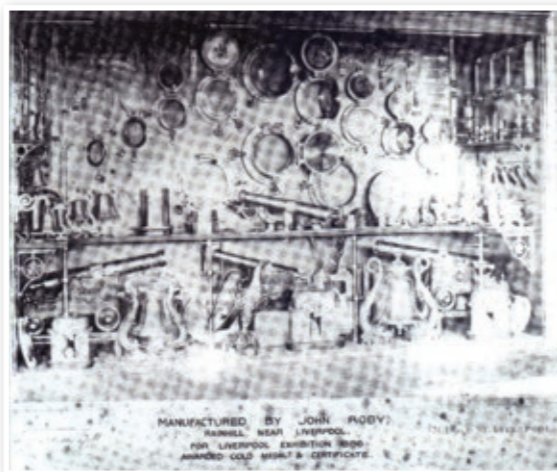


'Dolphins'

that the fish model was always referred to at the foundry as 'the dolphins', as noted on the photo. It took a marine biologist in the form of my grandson to point out that they had scales, and so were fish!

The business flourished and among the early customers were the Earl of Derby, Lord Sefton, the County Asylum (!) and Pilkington Brothers. Members of the Roby family, including my grandfather, father, uncles, brother and cousin, continued to be directors of the firm (or 'the Works' as it was always known) until its closure in 1973.

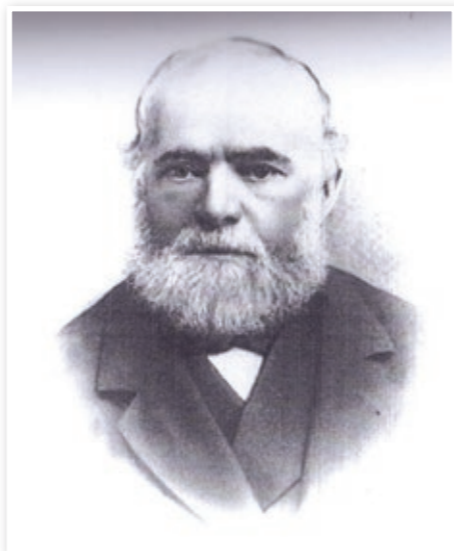
In 1886, two years after John Roby's death, a display of items manufactured at the foundry (including port holes, decorative bells and cannons) won a gold medal and certificate at the International Exhibition held in Liverpool (see photograph). The following year the men were given a day's paid holiday for the jubilee of Queen Victoria in June 1887.



Liverpool Exhibition

Important commissions during the 1880s and early 1890s included doors and frames for the Vanderbilt yacht Valiant which was being built by Lairds, and lights required by Thomas Utley for the royal yacht Victoria and Albert. The late 1800s and early 1900s were a golden age for British shipbuilding and business prospered, allowing improvements to be made to the foundry premises between 1900 and 1910. In 1904 there were sixty-six employees excluding family members.

My grandfather, William Henry Roby, was apprenticed in the family business in 1882. He was taken ill suddenly after a game of golf on Christmas Day 1914 and died of pneumonia a week later. At his funeral fifty-two employees preceded the coffin and eight more carried it. The family presented a Lych gate (a covered gate at the entrance to a churchyard)

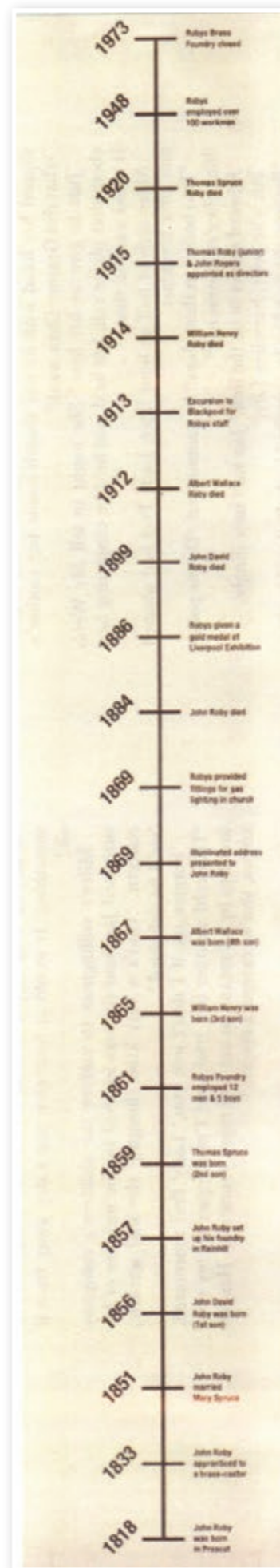


John Roby

to St Ann's Rainhill in his memory. The family grave can also be found at St Ann's.

In 1914 the firm of John Roby was incorporated as John Roby Limited to carry out brass founding. The outbreak of war brought a surge in demand for shipbuilding and other foundry skills such as shells. There were a great many regular customers, including the Admiralty, Cammell Laird (Birkenead), John Brown (Clydebank), and Harland and Wolff (Belfast and Glasgow).

However, in the 1920s, the firm was affected by the world-wide recession and the number of employees was reduced from more than 100 to thirty-eight. Changes had also been made to the regulation of employment – the introduction of national insurance payments, unemployment benefit and income tax. Thomas Utley, who had successfully tendered for the manufacture of sidelights and windows for Cunard's new luxury liner in 1930, was in serious trouble in 1931 when work on the Queen Mary was suspended for twenty-seven months. The firm had a distinguished history as designers and manufacturers of shipping products and had provided the ship's bell and several windows for the Titanic. There had been a longstanding relationship between the two companies dating from the late 19th century, Utley's orders often being passed to the Roby foundry when Utley capacity was limited, and in the 1930s John Roby Ltd saved Utley from bankruptcy by buying the name and continuing to make Utley products under licence.



Roby's Timeline

On 26 September 1934, the Queen Mary, previously known as Vessel number 534, was finally launched, as described in a current booklet: 'The 26th day of September 1934 is marked by an event unprecedented in the history of the British Mercantile Marine: the launching of 'No 534' at the Shipbuilding Yard of Messrs John Brown & Co Ltd. Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary were present – the first time they had ever honoured such an event – and also, for the first time in history, a Queen of England performed the impressive ceremony of naming a vessel. 'No 534' has now become known the world over as 'THE QUEEN MARY'.'

In the 1930s work was done on many Admiralty ships including HMS Ajax and HMS Ark Royal. Also in the thirties the foundry supplied fittings for Queen Mary (now in California), Queen Elizabeth and Mauretania. Later significant ships include HMV Britannia in the 1950s (now berthed at Leith just north of Edinburgh) and, in the 1960s, Queen Elizabeth II (now in Dubai).

By the 1960s, however, British shipbuilding was in deep crisis. Major shipbuilders had been slow to modernise their designs and working practices, so found it difficult to adapt to the new types of ship that were required and their increasing size. The British merchant fleet was declining and flags of convenience were being used increasingly. Also the Royal Navy was no longer planning any major building programmes. Government intervention had failed to halt the downward spiral and shipbuilders and their suppliers had to compete in a global rather than national marketplace.

In 1966 John Roby Ltd and Thomas Utley (Rainhill) Ltd merged to form Roby and Utley Ltd but by 1973 the combined firm was facing increasing difficulty in a competitive market and had little alternative but to close after 140 years associated with ships' fittings. It was a sad day for the family and, I believe, for British shipbuilding in general.

Anthea Fraser
St Peter & St Paul

THE ROBY FAMILY

Mid-nineteenth century oil painting by Mr Francis of Prescott. Represented courtesy of St John's, a descendant of the Roby family.

John Roby's Brass Foundry is to the left behind the railway station building. Walling's Foundry House is in front of the Steam-Works Gate.

John Roby was born in 1818 and apprenticed at the age of 15 to a brass-caster in Prescott. In 1857 he bought land alongside the railway line in Rainhill and set up his own brass foundry. He built his house, 'Railway View', by the Foundry.

JOHN ROBY
Manufacturers of all kinds of
BRASS WORK.
640 FITZROY & FLETCHER BRASS TOWER,
RAIN HILL.

John Roby married Mary Spruce in 1851. They had four sons and four daughters. All the sons and several of their descendants went into the family business.

John Roby 1818-1884 | Mary Spruce 1825-1885

John David 1856-1899 | Thomas Spruce 1850-1930 | William Henry Albert Wallace 1855-1914 | Albert Wallace 1857-1912

By 1861 John Roby was already employing twelve men and five boys. Using bricks produced at Roby's brickworks, two rows of cottages were built alongside the foundry to house the workers.

Roby's foundry became an important source of employment in Rainhill. During WW2, there was a surge in ship-building and Roby provided brass fittings for ships in many parts of the world.

The people of Rainhill owe a debt of gratitude to John Roby and his descendants whose generosity contributed much to the community and especially to the Parish of St Ann's Church.

The business prospered and, over the years, the brass foundry buildings expanded.

Monument to John Roby and members of his family.

The Roby Family

'Consequences' by Penelope Lively



The parish Book Group met via Zoom on 4 July to discuss 'Consequences' by Penelope Lively.

The story begins with a chance encounter on a park

bench in Kensington Gardens in the 1930s between Lorna and Matt, who come from different backgrounds. Their lives collide, and they marry, defying the expectations of their families, especially Lorna's, and head for a dilapidated but cosy secluded cottage in Somerset, where they live happily. However, World War II changes things drastically, and the book is an exploration of how the decisions Lorna makes impact on the lives of

her daughter Molly and granddaughter Ruth, and what the consequences for them are. It's a powerful story of growth, death and rebirth.

Penelope Lively wrote this book later in her own life – she was born in 1933 and is still alive – and the group generally thought that she wrote well about the changes which she has seen happening during her long lifetime. The themes which are present in all her novels – love, loss and memory, as well as the effect of the past on the future – are all very much a part of the book, as is a sense of place. The group mostly enjoyed it, although one comment was that perhaps it should have been called 'Chances' rather than 'Consequences', and some members considered that perhaps some areas did not sit as comfortably as others. However, the



majority verdict was that most of those of us felt inspired to discover more of her work, and that 'Consequences' was worth reading.

Anna LeHair
St Peter & St Paul

'Philosophy Club' – the next instalment...



Since my previous article about the new 'Philosophy Club' at Bishop Wood School, I have been approached by many people enquiring as to how it's been

going. Well, in short, it's been going really well!

There have been seven sessions so far and we will continue with the current group into the next school year (they will then be in Year 6). If the weather is nice then we sit outside (after all that's what the ancient Greeks did!), or we find a quiet space somewhere in the school building; either way we make it work.

The children who volunteered for the group are really invested in each session (which runs for thirty minutes), and they come up with many insightful answers, often proving wise beyond their years. Some of the challenging themes have included: the value of life how and how it might be determined; the importance of telling the truth; is lying sometimes necessary; what would be the consequences of immortality?

Each session is approached with a huge amount of enthusiasm

and they always have plenty to say, therefore one of the key areas of learning is to listen respectfully when other people are talking (they are making progress on this, but we are still working on this skill!). However, as I mentioned in my previous article, the main aim is to encourage lateral thinking and to view situations from differing perspectives.

At the end of the school year, I gave each of the participants a certificate, confirming that they are now officially 'philosophers'. I thought it was important to recognise them for their hard work and to encourage them to return to the group next year.

My thanks have to go to the Year 5 teachers at BWS (Angela Day and Elaine Clark) for making the time which allowed these children to come out of their classrooms to take part; and also to Head Teacher, Gary Stanley and Deputy Head, Jon Hall, for supporting this great initiative.

I shall keep you posted next term on how things are progressing and may even try to convince the children to write an article from their perspective! Watch this space for more Philosophy Club news...

Sarah Marshall
Tring Team



Bishops, priests and presbyters



When the Apostles planted new churches they appointed elders to oversee them. The elders, in effect, were responsible to the Apostle who had founded the church.

Sometimes the elders are referred to as presbyters – and sometimes the presbyters as priests. This was a very simple form of church government. However, two things happened: the Apostles died and the Gnostics appeared. The Gnostics originally believed in a personal knowledge and experience of God, without the interference of elders/presbyters and church structures. Later the Gnostics were called heretics by those who believed in the formal church structure.

The gap left by the Apostles needed to be filled in order to counter gnostic arguments and so bishops were created and the presbyters were responsible to them. Initially there was a bishop for each church. These presbyters and bishops claimed 'apostolic succession' since the original presbyters were all appointed by the laying on of hands by an Apostle – and the first bishops were promoted from these presbyters. In Acts 14:23 Paul appoints presbyters in Anatolia. In 1 Timothy 1:3 and in Titus 1:6 Paul appoints Timothy and Titus to oversee churches – the first 'bishops' in effect. Paul also tells Titus to appoint elders in every town. Titus was acting on Paul's behalf as a 'bishop' to ordain elders/presbyters.

The first reference to bishops appears around the end of the 1st century when Ignatius of Antioch writes of the three levels of leadership 'the bishop presiding after the likeness of God and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the Apostles, with the deacons also who are most dear to me, having been entrusted with the diaconate of Jesus Christ' (Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians 6:1). The presbyters appointed the deacons who dealt with a lot of the 'management' side of the church. Eventually, in the 2nd century, presbyters were named priests in many areas. There was a clear succession. Bishops ordained priests, priests created deacons by laying on of hands (but a priest could not ordain).

By the 3rd century, bishops, according

to the writings of Hippolytus of Rome, '*Spiritum primatus sacerdotii habere potestatem dimittere peccata*' had the power to forgive sins. Around AD300 the Western part of Roman Empire was starting to fade and the church took over a lot of the functions of the state; this did not happen in the Eastern part to the same extent. As a result, we saw prince bishops arising in Western Europe and continuing well into the Middle ages. These men ruled church and state and eventually became the chancellors to the medieval monarchs. In Britain they oversaw church courts where lay people could be tried for crimes such as fornication and blasphemy as well as civil, matrimonial and inheritance disputes. In many ways this came to a head in England with Henry VIII becoming head of church and state in 1533. The Church of England still combines church and state through the House of Lords.

This wielding of both spiritual and temporal power by bishops resulted in war! The English Civil Wars, the Irish Confederate War and the Bishops Wars in Scotland are part of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and are largely rebellions against the temporal rule of bishops. This is part of the Reformation in Europe and Britain which started in England in 1533, and in Europe in 1521 – the Edict of Worms which condemned Luther. The reformation movement led to the establishment of the Congregationalists in 1582, the Baptist Church in 1612, the Presbyterian churches around 1700 and the Methodist Church in 1738. All these churches kept church apart from state and did not have bishops as such. Most have senior regional ministers called by one title or another who help and coordinate but do not have the power of a bishop (democratic bishops in all but name!). Most have elders or deacons and ministers. So, in reality, very little seems to have changed since the early church of the 2nd century. There are, however, important differences in the 'powers' of the various levels of leadership in each church. On the whole the system is as follows.

The Anglican Church

Everyone in leadership starts as an ordained deacon. A deacon serves the whole church, not the local church, and is a lifelong ordination by a bishop. Priests are ordained from deacons and bishops from priests.

The Catholic Church

There are permanent and transitional deacons. Permanent deacons are ordained by a bishop and remain deacons for life, transitional deacons are on the pathway to being ordained priests. Bishops are appointed from priests.

The Methodist Church

There are local stewards who serve a term in their local church. The church may have an ordained minister or may be served by trained lay preachers. There are also deacons who are ordained for life but seen as 'representatives of the people'. Churches are gathered into circuits with one or more ministers serving the churches and one minister serving a term as circuit superintendent. There are also districts with a minister serving a term as district superintendent.

The Presbyterian (in England now United Reformed) Church

There are ordained ministers and ordained for life elders. Britain is divided into thirteen synods with a minister serving a term as moderator.

The Baptist Church

There are ordained ministers and unordained deacons/elders serving a specific term. There are also regional ministers serving a term.

The Congregational Church

(Those who did not join the United Reformed Church.) There are seven ministries – minister, preacher, chaplain, tutor, spiritual enabler, mission enabler and pioneer minister. There is training for each position, central interviews and accreditation at Assembly. There are also deacons/elders who serve a term.

There are many variations within each church, but as you can see, all churches follow the basic structure of the 2nd century church to some extent. In all apart from the Congregational Church, ministers are ordained by the formal laying on of hands in some way. Congregational churches accredit ministers. Deacons and elders in churches may be ordained or appointed and may be lifelong or serve a term. The strength of Christianity comes, in part, from its diversity, I feel!

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church

In memory of Jean Simmons

Mum was born in Boston in Lincolnshire in 1935 where she lived with her parents Ivy and Arthur, until she got married in 1964. Her father was a market gardener and rose grower and passed his love of flowers onto his only daughter. He absolutely doted on her.

Mum left her convent school when she was 15 with no formal qualifications, and always said that needlework was her best subject at school. In fact, during her life she continued to develop her embroidery skills, and now many beautiful cushions, pictures and tapestries fill her house with memories.

After a while she got a job in an upmarket ladieswear shop in Boston called 'Lucilles'. She absolutely loved this job, selling beautiful clothes and the latest fashions to the ladies of Boston. She modelled the clothes, too, whenever she got the chance, and her love of clothes, fashion and being 'well turned out' stayed with Mum throughout her life; she always loved shopping for new clothes. Her wardrobe is literally bursting at the seams!

Mum lived and worked happily in Boston through her 20s, and dated a few young men, but as she approached 30 her parents were getting worried that she might be left on the shelf (how times have changed, thank goodness!). Mum had other plans. She accepted an invitation to visit a friend's house, and was told that a handsome young RAF officer would meet her at Maidenhead Railway station, and travel with her. Her friends had set up a blind date.



Although apparently not initially impressed at the railway station, she soon changed her mind and fell head over heels in love (and so did he) and the rest is history. Shortly after her 29th birthday, she married my dad.

Marrying an ambitious RAF pilot meant that her life changed completely and shortly after the wedding they moved to Malta, where I was born the following year.

Mum had an amazing way of taking everything in her stride: she approached life with an enthusiastic smile on her face – and always looked for a way to make the best of things. In the following years she took a Cordon Bleu cookery course, hosted dinner parties, coffee mornings, joined wives clubs (!), moved house fifteen times, accompanied Dad around the world, and attempted, but failed this time – to learn German and play bridge!

In 1988 she went to Buckingham Palace with Dad when he received his knighthood. As one of the country's greatest Royalists, she was very excited about this. However, she rarely used her new title and often giggled when someone called her Lady Jean. She was, however, incredibly proud of Dad's achievements, but mostly unaware of the contribution she had quietly made to his success.

She was a devoted wife, loving Mum,

doting Grandma and good friend to many.

Without needing to say it out loud, Mum made sure that Sally and I never went through a day in our lives doubting that she loved us and was proud of us. She showed us what was important in life: to love, support and care for family and friends and to treat everyone with kindness, to be authentic and stay true to yourself, live life to the full (and to enjoy wearing lovely clothes).

We have received lots of cards and letters and the comments in these have reflected the lovely Mum we knew and loved: always cheerful, very chatty, very friendly, kind, thoughtful, the most lovely lady...

I don't think I ever saw her not in a sunny mood: always a warm greeting and a big genuine smile, always saw the best in everyone, never failed to take a warm interest in you, always beautifully dressed, even when deadheading the roses.



Although in the past few years Alzheimer's disease changed our mum in many ways, we would like to focus on the very many happy and healthy years that we had with her, for which we are so grateful. We will all miss her warm smile and friendly chatter, her sense of humour and her enthusiasm, and she will always hold a very special place in our hearts.

Susan Vaughan, daughter

Memories of Mum

Flowers

Mum grew up surrounded by flowers, her father grew roses as part of his business. She even tried to follow him into business but in her words 'I was too heavy handed and Dad said I was costing him too much money!' However, her love of flowers remained, and she joined flower arranging classes with the RAF Wives Club and later in life helped with the church flowers. She would always bring us to see the flowers in church when we visited. At her funeral there was a pedestal of flowers in the church to celebrate Mum.

Clothes

Everyone talks of Mum in terms of elegance, with an eye for fashion. Once a model, working in Lucille's Dress Shop, she loved to go clothes shopping. Even in the recent lockdowns she would shop using clothing catalogues. I remember many beautiful outfits she bought from Ann Periam's shop and her love of cashmere cardigans and Mum would always compliment others

on their outfits too. Susan mentioned the importance of accessories, and the most valued was a handbag; she wouldn't leave the house without it.

Sewing

Mum would always say that it was all they really taught her at school. Well, the Nuns certainly taught her well. Mum and Dad's home is full of her embroideries, many of flowers, some of favourite places including Boston Stump, where she got married. For special family occasions she always surprised us with a very personal piece of embroidery. We will treasure these for ever.

Baking

Mum's baking bible was the little Be-Ro book. As children we grew up on delicious jam cake, Victoria sponges, jam roly poly and, my absolute favourite, spotted dick with thick Simmons custard! She was an excellent cook and baker and I have a little handwritten recipe book I still use, full of her favourite simple recipes.

Family

Mum was devoted to her family. She was loyal, dependable, supportive, caring and a truly loving person. She always spoke fondly of Boston where she grew up and as an RAF wife she supported Dad in all his postings. As a mother she was always there, arranging and driving me to horse riding lessons as a child and helping me plan my very special wedding day. We shared a love of dogs, especially for Snoopy, our Westie, which we had as a family growing up. Mum always loved to meet up for lunch and adored spending time with her grandchildren. Family and friends were everything to her.

To go back to the flowers on the pedestal, the memories we have shared reflect the fact that Mum was as beautiful a person as those flowers on the day of her funeral. Every time I see roses, I will think of her.

Sally Harris, daughter

In memory of Eve Pettinger MBE

Tring Park School are very saddened to announce the passing of Eve Pettinger MBE aged 92. Eve was a professional dancer with London Festival Ballet (now English National Ballet) and danced for Dame Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin. She was one of the first pupils at the Arts Educational School, Tring, in 1945 and taught at the school for over fifty years.

Eve trained generations of ballet dancers and for decades prepared our pupils to perform in English National Ballet's annual Nutcracker production. Eve served the school tirelessly with resolute dedication, passion, and

commitment. Regardless of how busy she was, after Eve left she took a keen interest in hearing updates of all aspects of Tring Park life and always looked forward to her annual visit here, thriving on watching the young classical dancers in classes.

The Tring Park family, past and present, were delighted when Eve was awarded an MBE for her services to dance in the New Year's Honours List of 2007.

In April 2016 the school arranged a gala, A Celebration for a Life in Dance, in honour of Eve which was held at the Britten Theatre of the Royal College of Music. Alumni who performed included Max Westwell (then Soloist of English National Ballet), Greg Dean (then Principal Dancer of Royal Danish Ballet), Ruth Brill (then First Artist of Birmingham Royal Ballet), Carrie Johnson (former member of Birmingham Royal Ballet), Drew McOnie (choreographer) alongside our own pupils, members of National Youth Ballet and Scholars from the Cecchetti Society, for whom Eve both taught and was an examiner.

She was the most remarkable woman. Eve touched the lives of many people



and she will be deeply missed by those who knew her and loved her.

I was blessed to know Eve in the latter stages of her life. Upon moving into a care home in her beloved North Norfolk, my husband and I would visit. Into her 90s, she remained curious to know EVERYTHING about all parts of school life, such as its importance to her. Though we did not talk about spiritual matter per se, I had a sense that for Eve ballet was able to reach into one's soul, give one a purpose and be a gift to share with others.

May we all be blessed to have such drive and passion about the things we love.

Sarah Bell, Tring Park School



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Comment Deadlines

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

Crossword puzzle answers From page 29

ACROSS	DOWN
1. NOMAD	1. NEW SCHOOL YEAR
4. ABRAHAM	2. MOTET
8. WITNESS	3. DIET
9. POSER	4. ANSWER
10. CUTE	5. RIPE
11. PEW	6. HOSANNA
12. ANTI	7. MORNING PRAYER
15. MUSE	13. ASK
16. ABBA	14. EBB
18. LAMB	15. MEMPHIS
19. AMP	17. EMERGE
20. STAR	21. TROLL
24. ETHIC	22. ACID
25. RECTORY	23. ACTS
26. RESIDUE	
27. SOLAR	

A Piano Recital by

Alexander Ardakov

Saturday 2 October 2021 at 7.30 pm
St Martha's Church
Chapel Street, Tring HP23 6BP
Tel: 01442 822305 E-mail: berdinner@gmail.com

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Sonata in A major op posth. 120 (D-664)

Allegro moderato
Andante
Allegro

Impromptu in E flat major op 90 no 2
Impromptu in G flat major op 90. no 3
Impromptu in B flat major op 142 no 3
Musical Moment in F minor op 94 no 3
Impromptu in A flat minor op 90 no 4

Interval

Robert Schuman (1810-1856)

Kreisleriana op 16

1. *Agitissimo*
2. *Con molto espressione, non troppo presto*
Intermezzo 1
Intermezzo 2
Piu lento
3. *Molto agitato*
4. *Lento assai*
5. *Vivace assai*
6. *Lento assai*
7. *Molto presto*
8. *Vivace e scherzando*

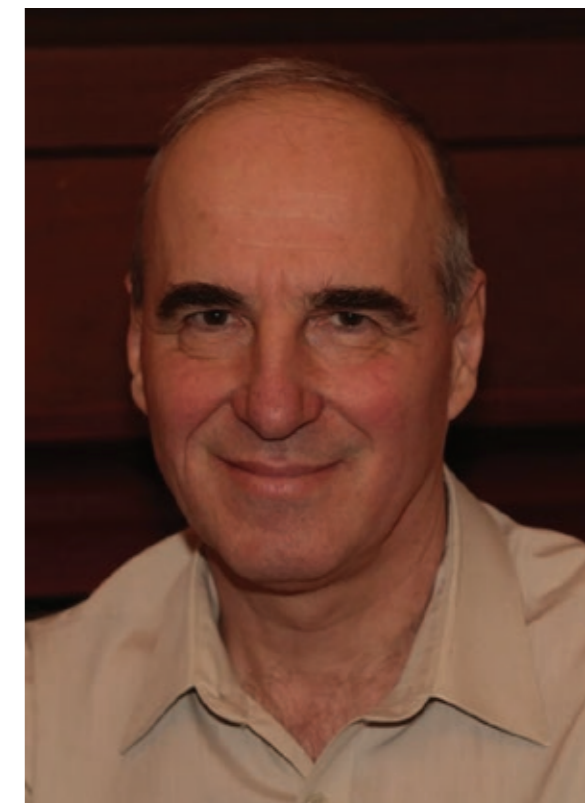
J S Bach - Ferruccio Busoni

(1685-1750, 1866-1924)

Chaconne in D minor

From Partita no 2 for Violin solo, arranged for Piano

Tickets: £15



A graduate of the Moscow Conservatoire and a prizewinner at the Viotti International competition in Italy, Alexander Ardakov has been living in England where in addition to his performing career throughout the world he is a Professor of Piano at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance. The move to Britain and to Trinity where he teaches since 1991 has enabled him to develop as an international recitalist of exceptional versatility and musical integrity.

Among his notable radio recordings are those for BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. He feels at home not only with the Russian classics but also with the composers of the romantic period such as Chopin, Liszt and Schumann.

Indeed, Alexander's audiences are never left indifferent, they are swept up in the sensitivity, intensity and passion of his playing that takes them on a journey from the most tender and intimate perceptions to the dramatic peaks of life's greatest moments. Each meeting with him is a virtuoso performance that leaves the hearer emotionally sated yet still thirsty for more.

Alexander's extensive discography includes Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson. Further CD recordings are planned.

High Street Baptist Church - Tring

Growing in the message and challenge of God



For details about our regular services, prayer meetings, special events and updates visit our website.

If you, or someone you know, would like to find out more please call Cliff on 07906 597882 or email admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/linkinglives/



Recycling Area

Outside left-hand side entrance to High Street Baptist Church

Did you know?

We collect bras, corks/plastic milk bottle tops, baby food pouches, pens and stamps

Visit our website to find out more about creation care.



Morning worship



Sundays 10.30am

zoom

Meeting ID: 978 9592 0392

Pass code: highstreet

Worshipping together in our building and at home.

Baby Group

Tuesdays 10.30-12 noon

Booking essential - Please note: this is not a drop in group

for new born and non-movers

Check out our Facebook group for details and booking or call Carolyn 07736 672998

Kids Activities @ High Street Baptist Church

Don't hesitate to get in touch if you need pastoral support.

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High Street Baptist Church