

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING

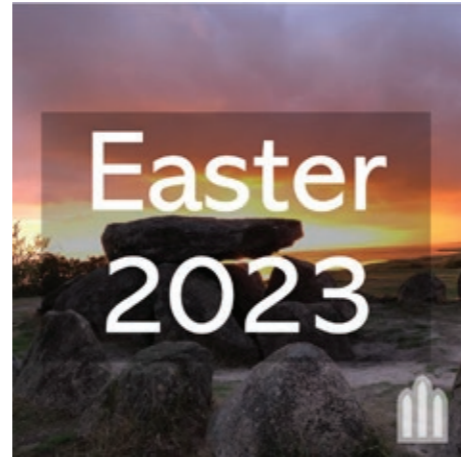


High Street Baptist Church - Tring

Growing in the message and challenge of God



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



Morning worship
Worshipping together in our building and at home

Sundays 10.30am

zoom
Meeting ID: 978 9592 0392 Password: highstreet

Coffee for a cause
Tuesdays 10am-12 Noon

Fairtrade tea, coffee and homemade cake.
Proceeds toward BMS World Mission.

Games Afternoon
Wednesdays 2 - 4pm
High Street Baptist Church, Tring

Baby Group
Tuesdays 10.30am - 12 Noon

For new born and non-movers

Tots
Wednesdays 9.30 - 11.30am
Indoor fun for toddlers

Junior Church
Sundays 10.30am

Church office 07977 230175 or admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk
Revd Joe Egan 07521 513493 or joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk
Revd Ruth Egan 07521 513494 or ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk



tringbaptistchurch



High Street Baptist Church

The Easter hope



There are many people in this world who say that they are Christians or people of faith, but they don't need to go to church to show that. They are stronger people than I am!

One of the very important aspects of religious life for me is worshipping with others: there is the joy of making music to God's glory; the power of prayer together, whether spoken or silent; and the knowledge of a shared experience, a reminder that we are called by God as a community, as well as individuals. Worshipping with others strengthens my faith and makes me a better Christian.

For me, this is never more clear than in the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter in the Church of England. We begin with Palm Sunday, with the procession and singing and rejoicing, and then the incredible power of reading the whole story of Christ's passion, all of it, needing no sermon, as the Gospel says all that we need to hear. There is the power of when we as a congregation join in with 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' reminding us that we can all follow the crowd rather than the truth.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week are when we have evening services with an address that follows the theme of Lent, which this year has been the Beatitudes. Different people talk to us of their different responses, or one person leads us through all three nights, and each session ends with Compline, that most beautiful of evening services, whose name means completion. 'The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end' are the beginning words, and we speak the responses quietly and gently. At the end, we leave in silence, with the words of the service having said all that needs to be said.

Then it is the Triduum, the three days that bring us to Easter, that last from the evening of Maundy Thursday to the dawn of Easter Day. Maundy Thursday is the day when we remember the Last Supper Jesus ate with his friends and we celebrate it through communion together and through the act of washing of feet, as a reminder of the greatest commandment, that we should love each other as Christ has loved us. But this service does not end

with the usual blessing and departure. After communion, we listen to psalms, including psalm 22 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?', while the church is cleared of decoration, and the altar left empty and the candles extinguished. Then we sit in silence, in the almost darkness, until midnight, when we leave, having watched for as long as we could alongside our Lord.

Good Friday sees several acts of worship: a service suitable for all ages as we think about what this day means; the incredibly powerful walk of witness as we gather together as Churches in Tring to walk down the High Street carrying the cross as a public act of witness; and gathering in the churchyard to worship; then in the church for hot cross buns and coffee. Then there are services where crosses are raised outside village churches, services that are an hour at the foot of the cross, that are the

Stations of the Cross. The evening sees worship where candles are extinguished and a cross is wrapped in white cloth, to symbolize Christ in the tomb.

Then we wait.

Holy Saturday sees much preparation – flowers, cleaning, getting ready, and no formal worship.

Easter Sunday begins with the Dawn Service – the lighting of a new fire and the Easter candle. It begins outside and, as the dawn brightens in the east, we hear again how those who loved him saw the risen Christ – Alleluia! He is risen!

It is the most important week in the Christian Church's year and one of the most meaningful and moving in terms of acts of worship.

I hope and pray that your Holy Week and Easter worship this year, whatever form it takes, is one that is full of joy and hope.

Jane Banister, Tring Team

Piano & more series *An hour of music on Sunday afternoons*

Anna Le Hair Piano
A recital for springtime

Sunday 16th April
at 3pm

followed by tea and refreshments

Tring Parish Church HP23 5AE
Free admission, with retiring collection

For further details see:
piano-and-more.org.uk
or Google "Piano and more, Tring"



Chicks and other Easter stories!



No matter how many times I have seen calves, lambs, piglets etc. born, it never loses its magic. I should also say I have been just as delighted with the arrival of my children and grandchildren!

However, at this time of year we think of eggs and hatching them, either in an incubator or naturally. Our youngest, William, took this to a whole new level from a very early age; so much so that after a while he didn't need pocket money, as he was doing very well, thank you, selling eggs and poultry of various ages! The breeds also varied, from tiny quail to turkeys, with a great many others in between. Now, despite living in a house with a garden instead of our farm, he has bought two emu eggs!

Easter is also a time when we think of new life with the vast selection of chocolate eggs, pictures of bunnies and chicks; but, of course, the deeper meaning is surely the resurrection of Christ and the new life this provides for us all because of his sacrifice on the cross.

My faith and church are very important to me and there are always many of God's gifts around us to marvel at, especially when you are involved in farm life. Nature is amazing and usually has a way of triumphing in the end.

Whilst mindful of the true meaning of Easter, I thought I would write about

some of the more amusing events which have happened to our family over the years. Farming has given us the opportunity to see all forms of life – and death – at first hand. A farming relative of mine said, 'If you have livestock, there will be deadstock'. Cheerful stuff and hopefully not too many of the latter! It is also easier to teach children about them both, especially 'the birds and the bees'! Once we had a particularly bad lambing and later, at bathtime, Rebecca, who was barely 3, asked, 'Who pulled me out, mummy?!'

Soon after I moved into my late husband's farm in 1975, it was my stepson, David's, 9th birthday, with some school friends invited to his party. I was just about to call them in for tea when they appeared at the back door. Excellent you say; however, one of his friends was covered from neck to toe in slurry! The first job was to hose him down outside, then a bath and a change into some of David's clothes. Worse was to come, as later on I had to drive him home, introduce myself to his mother and hand over a bag of rather smelly clothes, along with an explanation. Thankfully all was well and whilst easy to laugh now, it shows how dangerous farms can be.

A couple of years later my two stepdaughters wanted a pony, so off we went to Exmoor, up the dreaded Porlock Hill with our old Land Rover and horse box. The trekking establishments there would loan you one along with tack, in exchange for feeding, exercising and looking after it for the winter. Unfortunately, by the time we arrived,

there were only a couple left, but we were loathe to go home empty handed. Still, they enjoyed the pony for the rest of the winter, though we discovered why it was not taken by others!

A little boy from Birmingham came to stay with us once, as part of a holiday scheme for deprived children. When he first saw John milking, he couldn't believe that milk came from cows! Conversely, one summer we were holidaying in a house in Wales and our then two youngest children waited every morning for the milkman, as they couldn't believe milk came in bottles!

Back to poultry, when William was about 4, he came running down the garden screaming. I couldn't understand why until he got closer and I could see one of our geese had his little leg in its beak!

As well as domestic poultry, we once hatched in the incubator some pheasant eggs John found abandoned in a field – exciting, yes, but not as much as borrowing a broody hen to hatch some we found in the garden. We had success, but once hatched they tried to escape from the pen and many of them succeeded. Poor William was hysterical and the poor hen was in a tizzy as well! Obviously instinct made the domestic fowl want to keep her chicks close, but the wild variety had to be free.

I could go on, but it has been very enjoyable remembering these stories and thinking how much we have to be thankful for.

Judith Weatherill
All Saints, Long Marston

Pancake races in Aldbury

A great time was had by all at the annual pancake races held in the churchyard of St John the Baptist Church in Aldbury.

The children, parents and teachers of Aldbury Church of England School then enjoyed some much welcomed refreshments and pancakes in the Chapter House. Well done, everyone,



for being a good sport, including the parents who also enjoyed getting involved. Thank you to all who organised and helped to make this such

a lovely and memorable event.

Victoria Sypko
St John the Baptist, Aldbury



Failing well



One of my Lent readings went like this: 'We all live with the consequences of failure. We fail to get jobs. We fail to be patient with our loved ones. We fail to do everything we say we're going to do in that flash of enthusiasm.'

'As individuals we might be aware of how we measure up against others, of relationships that have gone wrong, or of our bodies failing. On the news, we see failure on a global scale – conflict, famine, injustice, poverty.'

'Failure is the wallpaper of life. It hangs in the background, slowly building the scenery of our days. How can we live, surrounded as we are by failure? We can't shy away from it, or try and escape it, or live in constant fear of it. Otherwise, we'll live narrow lives, motivated by running away from failure rather than running towards full,

exciting, hopeful lives.

'So, failure. We'd better learn to live with it.'

Now, given that it was given as the reading for one day, I was rather disappointed (even apart from the failed grammar in it). If I had been a younger or less resilient person, or someone who had just suffered a huge feeling of failure in my life (rather than the many tiny failures that do indeed make up daily living!) I think I may have felt ready to throw in the towel. But it reminded me of an article the Headteacher of Tring School wrote for *Comment* many years ago, talking about the culture of success that young people grow up with today. Failing their driving test may be the first time some of them fail – and it can come hard.

It hurts when things go wrong for us and some of us may be better able to pick ourselves up than others. The more fortunate we are in life, the harder it can be when we fall. Others grow up with so many failures that they struggle to

have that hope that anything will ever be different for them. Michelle Grace talked last month in *Comment* about being blessed by God. Has God withdrawn his blessing if things go wrong? NO, and he promises his comfort and blessing when things DO go wrong. That's what I felt was missing from that daily reading. Why didn't it end by saying that God, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is there to meet our need and enable us to move beyond the pain and teach us compassion for others when they too experience that sense of failure?

The reading was based on 'Failure: What Jesus said about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up', The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2023, written by Bishop Emma Ineson and published by SPCK.

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

From Morte d'Arthur



An extract for this month from the giant of Victorian poetry, Alfred, Lord Tennyson. It is taken from his Idylls of the King, which

Tennyson based on the medieval romance of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. It is the dying speech of Arthur, spoken to Sir Bedivere, as he is taken to the lake into which Bedivere had finally brought him to throw the sword Excalibur. Written in blank verse, the extract shows Tennyson's skill as a stylist, with a gift for the sounds and cadences of words and phrases. There is an inescapable atmosphere of melancholy about it, typical of many Romantic poets. Many of his other poems show his strength in describing the natural world ('The Eagle' is a superb example of style matching subject matter in a poem), though he is not read much today, possibly because of the wordiness and sheer volume of his work.

Alfred Tennyson was born in 1809, the fourth of twelve children of a Norfolk clergyman. His upbringing, though described in contemporary books as in a 'quiet and secluded nest', was far from happy and Alfred took refuge in the local countryside and in writing poetry. His early education was divided between the local Grammar School and at home, where his father encouraged wide literary reading. He went up to Cambridge in 1827 but had to leave without taking a degree because of the financial troubles of his father. As a student he joined a group of young men interested in writing poetry. Among them was his friend Arthur Hallam, whose sudden death in 1833 affected Tennyson for the rest of his life and was the inspiration for his well-known work *In Memoriam*. He did not take kindly to adverse criticism and was always

*And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the soul.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou should'st never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God'.
Alfred Lord Tennyson, first draft 1834*

prone to depression. His work was much admired by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (he was made a Baron in 1884) and he held the post of Poet Laureate for forty-two years from 1850 until his death in 1892. He was buried in Poets Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Kate Banister
St Julian's, St Albans

Parish Church works update



Work to improve the drainage beneath St Peter & St Paul's Church continues with several phases of work, which started in late February.

To maintain access to the building, the work had to be undertaken in three phases, but despite this, it meant unfortunately that accessibility was somewhat restricted during different phases of the work. The main church door was available at all times, but not from all directions. You can see details on the diagram.

These works have been essential to help protect the church building from damage. The existing drainage was no longer functional and, at the last quinquennial survey, it was noted that rainwater was being discharged alongside the historic walls. The soft friable Totternhoe clunch, used as material for the walls, is vulnerable to water damage from constantly being soaked, so this work was very important to help preserve and maintain the building structure.

The work followed the urgent phase of work completed by the vestry in 2021

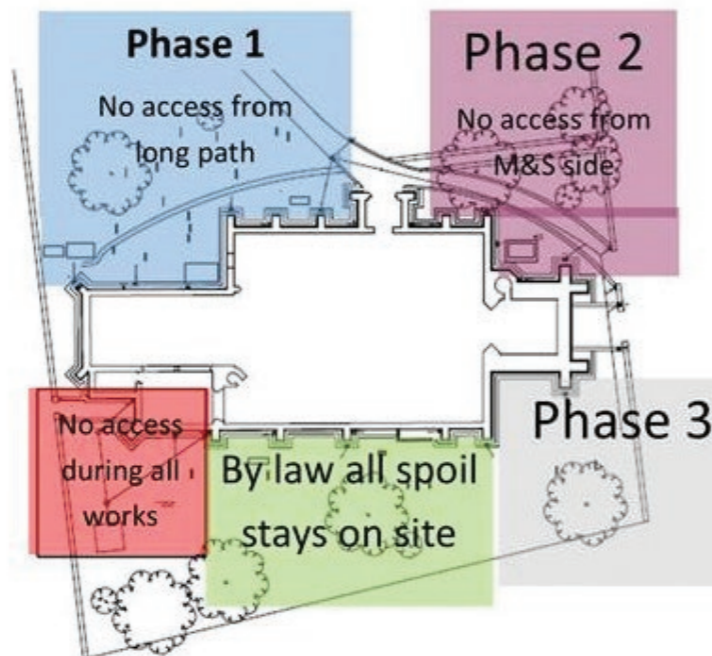
and is being undertaken in accordance with a faculty that has been granted by the diocese. This is a permissive right that is necessary to undertake works to a church building or its contents, a bit like a planning permission for churches.

Some of the conditions that were granted as part of the faculty required us to notify an appointed archaeologist if any remains were found. Remains have to be recorded and, if directly affected

by the works, are removed for reburial as close to the point of origin as possible. You can read more about that in Huw's article.

Legally, all the excavated materials (spoil) must stay on site. The contractor carefully stockpiled the arisings to avoid damage to existing trees and minimise impact on any other biodiverse features on site.

Andrew Kinsey, St Peter & St Paul



In conversation with our archaeologist



Many of you will have seen the diggers outside St Peter & St Paul's. We have needed to put in new drains. It has been important as we have worked

that there has been a banksman on duty (a person on the ground watching the digger bucket) and work stops immediately if there is any chance that we come across anything in the ground; then the archaeologist is called immediately.

On day two of the work, this happened. The workman saw some lead and work stopped until the archaeologist could inspect. It was the edge of a lead coffin, date unknown (without disturbing the coffin, and it is important not to if there is no good reason). It was surprisingly close to the surface, probably indicating that this was once a superstructure, now lost in the midst of time. It was obviously someone very wealthy (a lead coffin is not usual) and also the location so close to the church – as close to being buried inside the building as possible. It is a little piece of intrigue which shall never get answered.



It was, however, measured and recorded for the future.

It was fascinating talking to the archaeologist. He maybe has a unique view of history by studying the history which is not there for most of us to see. He is not a fan of headstones. For him, a churchyard should be a burial place for all to be reused again and again; and to introduce a permanent memorial goes against the grain for him. As he said, 'For ever is a very long time'.

For an archaeologist, the joy is discovering that which has been lost. He looked at the church and said 'This, too, will be gone one day'. It was a

challenging statement, but he is right. It is arrogant to believe that any human-made thing shall last for ever. Maybe he sees the world in a different way. I found it hugely liberating. The church building for me is always such a symbol of permanence and yet, at the beginning of Lent, as we put new drains into the churchyard, I was reminded of a profound truth: we are but dust and to dust we shall return. To think anything else is human arrogance. Only the love of God goes on for ever and no monument will ever live up to that.

**Huw Bellis
Tring Team**



An unusual Easter Gift



Our family always celebrated Easter in the 50s and 60s with greater joy than Christmas. At Easter, even the sky seemed to be in celebratory mood, with the warmer lighter days

illuminating gardens bursting with colourful life, in contrast with the cold, subdued Christmas earth.

The only downside for children was the wait till Easter Sunday services were over before we could open our Easter gifts – mostly chocolate, and later, join our grandparents for high tea with delicate sandwiches, Battenberg Cake, Maids of Honour and luxury biscuits.

My Easter in 1972 was very different, spent alone in the depths of Westminster Hospital SW1, on duty as the pathology Senior House Officer, a

training post that had looked and was attractive. An important part of the job was 'serving-up' blood products for next day's surgical lists, and occasionally doing more specialised transfusion tasks.

The call that came through from the children's wards early on Easter Sunday sounded urgent. An infant with leukaemia was in danger of catastrophic bleeding owing to a huge deficit of blood platelets.

We had been thoroughly briefed about emergency duties, and one of the resources was a yellow alphabetical ledger with the names and contact details of a panel of donors who were willing to attend at very short notice to donate their blood.

I hurried to this list of volunteers and then found the first suitable one, a gentleman called Mr Devine, whom I phoned and who arrived within the hour at the hospital entrance. We descended

to the transfusion department, and it was not difficult to obtain a unit from his arm. I thanked him and wished him a Happy Easter, which hopefully he enjoyed with his family after a couple of unscheduled hours getting to SW1.

The blood volume of infants is small, and transfusing all of his blood would have been risky. However, it didn't take long to centrifuge Mr Devine's blood and draw off the thin top layer containing the platelets. That same morning the precious platelets were infused into the infant and catastrophe was averted.

The episode was fifty years ago but the happy association between Easter and Giving, topped by such an apt name, has never left me. Gifts come in all forms, but this was truly life-sustaining, made all the more special by the aura surrounding the donor.

**Mike Sherratt
Corpus Christi**

Are we open to God showing us something new?



As always when studying the Bible in depth, one of the fascinating aspects about looking at the Beatitudes in the

Tring Team house groups during Lent has been translation. For example, would you say that 'happy' is the same as 'blessed'? Most of us seem to say no to that, but is that more about how the word happy in English has become devalued?

Meek is another word that can be translated in different ways when you

go back to look at the original – gentle, kind, slow to anger or humble are other meanings, and humble is a word that is very interesting. Most of us would like to be thought kind and slow to anger – do we want to be thought of as humble? Do we admit our lack of knowledge? Do we listen and learn from others? Are we open to God teaching us in unexpected ways and through unexpected people?

Nicodemus, who is a Pharisee, goes to Jesus in order to learn. He goes at night and on his own, as he is going against his fellow council members, but he wants to find out more from

Jesus. It can be our lack of humility that prevents us from growing in faith, and sometimes, like Nicodemus, we need to do something different, and that is not always easy.

*We come to meet you, Lord,
the keeper of our lives.
We come to hear you, Lord,
the wisdom in our lives.
We come to follow you, Lord,
the guider of our lives. Amen.*

Jane Banister
Tring Team

Music on a Sunday afternoon



Piano & More continues to be on the third Sunday of the month rather than the second in April and May. In April, I will be playing a recital of music

to celebrate Spring; and in May we welcome back George Salter, Penny Bradshaw and Kathron Sturrock, who are always wonderful.

Concerts return to the second Sunday from June, when we look forward to the return of Tring School musicians. We will continue throughout the rest of the year, and you can find

details of the upcoming concerts on the Piano & More website: www.piano-and-more.org.uk.

Thanks as ever to our wonderful tea team and stewards, who all give of their time. Concerts are free, but donations towards the church funds and the upkeep of the piano are appreciated.

Anna Le Hair, St Peter & St Paul

From war to wear

I want to share my story as someone who had to flee war-torn Ukraine and has now started a business selling high-quality bohemian clothing online from the UK.

My name is Maryna, and I am a Ukrainian national, currently living in Tring. I was forced to flee my home country with my two young children, leaving my husband and pet dog behind due to the conflict there.

Like many others, I have faced numerous challenges in starting a new life in a foreign land. However, I refused to let circumstances define me, and set out to create a new online fashion business <https://cafedelmarina.com>, to not only support myself and my family, but also bring joy to others.

Our mission is to offer you carefully selected items from small Ukrainian manufacturers. Sophisticated and bohemian, our clothes and accessories represent Ukrainian artisan traditions and timeless classics. Like pearl fishers, we are always looking for outstanding pieces of luxury quality at reasonable prices. Each piece is made from high-

quality materials and is designed to be comfortable and stylish. They are inspired by the vibrant patterns of traditional Ukrainian clothing and elements are incorporated into the designs to create a truly unique and eye-catching collection.

What's more, I'm committed to ethical and sustainable fashion. The clothing I sell not only looks beautiful, but, like me, is highly resilient too. It's made to last and be worn again and again. I believe that fashion should not only look good but also do good, and this philosophy is reflected in every aspect of my business.

Whilst I don't yet have a team – I currently do everything myself and run my business from home – I would love to collaborate with *Comment* readers to promote my online store and Instagram account to bring these beautiful garments to the public. Not only can you help me, it can continue to raise awareness of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Maryna Mashinska

Quiet Place

Need space to contemplate?

Pop in to
St Martha's Methodist Church

Chapel Street, Park Road, Tring

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



A welcome addition to Tring!

New Mill Baptist Church, Tring, was almost filled to capacity on Saturday 25 February for the induction of its new Minister, Reverend Jackie Buie.

Along with the regular congregation and friends were worshippers from other Tring churches, Mayor Christopher Townsend and a fantastic support from Gold Hill Baptist Church, Chalfont St Peter. Over 150 people celebrated the start of Jackie's ministry and heard about her time with Gold Hill from Reverend



Stephen Walker-Williams. He spoke highly of her contribution and spiritual strength as part of the church and the team.

Val Carr, New Mill Church Secretary, related a short history of the church and its search for a replacement for its previous minister, Andrew Openshaw. The church had welcomed Jackie and her husband, Andy, to preach on two occasions in 2022. The call to invite her to be the permanent minister was a unanimous (and enthusiastic) vote from the membership and friends of the church.

After the induction service, a cream tea was enjoyed by everyone, followed by Jackie cutting a huge cake. The mayor gave a short speech, acknowledging New Mill Baptist Church's commitment to serving the community in the area.

New Mill Baptist Church



Farewell to Alison!

Many *Comment* readers will know Alison Bickerton, who left Tring with her husband Alan in March this year. The plan is to move to a house in Hampshire where she will be nearer to her children and grandchildren.

Alison and Alan have been together in Tring for nearly 47 years and she has lived here for 50 years altogether. She briefly attended Bishop Wood School before it was Bishop Wood School, when she was Alison Franklin, and even knew the infamous Miss Baker. She moved on to Tring School for the first three years of secondary education and was in the same class as Mike Watkin.

Alison was involved in many Tring activities and gave her time to various charities while she lived here. She was a regular member of the Tuesday morning congregation at St Peter & St Paul's and a regular helper at the FOTCH Family Fun Day. The photo was taken at one of the lunches the 'Gardening Ladies' used to have before Covid-19, lockdowns, Prezzo and Chris Impey (far right) also moved away. Alison is second from the left,



between Margaret Oram and Jo Green.

Alison not only contributed to *Comment* herself, she also was a regular doer of the crossword supplied by David Gittins each month; I know she read the magazine thoroughly because she would often reference something she had read there!

Fifty years is a long time in one

place and a big chunk of anyone's life, but Alison is ready for the change, embracing the opportunity for new experiences and looking forward to making new friends. I am sure she will be a blessing to others, wherever she settles. All at *Comment* wish her well.

The Editor

WHY does FOTCH exist? What is it FOR?



Let's go back to the beginning
FOTCH – The Friends of Tring Church Heritage, to use its full title – was founded in the late 1980s at a time of great need. The church of St Peter & St Paul's in Tring was in a very perilous financial position with outgoings far exceeding its annual income and some considerable challenges in terms of urgent fabric repair.

Over a period of many months, we came up with a strategy which involved a tripartite model of financial support; a financial tripod with three strong legs.

Leg 1 – Mr Micawber's rule: ensure that annual income exceeds annual outgoings;
Leg 2 – Create a capital fund of sufficient size to deal with any sudden emergencies (say £50,000);
Leg 3 – create an external source of support and funding for serious emergencies and pre-emptive improvements'

The eureka moment was the realisation that, whilst the church community itself was active and inclined to be generous, this was obviously much smaller than the community of Tring as a whole. It was also pretty clear that St Peter & St Paul's Church – the marvellous building at the heart of Tring in its open green space – was valued far more widely than just by those who used the church for worship. Some study of this idea led to the realisation that whilst not everybody was a big supporter of the Church of England, almost everybody questioned was very positive about the value St Peter & St Paul in its green churchyard and what it added to life in Tring. Nobody wanted to see it demolished and replaced with a supermarket and carpark!

'What would happen if Tring lost its heart?'
Out of this realisation came the concept of Tring's green heart – the church at the heart of Tring.

Thus the idea of creating the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage as a charity, carefully separate from the church hierarchy and with an independent

constitution, was born. The launch concept was 'What would happen if your town lost its heart?' This theme became part of a series of launch events and house-to-house distributions (this was long before social media and the internet). It was warmly embraced by the community and membership blossomed.

During the 1990s, FOTCH became established and operated not only as a supporter of major reconstruction projects but also as the organiser of fundraising events. It was described by the then rector John Payne-Cook as 'not only a financial lifeline but the social / entertainment centre for the church'. In the first ten years or so, there were regular events ranging from Parish-wide parties to concerts and an early form of the Family Fun Day, all of which were designed to raise funds but also raise the profile of 'the Friends' within the town. We were greatly helped by Roland and Colin Stevens and Tring Choral Society with great musical performances. They helped us with a wide range of events but also sponsored awards for young people which led to a strong engagement with the schools. This eventually led to FOTCH becoming the sponsoring charity for Tring Learning Centre which was established in Tring School when that organisation had embraced a strategy of community involvement and use of its assets. That was a joint venture between FOTCH and the School and brought us wide engagement with young families.

During the 'Noughties' FOTCH's entertainment and activity programme operated at a very high level. In 2005 and 2008 we put on major pageants in the parish church which ran for two days and presented the history of Tring, with the involvement of a number of musical

organisations but also all the Tring schools. Throughout this period FOTCH regularly arranged dedicated fundraising events (often at Tring Park School) acquiring sponsorship from our local philanthropists.



Major Fundraisers involving a huge cast creating wide connections

Perhaps most importantly, FOTCH supported the improvements and updating of the fabric of the church building with a series of initiatives which helped to keep it in good order but also made it more accessible and useful to the whole community. These ranged from securing the stained glass windows from the occasional vandal attack to reconstructing the tower stairs; providing lighting, sound and projection systems; developing a whole series of Open Church leaflets and displays which are greatly valued by visitors, right through to supporting the fundraising for the North Wall project (a considerable reconstruction in our most vulnerable fabric area).

Over this period of time FOTCH donated over a third of a million pounds

and at the same time continued to increase its capital resource for long term security. This met the twin strategic aims of supporting the asset in the current time and building a bulwark for the future.

What is FOTCH for today?

That's the key question and the answer is very simple – FOTCH is really for the future. It is there to be the last bastion of support when all else runs out.

That brings us to the question of what would happen if FOTCH didn't exist. Things have changed over the last thirty-three years, and not necessarily for the better. Perhaps the main thing that has changed is that the need for an organisation like FOTCH has become not less but ever greater.

When we started out, the annual Parish Share or Quota (the amount we pay every year to the Diocese) was relatively small and affordable. Most parishes received a net benefit from central church funds.

Now the opposite is the case, and the parishes contribute more to the centre than they receive in clergy provision and other benefits. Given the central costs of the Church of England and their continuing deficit situation of cost exceeding income, this is unlikely to change any time soon.

The fact is that our churches have a decreasing level of support and perceived relevance within the community as a whole. They must do everything that they can to maintain their finances on an even keel and it becomes increasingly difficult to do that from within the core faith community. Thus the need for FOTCH is arguably greater today than when we started out.

'Stuff happens'

This much celebrated saying of another of our previous rectors, Frank Mercurio, is of course one of the fundamental truths of all existence – Stuff DOES happen – usually when you least want it. This firmly underlines the continuing need for FOTCH.

Stuff does happen and it will keep on happening and no parish is likely

to be able to stand alone on its own resources when really bad stuff happens. The fact that FOTCH is maintained as an independent charity with its own strategy for capital growth – drawing on support from the whole community of the town – remains vital for the wellbeing of the heart of Tring.

The Covid-19 era and the lockdown years are a good example of bad stuff that happens. One of the worst impacts of that has been that we have had fewer high profile events and our saliency and perceived value has suffered as a result. That is a challenge.

Getting OUT THERE – being RELEVANT to the new people of Tring

This is really our current challenge and what we need to focus all our energies on. Tring has grown and is growing and most of the new people have never heard of FOTCH – yet they value the unique character of the town and the special heart of Tring. Getting our message across that the heart needs their help to thrive and they can have an exciting and fun time helping that happen is vital.

After thirty-three years FOTCH is alive and well; but if it is to fulfil its purpose,

it needs to get more energy and support from a new and younger market. I believe that they will respond to the importance of keeping Tring's Green Heart at the centre of our town in good health.

More and more people are isolated and lonely and many do not feel they really belong or are valued. FOTCH is there for the whole community to enjoy. Offering events and activities that anyone can join in with and feel they are making a contribution to helps everyone share a good feeling about life in our town.

What is FOTCH For? Making the good stuff happen! Let's DO IT TOGETHER

Which brings me to the key message for everyone in our town who enjoys a good day out and a real community celebration. Last year our May event of the Family Fun Day was our most successful, best-attended event. It is not just a fund-raiser but is primarily a day when FOTCH welcomes everyone in our community to get together and enjoy the fun of a proper family day out in the heart of Tring. This year the date is a little later (due to the Coronation) and is on 20 May. It has become a real festival of family fun with the opportunity for Teddies (and

other soft toys) to take a thrilling trip from the tower and earn their Certificate of Bravery. Lots of good stuff happens all day long. There are Tower Tours, a traditional Bouncy Castle Slide, lots of stalls and activities in the churchyard and an all-day programme of musical entertainment in the church. There are refreshments in the church, a wonderful barbecue at lunch-time, a Tring Brewery Bar, traditional candy-floss, tombolas, raffles and displays – including the chance to ascend the tower and visit the Bell-Chamber... A veritable feast of family fun! Do come along, bring all your friends enjoy the fun whilst supporting the heart of our community.

See the initial details on the poster. FOTCH is all about making the good stuff happen and dealing with the bad stuff whenever it threatens us.

Grahame Senior
FOTCH Hon President



Family Fun Day Poster for Current Year

Minority views in conflict



At the end of February, the conflict in Israel and Palestine was taking turns for the worse. What would that mean for participants in Musalaha's groups, seeking

to build bridges across the divide? Such people are easily seen by their community as working with the 'enemy'. They are reluctant to join in with their community's condemnations and more ready to make sense of the 'other'.

Last year, during a Desert Encounter with women from both sides, a Palestinian woman heard that her son had been killed by the Israeli army. This presented a situation in which both leaders and members had to work out how to respond on the spot. I had never read of such timing in previous years. Think also of the Jewish lady I mentioned in February who had had 1948 tattooed on her forearm, as her recognition of Palestinian suffering, recalling the Holocaust.

When the conflict worsens from time to time, the community tends to put great pressure on members who 'fraternise' with the enemy. I think you can easily imagine this.

Holding minority views can be tricky – very tricky. Jesus held minority views that even his closest disciples had almost no clue about until well after the resurrection. God has a different way of operating power. People in Musalaha's groups face some aspects of community life that are like those that Jesus faced.

There are leaders who have responded with Jesus-like patience over decades. There are others who are thinking and learning. And yet others who will step back.

Let's pray for the people of Israel and Palestine in these days, especially those in Musalaha's groups. There is much we can learn from them and schemes to teach people like us are being developed.

Incidentally, there is research that shows that when 5% of a community is convinced, they can influence the behaviour of the whole community – and that it works best when the 5% are volunteers!

Colin Briant
High Street Baptist Church

The account above is derived from the news and Musalaha's Jerusalem website <https://musalaha.org>
See: About Musalaha – Newsletters – January & February 2023
UK-based website <https://musalaha.uk>
For a Tring perspective email Colin or Janet Briant
colin.briant@hotmail.com



The property known as...



I like things to be tidy, organised, listed and labelled, especially paperwork; which is why I recently spent a day sorting through all the legal documents relating to our property in Beaconsfield Road. There are quite a lot, but putting them in date order meant I had to read them, and some proved very interesting, albeit challenging to understand.

For many years the plot was a builders' yard, which is why the houses on either side are considerably older, built in the early 1930s, whilst ours was built in 1956. The land for many of these properties originally belonged to the church, specifically Oxford Cathedral.

The oldest document we have is dated 1920 and it details an exchange of property between the cathedral and the owner of Pendley Manor. It covers three large sheets of paper and is written in old legal language, with no punctuation, and with many words abbreviated – partly means particularly, descd is described, premis is premises. The word 'and' is seldom used, nearly always replaced by '&'. The document is entitled:

'1920 Abstract of the Title of J.G. Williams Esq. to a piece of land in Beaconsfield Road Tring in the County of Hertford.'

12 August 1884 BY INDRE of this date made between The DEAN & CHAPTER of the CATHEDRAL CHURCH of CHRIST in Oxford of Foundation of King Henry V111 of 1st part JOSEPH GROUT WILLIAMS of Pendley Manor nr. Tring in Coy. of Herts Esq. of 2nd part and CLEMENT UPPERTON of No.52 Lincoln Inn Fields in Coy.of Middlx Esq of 3rd part'

An Abstract of Title is a chronological list of ownership of land or premises. An Indre is a word taken from medieval English meaning 'indenture of retainer', a legal contract between two parties, written in duplicate on the same sheet of paper/parchment, with the two copies separated by cutting a jagged line (hence indenture) so that the teeth of the two parts could later be refitted

to confirm authenticity. It was used from the 13th century, initially for military service, and later for land and buildings.

Dean and Chapter is self-explanatory. Mr Clement Upperton, as far as we can ascertain, was a solicitor. Joseph Grout Williams, born in 1849, was the builder of the 'new' Pendley Manor. His mother was the niece and heir of the tenant of Tring Park, a gentleman called Joseph Grout. She was married to a Revd James Williams, who succeeded to the tenancy of Tring Park in 1852, and Joseph Grout was their third child. J.G. Williams became a successful landowner in his own right and in 1872 took the opportunity to buy the Manor of Pendley. The original medieval manor house had been abandoned in the early 1830s, as the owner refused to live adjacent to the newly built railway and it subsequently burnt down in 1835. Joseph Grout Williams had a new manor constructed and moved his family there in 1875. He then turned his attention to other land holdings, and the document continues:

'Reciting that sd Dean & Chapter were seised in fee simple of lands and hereditis partly dscrd or referred to in 1st Schedule'. ('Seised' means total freehold with hereditary ownership.) By an order 9 April 1884 made by Land Commissioners for England – a statement has been submitted by Dean & Chapter for an exchange of certain lands and premis belonging to Dean & Chapter known as Gubblecote Farm situate and being in Hamlet of Wilstone in Parish of Tring and in Parish of Long Marston in Coy of Hertford and certain lands hereditis and premis sited in Parish of Tring and forming Inproprate Rectory of Tring also belonging to Dean & Chapter said premis contd in whole 283a 2r 1p TOGETHER with Rectory of Manor of Tring comprised of land and premis for certain lands hereditis and premis then belonging to J. G. Williams being part of a farm known as Pitchcote Manor Farm in Coy of Buckingham and certain lands in the Parish of Long Marston contd in whole 360a 2r 22p.'

This is all one sentence! The 'a' is acres, the 'r' is rods, and the 'p' is poles, but to make sense of it, the most important word is 'for' (my highlights). At this time, 1884, Wilstone did not have a church and when St Cross was

built in 1877 it became a curacy of the Tring parish, whilst Long Marston had become a completely separate parish in 1871. The Manor of Pitchcote (near Oving/Winslow) appears to have been in joint ownership, some land already belonging to the Dean and Chapter of Oxford and some to J.G. Williams, so the exchange makes sense for both parties. After further preamble the document concludes:

'Upon exchange of sd premis the trusts and purposes of sd premis should be conveyed to Dean & Chapter, four annual payments or augmentations for the benefit of certain Ecclesiastical benefices or cures of (1) £200 stipend to minister or curate of Tring (2) £6 to curate of Long Marston (3) £1 6s 8d pension to Parson of Marsworth (4) £3 pension to Parsons of Aldbury.'

The Dean and Chapter were keen to point out that none of them was individually or personally liable for these payments!

It has long been assumed that Christchurch Road in Tring was so named because of the connections to Oxford, and Joseph Grout Williams' name appears on several more documents relating to our property. The land he owned in Beaconsfield Road, just under 7 acres, was divided into plots and sold on 3 March 1920 to Mr William Horne, a local builder. The building company subsequently passed to his son, Sidney Horne, and knowing my parents wanted a home in Tring, he offered them the plot of land that was his builders yard, if he could build the house to 'use up' all his leftover materials prior to his retirement. What he didn't use up he left, buried in the back garden under the 'lawn'.

The house may not win any prizes for design but at least the property has a history, an ecclesiastical one linking it to a cathedral 'of foundation of King Henry V111', even if the lawn is not, and never will be, up to the standard of Oxford University quads. Nor is it very likely that any of our descendants will name one of their sons Grout, not a name that is destined to be among the top ten most popular boys' names.

What does the abbreviation 'thrinar' mean? Answer: thereafter.
Alison Cockerill, St Cross, Wilstone

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Spinning faster



Do you ever feel that the earth is spinning faster; that after waking on Monday morning, Tuesday or Wednesday, it's suddenly the weekend? So do I.

You might assume I live in the fast lane: sports cars, wine and men. But, no. I do have Roy by my side, an eleven-year-old Honda and a bottle of sherry in the sideboard. Hardly fast living – so why then does time go so fast?

I am busy, that's true, driven in some ways to paint and write about the world as I see it, but in all my works, I am much slower than I used to be. Why that made me think of the time of Jesus, I don't know. I suppose I have always thought that not having technology, cars and labour-saving devices would have slowed that time down, but the more I think of it, I doubt it. Journeys and communications and just LIVING would have been labour-intensive.

I imagine Jesus' life as a refugee in Egypt, a different language and culture from his parents. Did the family cluster

together with others from their region as most refugees do, until Herod died and they could return home? There is a lot we don't know, but when we look on this world of ours, and we see the pain of the Ukrainians, their need for safety against the desperation of leaving home, we can glean a little of what Jesus' family went through 2000 years ago. Did that experience help Christ in his later ministry? A child absorbs so much of what's around them and learns. Kindness and love are universal traits in all people, despite language and culture.

But back to the spinning globe, three years is not a lot of time for his ministry. From the Sermon on the Mount, when his followers heard kindness and love being taught, to the months later when the crowds turned on him, betrayed him to the Romans, shouting for Barabbas to be freed instead of him. Although he knew it was part of a master plan, Jesus must have felt disillusioned and very alone. He was also human after all.

That brings me to another point in my thought process (forgive me for being long winded). I have two different images in my mind's eye of Christ. There is the supernatural being, powerful in all of God's gifts. After all, he could bring the

dead back to life, heal the blind and make the lame walk, and much, much more.

Then there is the image of a driven man, seeking to complete the mission he was given from God; a person who got hungry, who felt the cold. If he stubbed his toes, wouldn't he have leapt with pain? If he cut himself, wouldn't he have bled? He felt sadness and wept with grief when he heard of the death of Lazarus but he also knew joy. Did the world spin faster than he wanted it, too? Did he want to linger longer in the bosom of his friends? Did he wonder how much more he could do, if only he had the time? Human questions.

It is all so complex, but his teachings were about love – that's the bottom line. His sacrifice was love-based, for us (our salvation) and for God the father (God's mission to his people). Three years is a short time, just a few spins of the globe in the span of time: a bit like my week. Except it's not three years, is it? Nearly two thousand years and his promise is still as good now as it was when he made it.

'I will be with you always, to the end of the age.'

Brenda Hurley
St Peter & St Paul

What to do on a sabbatical



Just after Easter I will be taking a sabbatical. It is hard to believe that it is eleven years since I had the privilege of walking some of the Camino de Santiago pilgrim route across Northern Spain.

I have yet to decide what to do this time. Maybe back to do a little more of the Camino or maybe focus on pilgrimages on these islands. There are some amazing places here. Recently Bardsey Island has been designated as a 'dark skies' location. Tourists now travel for the night sky.

Centuries ago, pilgrims in their thousands were finding their way to Bardsey Island, drawn there by stories of the special peace to be found at the edge of the western world

– drawn to the place of the setting sun, with only the vast ocean between them and the unknown. 1,500 years ago, St Cadfan had founded a Christian community there. In the Middle Ages, two pilgrimages to Bardsey were considered as good as one to Rome; and that sense of a sacred place draws pilgrims there still. The pilgrim route to Bardsey travels through Snowdonia

and along the Llyn peninsula coast. The boat to Bardsey leaves from Aberdaron. It is here that R.S. Thomas finished his ministry. I look forward to planning what to do and telling you when I get back. It may or may not include Spain or Bardsey.

Huw Bellis
Tring Team



A day of
Centring Prayer

Developing tools for your Prayer Toolbox

Reverend Canon Alan Hodgetts will lead a practical day exploring centring prayer through the lens of Philippians 2. What does it mean to have the mind of Christ?

Puttenham, Saturday April 22nd, 10 am - 3 pm £10

Booking essential; www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events

Spring Concert

St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Tring

Saturday 29th April, 2023 @ 7.30pm

The Ridgeway Chorale

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Alexander Ardakov

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St Martha's Church
Chapel Street, Tring HP23 6BP
Tel: 01442 822305 E-mail: berdinner@gmail.com

Frederick Chopin (1810-1849)
Nocturne in C sharp minor op Posth.
Nocturne in D flat major op 27 no 2
Mazurka in G minor op 24 no 1
Mazurka in C major op 24 no 2
Mazurka in A flat major op 24 no 3
Mazurka in B flat minor op 24 no 4
Mazurka in E C sharp op 41 no 1
Mazurka in E C sharp op 63 no 3
Ballade no 1 in G minor op 23
Waltz in B minor op 69 no 2
Waltz in C sharp minor op 64 no 2
Scherzo no 2 in B flat minor op 31

Interval

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)
Melodie op 3 no 3
Elegie op 3 no 1
Polichinelle op 3 no 4
Ten Preludes
Op 3 No 2 in C sharp minor
Op 23 No 1 in F sharp minor
Op 23 No 3 in D minor
Op 23 No 4 in D major
Op 23 No 5 in G minor (alla marcia)
Op 32 No 5 in G major
Op 32 No 12 in G sharp minor
Op 23 No 6 in E flat major
Op 32 No 10 in B minor
Op 23 No 2 in B flat major

Born in Samara, Russia, Alexander Ardakov studied under the renowned pianist and professor Vera Gornostaeva at Moscow Conservatoire. Upon graduating, he joined the Moscow State Philharmonia as a performer. Alexander won prizes at the Kabalevsky Piano Competition in Russia and the Viotti International Music Competition in Vercelli, Italy. Moving to Britain and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, where he has been teaching since 1991, have helped him develop as an international recitalist of exceptional versatility and musical integrity. Alexander has made notable radio recordings for BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. His extensive discography consists of 20 different CD albums. Among them is a remarkable recording of Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson. Alexander has given recitals at the Bösendorfer Hall in Vienna, Southbank Centre, Wigmore Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields and St John's Smith Square in London, Carnegie Hall in New York, Gastleg and Carl-Otto-Saal in Munich, Bersaroya Hall in Seattle, and Herbst Theatre in San Francisco. He frequently gives masterclasses in the UK and abroad.

Tickets: £15

Protecting the environment of Tring



Seeking to make Tring pesticide free

Last year Tring was one of the first towns in the UK to be awarded Bee-Friendly Town status.

This award followed a campaign, led by the Justice & Peace Group, and joint efforts in practical action by individuals, churches, schools and other organisations in Tring.

Late last year one Tring resident emailed me to say that last October she had seen a man with a backpack spraying herbicide along Beaconsfield Road. On enquiry she learned that he was spraying glyphosate, a poplar weedkiller. She remarked that as she knew this chemical had an adverse effect on bees, this didn't seem to fit well with our status as a bee-friendly town.

On looking into the matter further, I noticed that as well as having been found to affect honeybees, bumblebees and beetles, the herbicide has reportedly been found to have adverse effects on human health. Glyphosate in fact has recently been declared a probable human carcinogen by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Justice & Peace Group do not believe that glyphosate should be used on the streets of Tring and certainly not in areas that are frequented by children, such as parks, playgrounds and schools. Children are one of the groups most vulnerable to the harmful effects of pesticide exposure and as such we all have a duty to protect them.

So, what can be done? As a first step, the Justice & Peace Group has written to town, borough and county councillors. We are asking that all three should consider working towards



stopping the use of all pesticides, not just glyphosate, in areas under their control. Safe, effective alternatives to pesticides are available and these should be at the forefront of the Councils' thinking for dealing with unwanted weeds and pests.

Other methods of weed control that could be tried are:

Manual weeding – manual (or hand) weeding can be used to control annual and perennial weeds, with its limitations being expense and availability of labour;

Burning – burning (or flame) weed control involves passing a flame over a weed, with the goal being not to burn up the plant but to destroy its tissue so the weed dies;

Hot water – the heat from the water collapses the plant's cell structure, making the weeds easier to pull out of the ground;

Strimming – otherwise known as weed whacking, a traditional, manual form of pulling weeds out of the ground;

Foamstream – using this commercially available product, which according to the website weedingtech.com/weed-moss-control/ 'effectively controls unwanted vegetation by using the heat in hot water, insulated by a biodegradable foam blanket'. According to an announcement beforehand Surrey County Council were to start a week-long trial of Foamstream on 14 June 2021 along the kerbs of roads in Dormansland, Tandridge. The works were to be carried out by Wealdens, one of Surrey's approved Countryside contractors, under the supervision of the Local Area Highway Office;

Ebiotic herbicides – made with ingredients extracted directly from plants or animals, or microbial synthesis e.g. vinegar, as opposed to being produced synthetically.

A useful publication 'Alternative Methods in Weed Management to the Use of Glyphosate and Other Herbicides' is available on the Pesticide Action Network website: https://www.pan-uk.org/resources/#pesticide_alternatives

The Justice & Peace Group has already had some response to its lobbying of councillors. We now know that no pesticides are used by the Town Council on property owned and maintained by the Council, including the Pond Close playground, known as 'Spider Park'. The position regarding allotments owned by the Council,



however, is not so clear as each plot holder, it seems, is free to choose what method of pest control they use. The majority of green areas including children's parks within Tring, however, including Pound Meadow and the Memorial Gardens, are owned by Dacorum Borough Council and so the Town Council has little influence on how they are managed.

There is clear evidence and good examples from around the world that the pesticide-free approach is both achievable and effective and that it is reducing the exposure of millions of citizens around the world (and, of course, wildlife too) to the potentially harmful effects of pesticides. So let us hope that in due course we will be able proudly to say that Tring is pesticide free!



Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill

In January 2023 some of us in the Justice & Peace Group had an online meeting with our MP Mr Gagan Mohindra regarding the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill which proposes sunseting over 3700 pieces of retained EU legislation on 31 December 2023, unless, before then, a departmental review proposes retention of, or changes to the legislation, or delays the sunset until 2026. (Sunsetting means that the laws would automatically cease then.)

We concentrated in our meeting on those laws affecting the environment and subsequently, at Mr Mohindra's request, emailed a list of twenty of those Regulations etc. we thought particularly important for the UK's environmental protection and asked him to let us know which will be at least temporarily retained beyond the end of this year and, of those, which are to be scrapped, and what is planned to replace them. Our MP's reply is awaited.

There is a massive amount of legislation that might just vanish when the sunset clause takes effect. One such piece of environmental legislation is the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitats Regulations). The Habitats Regulations require the compilation and maintenance of a register of European sites which form a network termed 'Natura 2000'. This includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which are designated because of their importance for specific habitats or species. The regulations require competent authorities (in our case Dacorum Borough Council) only to allow new projects (e.g. individual developments seeking planning permission) or plans (e.g. local plans) having first ascertained that they will not adversely affect the integrity of a 2000 site. Our nearest SAC is the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC which includes the Ashridge Commons and Woods Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

and also the Tring Woodlands Site of Special Scientific Interest. This combination of SSSI designation and designation as an SAC (or Special Protection Area which is designated for the protection of birds) is currently the best protection for wildlife sites from development or inappropriate land use that we have. Yet the Retained EU Law Bill includes powers to change the Habitats Regulations with scarcely any scrutiny by parliament.

Our MP is, of course, there to represent us, and if any reader of this article contacts him to seek his help in, at the very least, delaying the sunset clause until 2026, that will add weight to the representations already made.

I am very conscious that we share this world with other forms of life and that as such we have an obligation to take care

of them as well as ourselves.

Michael Demidecki
Justice & Peace Group
Affiliated to Churches Together in Tring
www.justiceandpeacetring.org



And so he calls you

Inspired by words in 1 Samuel 3:3-10 and John 20:1-16

Listen – for He is calling
Down, down through the passages of time.
Do you know me?
Will you know me?
Hear me call you, for I know your name.

Listen – for I am calling.
See your name entwined in scars seared
Into the palms of my hands.

Listen – as the sheen of raindrops
Silently flow down the green grass blades
Crushed to nothing by heavy-hearted and careless footsteps.

Listen – as the anguished cry pierces the darkness,
Ripping, shattering the deep silent stillness.
Passion flares but the quiet of the garden rests, waiting.

Listen – in the peace of the garden, still, so still.
Sun stealthily rising, heat burning fiercely.
Life awakening as birds raise their song for the day.

Listen – to the silent sound of weeping.
Tears mingling as dew drips to the ground.
Listen – for I call you, precious one to me.

Listen – as the rush of fear strikes heart and mind.
Terror overwhelming and sorrow descending.
Yet calm, so calm, now He comes.

Listen – as the shadows of uncertainty flee and fade away.
Listen – as He speaks your name.

Know Him then in the still and silent garden.
Know Him now in the fire of living.
Know Him when in the inevitable dying
Peace falls on you as He finally calls you.
Rest with Him in the still quiet garden.
Listen – through the silence
And know – He will call your name.

Sue Yeomans
St John the Baptist, Aldbury



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Tweet of the month



Recently I decided I needed to buy a small, lightweight telescope that would be useful abroad and at home when my heavier telescope and tripod weren't needed.

Some research narrowed it down to two possibilities which a shop in Norfolk happened to sell. So, I decided I'd combine a trip birdwatching with comparing telescopes and purchasing one of them. Well, it would be rude not to, to be honest! So, when a friend happened to mention that she wanted to go to Norfolk to see Shore Larks, I suggested a joint trip. I also mentioned we could see Lapland Buntings – another scarce winter visitor. A mutual friend said she was also interested in joining us, as she had not conclusively seen Lapland Bunting before. So, a few days later, the three of us headed to Norfolk.

Suffice it to say we had a great day, described as unforgettable by one of my friends. We saw the Shore Larks, many other good birds, and the Lapland Buntings. The Lapland Buntings had been described as elusive and were small birds in a large ploughed field. I have a positive mental attitude when it comes to looking for birds and basically I think if the birds are there, then I can

find them. Being cautious though, I allowed two hours on the car parking ticket, just in case they were really elusive. In the end it took about five minutes of searching for me to find one and then after that we saw at least five, and although they were distant, the telescopes allowed us to enjoy them and we and other people there went away happy. I did look at them a bit through the telescope, but after I located an individual I would let the others enjoy their first sightings of these beautiful birds.

Since seeing my first Lapland Bunting, almost forty years ago, I have seen them on fifty days, totalling over 100 birds. From the Isles of Scilly to Shetland to Kent and Norfolk – virtually the corners of Britain. They have always been a scarce wintering bird in Britain and breed in the extreme north of the Northern Hemisphere. The birds that winter here are thought to come from Greenland, and probably Scandinavia, and numbers fluctuate from year to year, but the trend seems to be downward unfortunately. The breeding males are stunning, but it is a very attractive bird in all plumages, as this photo of a juvenile demonstrates. It is a close-run race between this and Snow Bunting as to which is the northernmost breeding passerine (songbird) in the world; best to call it an honourable draw, I think.



Seeing my first Lapland Bunting was a joyous occasion similar to recognising Jesus as the Son of God for the first time. To be clear, as an experience, the former is nothing like as profound, life-changing and important as the latter, but every time I see a Lapland Bunting it brings a smile to my face; much like every time I am reminded that Jesus is the Son of God and living proof of God's love for us all – that brings a smile to my face. I am sure we all have those things that do this: maybe a beautiful sunrise or a smile from someone you love or whatever it is, just remember God's love really caused that smile – either directly or indirectly.

Roy Hargreaves
St Peter & St Paul

Stephen Hearn

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A job well done



A while ago I had the joy of spending time with one of our granddaughters when she was not well enough to go out with the rest of the family. This part of the family has been brought up to think deeply about their faith and follow the teachings of the Bible. We were talking about faith when she said 'I think the most important words in the Bible are: "It is finished"'. She was, of course, referring to Jesus' words from the cross just before he bowed his head and died (John 19:30).

Her words made me think a lot. Here we have the words of Christ, totally

submissive to the will of God, his father. He has completed the sacrifice to redeem us so that we may contemplate the resurrection: a job well done.

How often do we dwell on the teaching words of Jesus and try to integrate them into the way we live our lives? How often do we get distracted, fall short of what we would like to be for Christ? How often do we fully accept that through Jesus' sacrifice, our sins are really forgiven?

We were given a calendar this year which has a thought for each day. This week one of the thoughts was 'Five things to remember about your past'. These included that our past no longer exists, it does not define us, it can only serve as a teacher, and it doesn't hinder our future. There is also the

comment that our past deserves love and understanding. There is something of the essence of the Easter story here. Throughout our past, in the present and in the future, God's love and understanding is there, and because of Christ's redeeming love, our future is not hindered by what we have been. It is time to go back to the teachings of Christ, to be open to the job he wants us to do and to pray that we may do that job well. There is the joy and promise of heaven at the end of the road.

'Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won.'

Jill Smith
St Peter & St Paul

Endings?



Last autumn I wrote an article entitled Beginnings; this spring my subject is Endings, with a question mark. Is Easter really about endings? All

four Evangelists end their Gospels with distinctive versions of the Easter event. Their books end, but, of course, the story goes on. So, is 'Endings' a fair title? Certainly, Easter is the climax of the Christian year, yet it is both an ending and a beginning. Easter Day to Pentecost, the great fifty days, take us from the ending of Christ's earthly ministry to the beginning of the ministry of his church, his body.

But as with beginnings, so with their endings, the Gospel writers have very different ideas about what we need to know about the 'ending of Jesus' earthly life'; their descriptions of the Resurrection appearances differ. Where should a Gospel end? How much do we need to be told, bearing in mind all four Gospels were written for believers by believers. Here we should perhaps bring in St Paul whose list of Resurrection appearances was written decades earlier. Further, his is a list which differs in some respects. Paul tells us (writing to the Corinthians) that Jesus was raised on the third day and appeared to Cephas, to the Twelve, to 500 brothers, to James and the Apostles, and finally to Paul himself.

To sum up the different approaches, starting with Mark as the earliest, we immediately find there are questions as to where he actually finished, of which more later.

Matthew ends on the mountain with the eleven disciples, but there is no mention of the Ascension. Rather, there is the great Commission to teach and baptise all nations, and, with this, there is the assurance of Christ's perpetual presence. Luke also tells of the Commission but with an instruction to wait until clothed with power, i.e. the Descent of the Holy Spirit. Before that, there is the account of the Ascension and this is repeated in Luke's second book, the Acts of the Apostles, and leads to the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, resulting in the good news spread from Jerusalem to Rome via various places.

All of this takes twenty-eight chapters.

John, on the other hand, ends his book, apparently, with the appearance to Thomas and his confession of faith 'My Lord and my God' and includes a blessing of all those who believe without seeing the risen Lord (that is, us). The last verse of chapter 20 reads like an ending but then comes chapter 21 to give us more appearances of the Risen Lord – by the Sea of Tiberias with the miraculous catch of fishes, which is described as 'the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples'. After this Simon Peter is told to feed Christ's sheep. Then, finally, one might say, the writer tells us a lot more could be said but 'the world itself could not contain the books that would be written'.

So we have a number of references to Easter appearances from different writers and some of them, it has to be said, are difficult to make into one consecutive narrative. Having referred to the different accounts of the Eastertide appearances, we can turn back to the problem of Mark's ending. If you turn to your Authorised Version (King James) of the Bible you will find chapter 16 has twenty verses and then 'Amen'. If, however, you turn to the New Revised Standard Version, you will find the chapter ends at verse 8 with the words 'they were afraid'. Then comes 'The Shorter Ending' with double brackets and no verse numbers but with the concluding words 'Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation'. These words are followed by 'The Longer Ending of Mark', numbered verses 9-20 in our versions, after which comes this note in italics 'other ancient authorities add other words'; but clearly the old manuscripts ended abruptly at verse 8 with the women being afraid. What is or should be the real ending?

Did Mark really plan such an abrupt end? Was there a final page or so that was lost? Was

Mark prevented from finishing by illness, arrest, accident or what? Or did he intend to end with the women running away in fear because everybody knew Jesus had indeed risen from the dead? We can only speculate. Do we find the abrupt ending dramatic, unsuitable, enigmatic, regrettable or what? The longer ending tells us of the appearance to Mary Magdalene, to the two on the way to Emmaus, the commission to preach, and also tells us that Christians will be able to survive prison and snakes (this last has been taken too literally by an American sect!). Finally, mention is made of the Ascension and the Lord working with signs through his followers. It is a reasonable, fuller ending but is not found in the earliest and best manuscripts. It is clearly interesting to compare and contrast beginnings and endings, to read what Matthew, Mark, Luke and John with Paul tell us about Easter.

The fourth Gospel tells us the world would not contain the books that would be written about these things. It is perhaps an exaggeration, but much has been and is still written about Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Man, Son of God, his birth, life, death and resurrection and is still being written. In many ways the spirit of the book Ecclesiastes is very different from the Gospels and Epistles and yet how true are his words: 'Of many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness to the flesh'.

Yet, what better than to study the Scriptures and to read improving publications such as *Comment!*

Martin Banister
St Albans Cathedral

That ending made me smile! Ed

Jane Ducklin
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From Tring to Seoul for a Jamboree!



In August, I'm going to South Korea as part of the World Scout Jamboree – an event where 50,000 scouts from across the globe all go together in

what is, essentially, a massive scout camp! We will be doing activities, meeting each other, and generally having a good time!

There will be scouts from across the planet attending. In the UK contingent, scouts are selected from each district by a selection committee. For West Hertfordshire, that included a written application, and then a hike and some team-building exercises, as well as an interview with the district commissioner, where we were assessed on suitability. The selection weekend was held in January last year, so I found out I was successful just over a year ago.

I will be going to South Korea with my unit. The UK contingent is split into lots of units of thirty-six people, and I am in Unit 24. We will all be camping together and working together in the Jamboree. We have had monthly training weekends as a unit where we have been getting to know each other and practised working together for the Jamboree.

We have done a wide range of activities – everything from a day of artistry in May to a massive fundraising event in June and a day challenge around London in October. Everything we do is roughly themed on scouting activities, as well as things that we will be doing in Korea. Most months we have an overnight camp. Korea's weather is very hot – certainly much warmer than the UK – so we've been

told not to bring sleeping bags, and that just a sleeping bag liner or even a duvet cover will suffice! However, the focus is really on practising our teamwork and generally having a good time!

What's the best bit? There's a lot to choose from! I really enjoyed the meet in June where we were helping at the scouts' Annual General Meeting on the Saturday, but for the rest of the weekend we just got to talk and relax together and mess around as a group, which I really enjoyed. Another highlight was the water sports weekend



in September. On the Sunday we went sailing at Bury Lake in Rickmansworth, which was great fun, especially as I was one of the few people who actually knew how to sail!

The plan for the visit to South Korea is to fly in via Thailand about a week before the Jamboree, and we are then spending a few days in Seoul, fighting off jetlag, getting used to the country and generally anticipating the Jamboree. We will also be visiting the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea during this time. The actual Jamboree is about two weeks long, and will be a massive camp with about 50,000 scouts from across the globe attending. There will be lots of activities to do, but really the focus is on meeting new people from a range of different backgrounds. One of the days is a 'culture day', for which each group prepares a presentation or

demonstration or activity linked to their country's culture. We then spend the day going around and experiencing the culture of the other groups, and sharing our own UK culture.

There's still a lot to do before I go. I need to finish off my fundraising, so I'm holding a quiz night in April which should provide the last of the money that I need to raise. There is also a lot of work to be done with figuring out the kit – it is a scout camp after all! I have also been learning a little bit of Korean, just enough to get by.

All are welcome to the Quiz Night on the evening of Saturday 15 April in the Parish Hall behind St Peter & St Paul's. We're estimating that we'll be able to fit in around seventy people in teams of 6-8. I'll be sharing more information shortly, but *Comment* readers would be very welcome!

The total cost of participating in the Jamboree is around £3,500,

although a portion of that is subsidised by the district. The rest we have to fundraise ourselves. Because I've been volunteering on the sound desk on Sunday morning services in St Peter & St Paul's, I've been able to work as a verger at some weddings and other church events, which I am lucky enough to get paid for. Other than that, I have been doing various odd-jobs for various people in order to raise money.

I will be pleased to tell you all about the experience on my return!

Nathan Townsend
St Peter & St Paul

Come to our Quiz Night!
on Saturday 15 April
at the Parish Hall, Tring
Teams of 6 or 8
cbt73@hotmail.com



You are warmly invited to Tring's Coronation Celebration

Monday 8th May from 2pm to 6pm
at St Peter & St Paul Church, Tring

At 2pm there will be a Thanksgiving Service in the Church

From 3pm join us in the churchyard for an afternoon party with music, a tea tent, hot food, Tring Brewery bar, children's craft, fancy-dress competitions, and Royal themed quizzes. There will be Royal Yarn Bombing on Church Square.

Please RSVP info@tringtogether.org.uk to make sure we have enough pews and cake! Free local transport can also be organised via the same email or call 01442 828920



News from the bell tower

Notre cher Capitaine de la Tour has sent an email around to ask for any contributions we can make to *Comment* this month. I, being the most recent (and certainly the slowest to learn) recruit to Tring Tower can only say what it has been like for me so far.



A couple of months ago I knew nothing, absolutely zilch, zero about church bells other than their very rousing, inspiring sound, their loud mellifluous voices ringing out over the town, calling people to come and worship, as if that joyful,

powerful music came from the very gate of heaven inviting people into church. So I thought I'd just try and see.

The first evening I needed three rests on going up those steep, spiral stairs, heart beating fast as I reached an ancient wooden door. Last week I could do the whole flight in one go with just a slightly raised heart rate.

My enduring hope is that one day, maybe one day, I too will be able to understand the technique which involves a co-ordination of body and brain that at present I can only envy and admire.

Johanna Morgan
New bell ringer

At our AGM on 19 February, I was (unexpectedly) elected to the office of Tower Captain of St Peter & St Paul's Church and Dawn Milne was elected to be my Deputy. Howard Collings remains as Secretary and Cathy Anderson as

Treasurer; our Steeple Keeper, Colin Simpson, has a Deputy, Jonathan Smith.

Between us all we are improving the ringing – as some may have already noticed on Sunday mornings.

Philip Dobson, Tower Captain



Back Row, left to right Colin Simpson (Steeple Keeper) and Dawn Milne (Deputy Tower Captain)

Front Row, left to right Philip Dobson (Tower Captain), Howard Collings (Secretary), Cathy Anderson (Treasurer) and Jonathan Smith (Deputy Steeple Keeper)

The last week

'He set His face' 'His Hour had come' 'He drank the cup'

The Pilgrims travelled joyously to join the celebration, in Jerusalem, City of God, the Temple and the Feast, remembering Moses and God's plan to save the nation; freedom from long slavery for the greatest and the least.

'Do not go,' our Lord was warned, 'the priests want your arrest.'

But Jesus resolutely SET HIS FACE; He knew what lay ahead. As many who'd been blessed by Him now loudly called Him 'Blessed.'

Triumphant entry on a donkey, He was boldly led.

But scheming Judas had dark thoughts for Satan had his soul; to priests and leaders – desperate men, he went with treacherous aim

and brought them face to face with Jesus; making money was his goal,

but Jesus knew HIS HOUR HAD COME to take our sin and shame.

In the middle of the night the sinless Son of God stood trial, a great injustice ever to one who did such good.

They questioned Him and Pilate too, but He gave no denial. They ridiculed Him – 'King of Israel? Do you think you're God?'

The Roman Governor found Him guiltless and gave the crowd a choice –

'The murderer Barabbas or this Jesus do you want?'

'Crucify Him, Crucify,' the crowd bayed with one voice, 'He's guilty of such blasphemy,' they echoed with a taunt.

The sentence passed, the Son of God was led away to die. HIS HOUR HAD COME, hung on a cross, he took our punishment.

'Father, forgive them for they not what they do,' he cried.

The Man of Sorrows breathed His last – for this He had been sent.

This climax in man's destiny touches future, present, past.

It was God's great redemptive plan; there is no other way for man to know his maker and forgiveness that will last.

His body gently put in tomb, but there it did not stay.

What happened next would shake the world, both then and us today;

the empty tomb, the power of God who raised His Son to life. The triumph of the crucified – Jesus, sin and death did slay giving peace and hope to all – freedom from this world's strife.

At dawn, confused and fearful, Mary went quickly to the tomb. John and Peter, deeply troubled, raced there also with great speed.

They'd seen their Lord die on the cross; their hearts were in deep gloom.

They found no body there – an empty tomb for HE HAD RISEN INDEED!

THE RISEN CHRIST, triumphant over Satan, sin and death; salvation in His Name would be told around the world.

'It is finished,' was His cry before His final breath; No more to be added when God's message is upheld.

No event in history has changed mankind for better – an offer of forgiveness from One who dealt with sin;

All, once lost to God, now at peace with their creator. Everyone, with faith in Christ, to heaven can enter in.

The Holy Spirit came to all who claimed Jesus as their Lord; a new era in man's history had certainly arrived;

new disciples, prayer and praise, the Scriptures do record. Despite much opposition, the early church did thrive.

'Jesus Christ has Risen,' was the theme of their new teaching; salvation in His Name was preached to many, far and near.

Some believed, but many others found it challenging; yet the gospel is a message everyone should hear.

Just as bells ring out from churches round the land, Let us who know the truth ring the message loud and clear –

'In Christ alone who died and rose,' on these great truths we stand

'Go you into all the world,' Christ said, 'so that all may hear.'

John Young

Akeman Street Baptist Church

Parish registers

Baptisms

We welcome this child into our church community and pray for her family.

Isabella Herring-Rogers

Weddings

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

Francis Roberts & Martine Roberts

Paul Shaw & Amy Jordan

Ryan Blake & Sophie Shrieve

Dan Blunn & Bernie Gamble

Scott Thomson & Georgia Moore

Funerals

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

Joyce Isabel Wood 88

John Willmore 76

Carol Livingston

Velda Joyce Froment 95

Shirley Wall 65

Spencer Harris 62

Moiria Hargreaves 69

Berkhamsted Walk
Raising funds for The Children's Society
Sunday 30th April 2023

Choose the walk that suits you for a great day out in the beautiful Chiltern countryside around Berkhamsted
6, 12 and 18 mile walk options

#berkhamstedwalk
For details and to register online: www.berkhamstedwalk.com

Berkhamsted Walk
Sunday 30th April 2023

Raising funds for The Children's Society
It is a painful fact that many children and young people in Britain today are still suffering extreme hardship, abuse and neglect. Help us to make a difference to the lives of these vulnerable young people. As little as £5 could pay for a hot meal for a child who has not eaten all day, or pay for a vulnerable young person to travel to a counselling session, giving them a safe place to talk.

Choose the walk that suits you and make the most of the springtime countryside:

- The Fun Walk:** 6 miles for all ages
- The Bluebell Walk:** 12 miles for beauty and fresh air
- The Challenge Walk:** 18 miles for the really hardy

All walks start from Kitchener's Field, Castle Hill, Berkhamsted, HP4 1HE, next to the Cricket Club. Walkers can start any time from 9.30am - 2pm.

Berkhamsted Walk – choose your distance and get involved

Easy to participate
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Get sponsored or make a donation
Tea and cake provided at Kitchener's Field for returning walkers

Get involved
It's easy to participate in the walk – just visit www.berkhamstedwalk.com and register online. You can donate in advance of the walk by visiting our JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/berkhamsted-walk (link on our website).

We will have limited ability to take registrations and donations on the day, so online registration is preferable. The routes will be emailed to all participants who sign up and donate in advance.

For details and to register online: www.berkhamstedwalk.com

Crossword

1	2		3		4		5		6		7	
8												
9			10						11		12	
							13					
14												
15							16					
					17							
		18							19			
20							21					

ACROSS

- Enjoy (6)
- Fairy tale (6)
- Gratefulness (12)
- Absolutely (Most of the answer (2) (4)
- Go in a different direction (4)
- Simon of Cyrene is told to do this at the crucifixion (5) (3) (5)
- I took advantage and (4) it
- Last stretch of the race (3) (3)
- Rising from the dead (12)
- Scanty (6)
- A list of prices (6)

DOWN

- Letter in the New Testament (9)
- Pub (3)
- Can't decide how to reply (8)
- Jesus, (4) of God
- Shone brightly (9)
- Scold (3)
- Parts of heaven (9)
- Didn't wait (6) (3)
- Profound respect (8)
- Talk to God (4)
- Regret (3)
- Hill (3)

Times are a-changing



My mother married at 18 and had a traditional white wedding with hords of family attending in her parish church of St Mary's, Sunbury on Thames in 1953. I know she made her own dress and that of her bridesmaids but I don't know how they paid for it, as the family were as poor as church mice. I was baptised in that same church two years later though none of us attended services.

Her mother, my Welsh grandmother, was married in a Register Office in Bedwellty, Monmouthshire in 1933, when she was 19; her mother, my even more Welsh great grandmother, was married at 17 in a chapel in Blackwood, Monmouthshire, in 1913. No photographs appear to have been taken of either event. I think they made the church mice look well off.

When it came to my wedding, I had such definite ideas about not doing something traditional (not then knowing that my mother's beautiful wedding photos were not a part of the normal family history) that I chose a Laura Ashley simple cotton dress at the huge cost of £40.00, bought a white hat and borrowed a white umbrella from a friend at church. We were married when I was 24 in the church I attended, Laleham All Saints (famous for its connection with the infamous Lord Lucan) which was not my local parish church, so 'by qualifying connection'. Only a few of my vast family were invited to the wedding, but friends from college, work and our church in Hemel Hempstead made up the guest list and it was a very simple affair.

My eldest niece was the first of the next generation to be married when she was 29. Her father was an Anglican vicar, her uncle the rector of a large Devon parish and two of her godparents were Anglican canons: so she married a Muslim in a beautiful non-church venue and her amazing dress cost her £5000. Not a prayer was said, not a hymn was sung and her father, the vicar, heckled the Registrar!

Our eldest son became engaged to the lovely Ana in 2019 and their wedding plans were disrupted by Covid-19, travel bans and the fact that their family were scattered over the globe. Tom and Ana live in Tarifa, Spain, his family live in various parts of the UK and Ana's family live in Spain, Ecuador, the USA and

various parts of South America. You see the problem.

Ana's parents hosted an engagement party from their home in Ecuador when that country was still on the UK 'red list'. Tom and Ana could attend because they were living in Spain – but we and his three brothers and the rest of our family, though invited, could not. This engagement party (as later described by almost everyone) was a wedding in everything but the ceremony itself. There was even a cousin, a Catholic priest, among the 100-plus guests. There were three bands, speeches, toasts, first dances, amazing food, clothes and 'wedding' cards and gifts (something had clearly got lost in translation). Tom was the only English person there and he had to do his non-bridegroom's speech in Spanish... As he described it himself, 'The engagement party definitely wasn't a wedding but everyone called it a wedding on the day, it very much looked like a wedding, sounded like a wedding and even included some cards from well-wishers that said "Congratulations on your wedding!"'

So when Tom called us in the middle of February (my immediate response: 'Is anything wrong?') he said that he was giving us a wedding announcement that was NOT a wedding announcement: he and Ana were planning to get legally married on

3 March in what has oft-been described as the dream location for nuptials the world over. No, not The Maldives, though that was a close second but, of course, Gibraltar (they HATE Gibraltar). If anyone happened to be free that Friday, they would be very welcome, but he couldn't stress enough that this was a wedding that was not THE wedding except that legally it WAS a wedding. For those who haven't given up reading this, it had to do with the complications of Tom being English marrying someone from Ecuador in

Spain – and it was simpler to do it in an English territory.

So on Friday 3 March 2023, Ana's parents in Ecuador, her brothers in Madrid and the US, one of Tom's brothers in Birmingham, his brother's partner on a phone from a hospital in Birmingham, aunts and uncles in Hook and Sevenoaks, a cousin in Kent working from home, one of his godparents plus her husband and her son, our godson (linking in from Germany), joined us, his parents in Cheddington, with a very vocal 6-month-old baby on our laps – to watch the simple legal marriage of our eldest son Tom to Ana in a Register Office in Gibraltar on a computer screen. (And the words of the service used the form 'I take Thee!') Tom is 34, by the way (twice the age of my great grandmother at her wedding), and Ana 39. I wept just as much as I no doubt would have done if it had been a wedding in our church; and I hadn't had to lose a stone in weight and wear a posh frock. Our eldest son is married and we have our first daughter-in-law!

Times are indeed a-changing!

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

PS Our youngest son DID try to attend the event, flying in from Manchester that morning, but due to various problems with hire cars at the airport, missed the ceremony!

Congratulations to the newly weds!

Steve Bull and Annabel Harrison were married on 17 December 2022 in Painswick, Gloucestershire. The Harrison-Bulls live in St Albans but both sets of parents are Tring residents: Nicky Bull and Penny Harrison are both members of High Street Baptist Church.

The Editor
Photo © Sarah Carter



'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted'



he left a log fire burning and failed to put up a guard when he went to an all-night store for more beer.

A Tring Team tradition was renewed in Aldbury during Lent when a series of films was shown to contribute to the Lent Theme, which this year was The Beatitudes. The first film, 'Manchester-by-the-Sea' is a tale of Lee Chandler who was named as guardian of his 16 year-old nephew, Patrick, following the untimely death of his fisherman brother, Joe.

Centred around the themes of depression, guilt, grief, responsibility, dysfunctional families and post-traumatic stress, the plot follows a depressed and grief-stricken man who was accidentally responsible for the deaths of his three children and must care for his teenage nephew after the death of his brother.

The film explored Lee's realisation of his own inadequacy with not only being unable to acknowledge Patrick's needs for stable relationships in his own surroundings, but also his inability to forgive himself for the tragic deaths of his three children in a house fire where

he left a log fire burning and failed to put up a guard when he went to an all-night store for more beer.

As the story develops, we see Lee's grief and sense of inadequacy expressed in anger, bar-fighting, and ultimately an emotional breakdown with his friend George who has been a solid support through the tragedy which Lee and his ex-wife went through following the fire and the subsequent divorce... another manifestation of grief and loss which Lee is unable to address when his ex-wife tries to reconcile with him.

The plot develops the relationship between Lee and Patrick, placing the inadequate adult who cannot properly grieve for his three children, his marriage and his brother in tension with the worldly-wisdom of the grieving teenager who has lost his father.

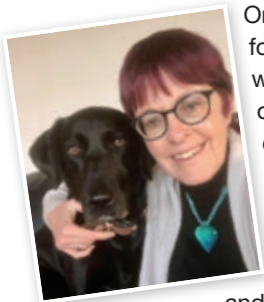
A pragmatic solution to Patrick's need for care is found when George agrees to adopt Patrick as his guardian, so Patrick can remain in his home town and keep ownership of the fishing boat which was so much part of his father's life. The final scenes show uncle and nephew in a slightly uncomfortable companionship, sitting on the boat

taking time fishing together. They have found some peace in their mutual grief and encourage each other to 'let go' of the pain of the past through which they may have found the comfort expressed in the Beatitude.

What did we make of it? We discussed the different facets in which grief is experienced and the various responses these raised in the different personalities. We expressed shock at the 'gratuitous swearing' (as one member described it) which has sadly become the common speech in today's culture. We debated the way society deals with grief today compared to earlier generations: some felt today was more permissive with emotional expression whereas others felt that not enough time was allowed for grieving, compared to the twelve months of mourning held by our Victorian forbears.

It was a challenging and uncomfortable film. This was a thin plot overlying some intense emotional moments, which nevertheless gave us pause for thought and reflection on the Beatitude: 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted'.
Paul Boddam-Whetham, Tring Team

Postcard from Orkney



Orkney is well known for its archaeology, wildlife, scenery and opportunities for outdoor pursuits. These pursuits can include wild swimming, kayaking, rowing and sailing. However, as someone who likes to stay on dry land, walking is my outdoor activity of choice.

There are many walking routes around the islands, but an important one recently developed is the St Magnus Way. This is a fifty-five-mile pilgrimage route which follows the route the body of the murdered Magnus Erlendsson was taken around Orkney before he was finally interred at the Cathedral in Kirkwall that bears his name. There's a long and convoluted tale around his story, full of Viking derring-do, bloodshed, mayhem, betrayal and martyrdom.

The St Magnus Way is split into six sections each between ten and thirteen miles long. Many people come to Orkney specifically to do the pilgrimage route and often complete it in five days or less (apparently). Now, I'm aware many folk undertake pilgrim walks including those such as the 500-mile Camino de Santiago in France and Spain which takes experienced hikers around thirty-five days, traversing challenging, sometimes mountainous terrain and, if done in summer, scorching temperatures. Neither of these hazards are likely to trouble pilgrims in Orkney.

With this in mind, my friend Sheena and I decided to 'do' the St Magnus Way. How hard could it be? With great signposting along the way and a helpful app to guide us, it would be a great project to complete. We set off in February and have just completed it in March. Before you express congratulations on a job well done, swiftly and in winter weather, I should probably

confess we started in February 2022 and finished in March 2023. As is often the case, life got in the way, stuff happened and it was difficult to find mutually convenient dates on which to walk.

However, we kept going through sun, wind, a bit of rain, through bogs, up long relentless hills, over fences and gates (a huge problem for me, I don't know in which order to arrange myself to get over gates) and, thanks to Sheena's encouragement and good cheer, we got there in the end. As is often the way with walkers, we had great conversations about everything and nothing, ate lovely picnics and delicious cakes, discovered parts of Orkney we didn't know existed and finally reached the end of the route!

Big celebrations in front of St Magnus Cathedral followed and I staggered home for a large gin and tonic.

**Carrie Dodge
Milestone Church, Dounby**




The Big Help Out

The Big Help Out will be held on Monday, 8th May 2023 and is being organised nationally by The Together Coalition and a wide range of partners such as The Scouts, the Royal Voluntary Service and faith groups from across the United Kingdom. The Big Help Out will highlight the positive impact volunteering has on communities across the nation.

In tribute to His Majesty The King's public service, The Big Help Out will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. The aim of The Big Help Out is to use volunteering to bring communities together and create a lasting volunteering legacy from the Coronation Weekend.

Maybe you already have an event planned to encourage more volunteers to join your group? Or maybe this is the 1st you've heard of it, and you would like to get involved?

Tring Together are pulling together a programme of local volunteering events that will be advertised for you as part of Tring's Coronation Celebration on Monday 8th May. Please contact vivianne@tringtogether.org.uk or 07786 707597 to find out more and get involved.



**St Martha's Methodist Church
Flower Festival
Seasonal Splendour**

Friday 28th - Sunday 30th April
Church Open 10am - 4pm
Admission FREE, light refreshments available

Saturday 29th April at 7.30pm
 **Piano Recital by
Alexander Ardakov**

Sunday 30th April at 5pm
**Songs of Praise with
Pam Rhodes**



**Proudly Presents
Friday April 14 2023**



**From The Chiltern Hills Internationally Acclaimed
Singer - songwriter - slide guitar - roots - blues - americana**

RSVP on line www.bluesbartring.co.uk Pay on the door £15
Doors & Bar 19.00- Band on Stage 20.00
Tring Parish Church St Peter & St Paul HP23 5AE

**Celebrate Holy Week and Easter
at Tring Church**

<p>Palm Sunday 2nd April 8am Holy Communion in traditional language 10am ** Communion with children's activity (procession starts on Church Square)</p> <p>Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 3rd - 5th April 8pm Talk on the Beatitudes for Holy Week and Night Prayer ** recorded and shown later</p> <p>Maunder Thursday 6th April 10am Holy Communion 8pm ** Team Holy Communion Services with foot washing 9pm Vigil until midnight - stay for as long as you like.</p>	<p>Good Friday 7th April 10am Team Worship for All 11am Walk of Witness and service from St Martha's Church to Tring Church 2pm ** Last Hour at the Cross 7pm Sepulchre Service - Jesus is laid in the tomb</p> <p>Easter Day 9th April 6am New Fire of Easter & Holy Communion This service will start in the churchyard. 8am Holy Communion in traditional language 10am ** Communion Together A service suitable for all ages - you may like to bring a long-stemmed flower to place in the cross. ** These services will be live-streamed.</p>
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www.tringteamparish.org.uk



No more fossil fuels. Amen.

God's creation is in trouble. Antonio Guterres, the head of the United Nations, says, 'We are firmly on track towards an unliveable world.' The International Energy Agency said we can have no new fossil fuels after the end of 2021 – yes, 2021, that's not a misprint! Yet the UK government is giving tax breaks to oil companies to open up 100+ new oil and gas fields. They have even given the go-ahead to a new coal mine – against the advice of their own advisors.



Banner at St John's Waterloo garden, Loss and Damage Day, 2022

On 21-24 April a big rally is taking place around Westminster to demand an end to fossil fuels. The rally is being organised in conjunction with the police. Many of those joining the witness will be Christians, people of faith. Jesus instructed us that we are 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world'. By participating in this mass protest, we bring our faithful communities into the space as salt, actively working as preservers and transformers in that secular space (and of that secular space), and as communities, even more than as individuals, we do so very visibly, giving light to everyone.

On the first day of the rally, Friday 21 April from 11.00am, the major Christian development and environmental NGOs are gathering in the gardens of St John's Church, Waterloo. At 12 noon we will come together for an hour of prayers, songs and witness. Staff members from Christian Aid, Tearfund, Cafod, Green Christian, Operation Noah, Christian Climate Action and the Salvation Army are co-operating on preparing the service.

At around 1.00pm a Salvation Army youth band will lead us on a Pilgrimage to Parliament Square (step-free and wheelchair friendly). We plan a brief stop

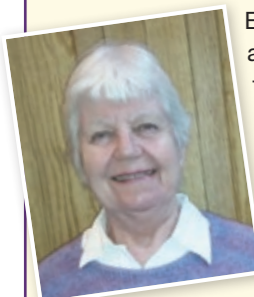
outside the Shell building to pray for no more fossil fuels – Amen!

If you do one thing for God's creation this year, this is it. Praying for and demanding climate leadership from our government is more important than anything else you can do. If you cannot come to London, then please pray this prayer by Green Christian's Andii Bowsher at noon on 21 April.

Compassionate God, you know our hearts and share our sorrows. We are hurt by the despoiling of the living Earth, which we love. We are angry at the loss we contemplate. We long for words of comfort, yet find them hard to hear. Turn our grief to active love; Turn our anger to energy for repair of the world; Turn our guilt to solidarity; and by your forgiveness make us whole with all creation. Amen.

From an article prepared by Barbara Echlin, of Green Christian

The joy of worshipping together



Each year we ask a different church to host the service for the World Day of Prayer. This year our service on 3 March was held at Corpus Christi Church.

In the past we have held two services, one in the afternoon and another in the evening, but for the past three years we have only had an afternoon service at 2.30pm. It was felt that the evening service was attended by those participating from the afternoon and only a handful of others who are at work in the day. We apologise to those who missed out on coming to the service.

The theme of the service was based on words of St Paul in his letter

to the Ephesians 'I have heard about your faith'. Paul's words are ones of encouragement and this was the theme of the service. The Christian ladies of Taiwan prepared the service during which our readers took the role of ladies who were writing letters of encouragement to some people in Taiwan. Continuing the theme, each person attending the service was given a postcard which they, in their turn, could send with words of encouragement to help others grow in the faith.

We must have had between thirty-five and forty people at the service (we forgot to do an accurate headcount!) and we were especially pleased to welcome Jackie Buie who had just started her ministry at New Mill Baptist Church. Many people stayed behind to share the refreshments on offer. It was

good to see the friendship between our churches.

The offering of £130 has been sent to the World Day of Prayer office to be distributed between the many charities they support. A list of the charities is given at the back of the service books; they are worldwide.

Many, many thanks are due for the welcome we had at Corpus Christi, especially to the two ladies who did a lot of the preparation work, and to the ladies who provided the refreshments. Thank you to Father Sean for letting us use the church, and a special thank you to all who took part. Our readers were from all five churches taking part. There are not many occasions when the different churches worship together; it is the friendly support and fellowship shared that make this service a joy.

Jill Smith, St Peter & St Paul

Valiant Club



In 1974, Nora Grace asked Mrs Mary Fuller if she would consider forming a club for younger disabled people. The aim would be for the social welfare of physically handicapped men and women under 70 years of age.

The hall was suitable, with wider doors and a ramp for wheelchairs and it had accessible toilets.

The Red Cross ambulance would be used to transport the wheelchairs and the Ladies Circle and others would help with cars for the more mobile members.

A committee was formed led by Mrs Grace with Mrs Mary Fuller as President and Mrs Joan Hollingsworth as Vice President. Mrs Hilda Harrowell proposed the name Valiant Club from the hymn 'He who would valiant be...'

The meetings were to be held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Members were to come from the town and surrounding villages and the first meeting was to be on 3 April 1974, always thereafter called The Birthday and celebrated every year. On that day fifteen members attended and suggestions were received for activities and entertainment and the name Valiant Club was adopted.

Members were then entertained by the Girl Guides, who sang camp songs, which were much enjoyed, followed by tea. It was free the first week and 5p thereafter. That week a Rummage Sale was held in the Scout HQ in Longfield Road to raise funds for the new club and £40 was made for them.

This was just the beginning. The Valiant Club went on for the next thirty-five years, until Mary retired and passed the baton to Sally Hearn in 2009. Each time there were between fifteen and twenty members attending but it required many helpers to make it run smoothly: the Committee, driver's escort on the ambulance, caterers and the many and various people who came to entertain us. Some of the meetings were just card games and tea but many speakers, choirs, slide shows etc were also organised, thanks to Mary.

I have been privileged to read Mary's logbook of the meetings so here are just a few of the Speakers and Entertainers: Robert Fuller and David Glue (slides on birds), Patrick Gibson (guitar and songs),

Sonia Waterton (singer), Doris Bardell (flower arranging), Jill Fowler and Mike Bass (slides of old Tring), Wendy Austin (also slides of Tring), Mrs Rodley and her Ladies' Choir, Wiggington WI Choir, Prestwood WI Choir, The Grace Notes and the Showtime Stoppers and many others, all much appreciated by the members. No doubt there are names here *Comment* readers recognise.

Then there were the special meetings such as the Birthday Party, held every year on the first Wednesday in April, which was a grand affair. There was always a colour scheme, with the tables decorated with appropriate flowers and paper napkins (one year it was daffodils). Mary made a beautiful iced cake and different sponge cakes. We made a wide selection of sandwiches, sausage rolls, fruit jelly and ice cream – it was a real feast! There were a lot of visitors that day from the Committee, supporters from the town and Red Cross from Hertford. We had special entertainment such as The Grace Notes. It was hard work but everyone enjoyed it.

The Christmas Party was another grand affair. In the early days, this was held in the hall, with turkey and all the trimmings cooked by the Committee and friends, but after a time this became too much work and we started to go out to eat instead. Some years we went to Rose and Crown, then the small room at the Victoria Hall with caterers, then in the last two years we went to the Cricket Club. All were suitable places for the wheelchairs and a good time was had by all.

The AGM was held every year and also a Bring and Buy Sale for funds. Every year we went shopping at Milton Keynes which was idea for the wheelchairs. We stopped for tea there – one year at Woolworths where they partitioned off a section of the restaurant there and gave us a really good tea.

Then there were the summer outings which required a lot of preparation. Mary and Alfred would go beforehand to make sure everything was suitable for



our members. We went by coach, car and ambulance to a really wide range of destinations, always followed by tea. Friends and families were invited too. We went to Pitstone on a canal trip with a cream tea, funded by the Rotary Club; Savill Garden; Woburn Safari Park; Waterperry Gardens; Shire Horse Centre; Broxbourne canal trip on the River Lea with fish and chips lunch; Milton Keynes Museum; coach trips around the Chilterns and Cotswolds followed by WI tea – and many others. They were always interesting and much enjoyed.

The Valiant Club was a very happy club with Mary at the helm and the many helpers who supported her.

In 2009 we were lucky enough to find Sally Hearn, who agreed to take over the running of the club and on 3 February 2010, after the AGM, we held a retirement party for Mary with a lovely bouquet, gift vouchers and a special iced cake. On the top it said 'Thank you from your girls'. It was well deserved after thirty-five years of running the Valiant Club which had nearly 100 members over the years.

Erica Guy, St Peter & St Paul

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

COMMENT DEADLINES

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

NB There is no magazine for January or August



Services at Tring Church

Holy Week and Easter
Please see the separate poster with all the services from **Palm Sunday (2nd April) through to Easter Sunday (9th April)**

Sunday 16th April
8am Holy Communion traditional language **
10am Worship for all
3pm Piano and More concert

Sunday 23rd April
8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Communion with Children's activity **

Sunday 30th March
8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Communion with Children's Activities **

** Streamed service on our website and YouTube

Mid-week Services in Tring

9.15am Tuesdays
Holy Communion

10am Thursdays
Holy Communion in traditional language

What's on in April in Tring Church

Lots more going on



Mondays 3.30pm - 5pm
Youth Café in term time Toast, chat etc for secondary school kids

Food Bank

Monday to Friday
10am - 12noon.
Drop-off donations and collect food



Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm

Craft and a Cuppa

Drop in for chat, cuppa and bring a craft to do if you would like to



Social Coffee

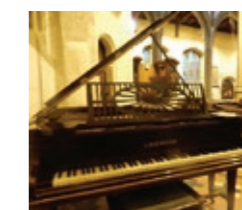
Fridays, Saturdays
10am - 12 noon,
and after Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday services



Piano & more series

Sunday April 16th

3pm for an hour's concert of music followed by refreshments.
Free but collection for church and piano expenses



Crossword puzzle answers

From page 24

ACROSS

1. RELISH
5. LEGEND
8. THANKSGIVING
9. IS SPOT
11. TURN
14. CARRY THE CROSS
15. USED
16. END LEG
18. RESURRECTION
20. MEASLY
21. TARIFF

DOWN

2. EPHESIANS
3. INN
4. SANCTION
5. LAMB
6. GLITTERED
7. NAG
10. PARADISES
12. RUSHED OFF
13. REVERENT
17. PRAY
18. RUE
19. TOR

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

High Street Baptist Church

We extend a warm welcome to all to our special Easter activities and services.

For further information email admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Easter Crafternoon Sunday 26 March

An afternoon making Easter cards with tea and cake. Suitable for all ages.

Photo by Leslee The first www.pixels.com

Kids' Activity Morning

Wednesday 5 April
9.30-11.30am

All ages
welcome
£5 per family

Lots of
Easter
craft!



Easter Day

7am Sunrise Service

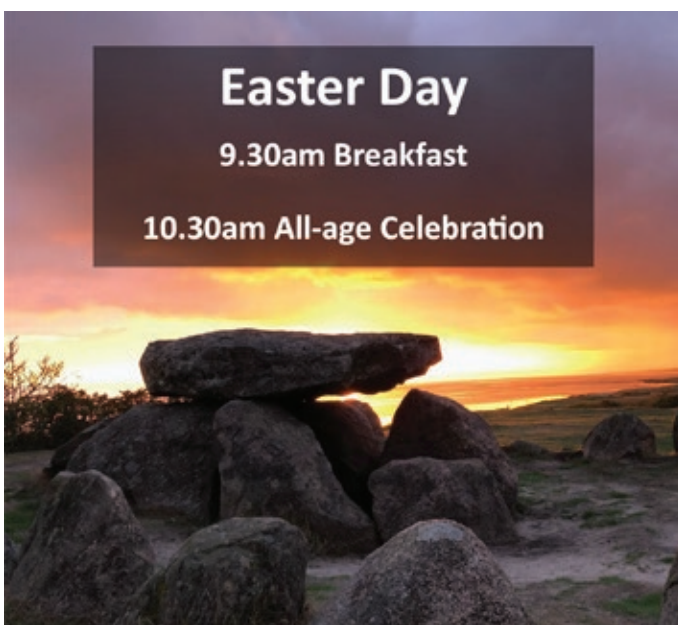
at Pitstone Hill, followed by egg-rolling competition
(bring your decorated hard-boiled eggs, prizes for best decorated and winner of rolling)



Easter Day

9.30am Breakfast

10.30am All-age Celebration



Egg-rolling Competition Rules

1. All eggs must be real chicken or duck eggs (they can be boiled).
2. One egg per person.
3. Eggs must be decorated.
4. Eggs must be rolled, not thrown.
5. Once the egg has left the competitor's hand it must not be touched again until the race is completed.

Prizes for 'best decorated egg'

The egg-rolling winner will receive the High Street Egg-cup