

# COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING





[www.tringteamparish.org.uk](http://www.tringteamparish.org.uk)

**Tring Team Parish**

Aldbury, Long Marston, Puttenham, Tring and Wilstone Churches.

As we have had to suspend public worship and close our churches, we are discovering new ways of being "Church"

Please visit our improved website for everything you need,

Services - Resources - Pastoral Care Support - And Much More!

**Contact - we are here for you!**

It's ok to contact any of us

**Team Rector** Revd Huw Bellis 01442 822170 or 07411483229 huw@tringteamparish.org.uk

**Team Vicar** Revd Jane Banister 01442 822170 Long Marston and Wilstone: jane@tringteamparish.org.uk

**Team Vicar** Revd Michelle Grace 01442 851200 Aldbury: michelle@tringteamparish.org.uk

**Curate** Revd Sarah Marshall 07538 888502 sarah@tringteamparish.org.uk



**Join in with our worship on the web.**

Services featuring our clergy and others coming into your home! Different styles, something for all ages and activities for families. Service sheets to download and hymns to sing along to. Access to daily prayer and services from the Church of England.

**Pastoral Care and Support**

We are here for you, please contact any of our clergy. - Keep in contact with church friends - Prayer support and resources - Protecting your mental health, lots of ideas about staying focussed and in balance.



The Foodbank in Tring Church is open on weekdays, 10am - 12noon, to collect food and to drop-off food donations. [www.dens.org.uk](http://www.dens.org.uk)



**Abundant life**



My lockdown routine has been massively helped because we have been lambing. Those of us in our sheep group have set times of the day to go and visit and I have the early morning slot.

Lambing itself is over but at the moment the ewes still need extra feed and one orphan in particular, needs bottle feeding. So early each morning as I potter around with my sheep, I get to reflect on the words 'The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out... the sheep follow him because they know his voice.'

Personally, I feel very blessed that I feel God close and that I am fed spiritually. Much of my spirituality revolves around those moments in creation, the dawn feeding of sheep, walking in the bluebell woods, or in other times sitting in a lonely moor. It is no surprise that the garden is the first place



of encounter with the Risen Lord and the garden is an ongoing metaphor for heaven.

However, it isn't the only one. The other important image is of the heavenly city. Whilst those of us who are naturally introverted are happy to hear the call of Jesus in the absence of other people, I don't want to pretend that this is the right way. In fact, even I, a deeply introverted person, am realising how much I am missing community. The call is to be gathered together into a flock. It feels wrong that we are not able to do that.

The beauty and joy of seeing a lamb being born comes with the misery of still-born lambs or of ewes dying; the gift of love comes with the pain of grief and death; the first signs of life on this planet came at the points deep in the ocean where the tectonic plates rip themselves apart: it seems that there is always a tension between life and destruction. Covid-19 is very definitely not part of God's plan but we know that death is part of life. The joy and fulfilment of being community has the downside of loneliness and lack of fulfilment when we do not have community. We must acknowledge this.

I feel very much for those whose spirituality is fed by being part of the heavenly city and not the garden. Whilst God still calls us by name, it is painful that we are not able to be called together as one flock. However, whilst acknowledging this I want to celebrate the times that we do still feel the presence of the Risen Christ with us. I also want to look at the other phrase: 'I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.' We often recognise that modern living attempts to 'sell' us a version of life which is appealing yet is somehow still ultimately unfulfilling. Our greatest problem is that we either get trapped living in the past or more likely we are continuously sold a vision of the future which is normally dependent upon the next purchase giving us fulfilment. This constant future promise prevents us from living now and in the moment. What do we need to get rid of to have an abundance of life? Do our new simplified lockdown lives make it easier to live in the present and to revel in the moment? We can't go out to buy stuff, so why not enjoy the now?

Studies have shown that the reality for most people is the hardest thing



about lockdown is not being able to plan. Whether that's a child not knowing when they are going to be able to go back to school or a church group not knowing when they will be able to meet again, we are discombobulated by our inability to plan for the future. I know I should revel in each moment as a God-given gift; I should try to live in the moment and not in the past or the future; but I do have to acknowledge that even with more time, I am getting less done because I can't plan.

So I look to my sheep again. Now that the lambs are older, one of the real joys is seeing the developing lamb races. They are able to live in that moment. For some reason they will suddenly start running and jumping. They epitomise the abundance of life. As I watch them I think: we are called by God by name. It is his desire for us to be one flock and it is painful that we are not, but above all, God calls us to die to sin so that we rise to new life with him, so that we can have life in its full abundance. I can find God in solitude. I have to learn to live life in the moment and to rejoice in what I do have.

**Huw Bellis**  
**Tring Team**



## I only volunteered!



It was in January that I wrote to David Whiting, saying that I felt that I could assist him in his search for someone to replace him as *Comment* distributor.

I shadowed David and Frank Dalton for the February issue, seeing how they labelled and bundled the magazines ready for other distributors to circulate, delivered copies to the other churches and also posted some to old friends outside Tring.

Come the distribution for the March issue, I felt I understood what was happening and David also then kindly talked me through his annual paperwork and label-producing software. I was ready to be 'in charge' for the April issue.

Well that was before 23 March, when lockdown was announced! Given the

restrictions and St Peter & St Paul's being closed, Huw Bellis asked if I could rearrange the distributors, so as not to require the vulnerable over-70s to deliver copies. Jane Banister then had a cunning plan! She would call on school children and scouts to walk around Tring and deliver the *Comment* magazines for us.

After a rushed reorganisation of rounds, to also include those recipients who normally collected from their Church pigeon hole, I sent Jane thirty-four lists of names and addresses and she prepared and labelled the bundles ready for collection from outside their garage. When I went to collect a couple of bundles myself, we thought the plan was working well.

I must say that I am very grateful for your telephone and written messages of support and thanks during this time. You were patient if delivery was a little later than you would normally expect and were obviously happy to see a young face at the door. There were a few

additional copies posted that month and I was delighted with the offers of postal payment when possible. I also continue to have the annual payments delivered to my door or receive confirmation of BACS transfers. Thank you.

So let's do the same again for the May and June issues, yes? Well, no, because the Church of England advised that as there was some evidence that the virus might live on paper surfaces for up to 24 hours, we should not be hand-delivering the magazine. With such advice other ideas were needed.

That's when Chris Hoare had another cunning plan... and because of that plan, you are either reading your *Comment* magazine online; or you have had it posted to you. We will continue with this methodology until we are told it is safe to return to pre-lockdown methods of delivery.

**Barbara Anscombe**  
*St Peter & St Paul*

## The early church



The Christian churches that follow the lectionary (an agreed series rather than choosing something different each week), are given four readings

each Sunday for the main service: Psalm, Old Testament, New Testament and Gospel. Many of us can remember the days when we had all four each week – but then many of us can also remember the days when ladies wore hats to Church, and not just because it was cold.

These days, we find it speaks more to people to use some of the readings

and concentrate on those. The observant among you may also notice that the hymns too are reflections of the readings, and the theme of each Sunday.

In the Easter season there is a difference: the Old Testament is replaced by the Acts of the Apostles. This is because the liturgy of Good Friday to Easter Day takes us from the old to the new: the Easter vigil service looks back on our salvation history; the Easter season looks forward from the Resurrection.

The Acts of the Apostles is not a Gospel or a letter, and is unique. It tells us of how people learned to live without Christ there in bodily form, but how they realised his presence was with them as the church. There were four

strands to how they lived: to teach about Christ and his life; to the communal life whereby they worshipped together, supported each other and became a real community; to the breaking of bread, the sharing of this meal of thanksgiving and remembrance; and to prayer, whether as individuals, families, groups or churches, to know that Christ is with us when we pray.

This has not changed. Christ is with us in our learning together, in our worship, in our sharing of life, and in our prayers. So we give thanks, and we rejoice and we continue on our journey.

**Jane Banister**  
*Tring Team Parish*

## Feedback

Further to Hilary Chapman's feedback in a recent issue of *Comment*, may I add that here in and around Wiveliscombe we have a free local newspaper The Messenger published every second month, and the Benefice of Wiveliscombe and the Hills publishes a

monthly magazine Wivey and the Hills Magazine. Both are free and both carry advertisements. The magazine covers St Andrew's Wiveliscombe and Parish Churches in eight of the surrounding villages, the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Congregational Church

in Wiveliscombe, and the Methodist Chapel at Brendon Hill (on Exmoor). Wiveliscombe has its own radio station 10Radio on FM105.3, with a Sunday morning service at 10.00am.

**Philip Scribbins**  
*formerly St Peter & St Paul*

## Hope



In February we sat at our staff meeting to make plans for our Easter programme and activity. There was an idea to hand out stones with an Easter message during the Walk of

Witness. Having had a successful stone 'campaign' in the lead up to Christmas, we thought this would be great! Ruth suggested 'hope' as a key word for our stones. We got busy sourcing lovely big stones, the youth group painted messages of Easter hope and the Bible reference John 3:16 was included too.

Fast forward a few weeks later and we were taking tough decisions to evaluate what was essential, cancel activity, and ultimately close the Church building. Not all stones had been painted, so bags of stone were quickly shared out to willing volunteers for painting. Scenes of sunny days, paint, brushes and stones were shared. We waited.

As the schools closed, and social distancing became routine, it was clear that the planned Easter activity would not be going ahead. Instead, though, we decided we would distribute our stones around the town during the Easter weekend. They would not be hidden, but placed prominently next to paths, on benches and walls. Easy to see, to take home or re-hide (as is the tradition with Tring Rocks – a group who, like others country wide, hide painted rocks for finding, enjoying and leaving for others to find).

**'If ever I needed a reminder of how much I love Tring the wonderful painted stones that I saw on my dog walk lifted my spirits and made me feel so connected. Thank you to the thoughtful soul/s who made them and left them out. Did I miss any I wonder?'**

The response was amazing. People shared their finds on social media with words of thanks and joy at finding the stones. And the 'likes' were numerous!

I must say I love the word hope. It is a delight to say: a soft, whisper-like beginning, but with strength. Go on, say it out loud.



But what is hope? For some it is a crossed-fingers, touch-wood form of superstition. But it is also a deeply profound word and it raises mental health concern when someone says they feel 'hopeless'.

At the beginning of the social isolating period, people put pictures of rainbows in their windows, perhaps the ultimate (biblical) symbol of hope. Faith-based or not, rainbows clearly resonate with people as symbols of hope.

Kevin's sermon the week after Easter focused on hope. He reminded us of the account Paul gives in Romans about Abraham's situation in Genesis. Despite all the earthly odds, 'Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed...' (Romans 4:18). Biblical hope is deep, confident expectation of something good for the future. John Piper says '...hope is like a reservoir of emotional

strength' ([www.desiringgod.org/messages/what-is-hope](http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/what-is-hope)). What a wonderful image, a place we can dip into, can be refreshed, it doesn't run dry, is always there.

I am not sure what sort of hope our painted stones brought. That is truly in God's hands.

**Polly Eaton,**  
*High Street Baptist Church*

**'Beautiful rocks to be found in the memorial garden - thank you so much for the Easter Hope.'**

**'Spotted so many beautifully decorated stones on my run today. Really enjoyed spotting them and stopping to take a picture was a welcomed pause during my run. Thank you whoever you are for this little bit of Easter hope.'**





# Easter in lockdown



Easter has been very strange this year. For the first time ever we have been in lockdown and, when you live on your own, it can seem a very silent experience. A few

weeks before, I bought myself two medium Easter Eggs but something stopped me buying eggs for the relatives I was due to visit. Just imagine if I had bought those boxes of chocolates and eggs! I was due to visit my niece for a big party the week after Easter. My sister was due to have my nephew and his wife and toddler to stay too.

During Holy Week I listened to Andrew Openshaw's talks from Frinton on the events of that week. On Maundy Thursday there was a Tenebrae Service from there and it brought back memories of the ones shared at New Mill, starting with a simple meal. Nine candles are then lit and a scripture is read and then a candle is blown out. This is repeated until the last one is extinguished and everyone leaves the Church silently. It was strange to see Andrew sitting there whilst people came in on Zoom to read and then he blew out the candles.

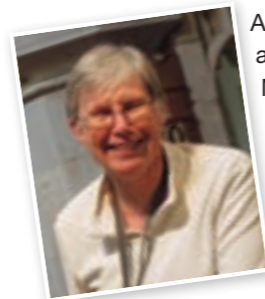
Good Friday: and no Walk of Witness. I missed this a lot. We shared a service at High Street via Zoom and it was very meaningful. On Easter Day we had a lovely service at 6.30am and pyjamas were allowed. Children had decorated eggs or drawn pictures beforehand. The ladies from Atkins the bakers had judged the entries and they had given prizes too. I walked down to St Peter & St Paul's and then to the Memorial Gardens and circled home.

I cooked my lunch and then felt a bit down. I normally spend Easter Day with relatives and it is a whirlwind of noise and chat but this was silent. I had done my walk so no more socialising except by email or phone. I cheered myself up and read a little and the day passed. By Easter Monday I was back to my normal positive self again.

**Thelma Fisher**  
**High Street Baptist Church**



# My Easter Monday pilgrimage



As many of you are aware, on Easter Monday I usually walk to St Albans with a couple of dozen people from Tring for the St Albans Pilgrimage.

This Pilgrimage is around seventeen miles, and I have been doing this for more years than I care to count! I started when I was a teenager back in the 60s, starting from Kings Langley, but had a few years off when the family were young. We join with thousands of others from all over the St Albans Diocese who also walk from their parishes, culminating in a big service in the Cathedral at 3.00pm. Sitting on the floor is the only way they can get everyone in; with banners and Alleluia flags waving, it is a tremendous sight!



Over the years it has become more of a personal challenge, as well as being an important part of my Easter journey. Because of the coronavirus, the pilgrimage was cancelled this year which left me thinking: what do I do instead? I needed a challenge, so I decided to walk the miles, but spread over the nine days of Holy Week and Easter as that would be my daily exercise of an hour(-ish!), and it would give me that time set aside

for reflection etc and enjoying our beautiful countryside.

The theme this year was 'Tread lightly on the Earth' so I always walked from my house, always using a slightly different circular route, and enjoyed the beautiful countryside that the Chilterns offer. I have taken hundreds of photos (as I have had the time to) and I have spoken a greeting to everyone as I have walked past them. I have recorded intercessions for the Easter Day Dawn Service and I have watched Spring come to life and blossom – certainly not on hold this year.

I have mulled over the ongoing news and restrictions regarding Coronavirus and tried to get things in perspective and stay positive. I have thought about lockdown and how this has affected so many people in so many ways. In contrast I have tried to focus on the freedom we get from faith in Jesus Christ, travelling through Holy Week on his journey to the cross and ultimate resurrection.

I have had in mind the names of people who are stuck inside their homes because of restrictions and been very aware of the struggles some of them are going through; for friends in other countries facing even tougher restrictions than us. I have remembered the friends whom I have shared the local walks with, in years gone by: lots of memories and nostalgia there, as we talked of families, faith and putting the world to rights! I have remembered the people I would have been walking with on Easter Monday on pilgrimage and some who have passed from this world to the next.



I have sung songs in my head along the way, 'How great thou art' and in particular, some of those we always sing on Easter Monday, 'Guide me O thou great Redeemer', and 'Thine be the Glory'! It was a still small voice rather than the rip-roaring belting out in the Cathedral of all the Easter Monday favourites.



And rather than walking to St Albans, my mother Cathedral, I walked in a round-about way into Tring, to St Peter & St Paul's, my mother Church, arriving at 2.30pm, around the usual time of arrival. In spite of everything being strange and different, I still have that feeling of renewal and achievement. I have again this year been on pilgrimage!

**Janet Goodyer**  
**St Peter & St Paul**

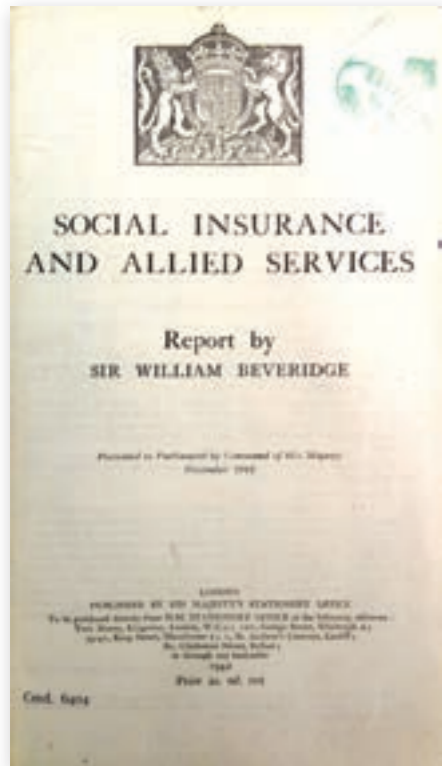




# Discipleship in a crisis



Most of you will be aware that the main elements of Britain's welfare state were set up just after the end of World War II, during the Labour government of 1945-50. Perhaps rather fewer will know that the roots of this transformation in care were planted in the depths of the war. The Beveridge Report was issued in November 1942 when battles were raging around the world against fascism, and victory was not in sight. Its author was driven by a clear and ambitious vision: 'Now, when the war is abolishing landmarks of every kind, is the opportunity for using experience in a clear field. A revolutionary moment in the world's history is a time for revolutions, not for patching.'



Beveridge argued for a coherent government policy: 'Social insurance fully developed may provide income security; it is an attack upon Want. But Want is only one of five giants on the road of reconstruction and in some ways the easiest to attack. The others are Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness.'

Commentators have been tempted to compare our current travails with the War, to encourage a blitz spirit of endurance and mutual help. In most cases our

deprivation and suffering are quite modest by the standards of the world at war, although that does not prevent us feeling anxiety and especially loneliness.

At a time when a week ago feels like a different era, our Parish Vision Day back in September 2019 seems a long time past. On the other hand, it feels as if life is on hold, and that we cannot progress longer term ideas when we are worried about our health, and that of our families, friends, and neighbours. The lesson, and I hope encouragement, from Beveridge back in the dark days of 1942, is that we can and should still be preparing for a time when this crisis is past. It may also be that we need to rethink some elements of the Vision.

Our parish workshop followed the theme of Growing in Discipleship. Our vision can be summed up in the sentence: 'We love and believe in God and we help all people in our community to realise that they are known and loved by God'.

Prior to the Coronavirus lockdown the parish and district church councils had been discussing this and working groups had been exploring the three areas of focus identified last September: we attract people by being open to all, working to make our worship more inclusive and welcoming; we want them to stay – be involved – join in, expanding the many learning, interest, and prayer groups that members of the parish run; we help those in need everywhere, with pastoral care and prayer, exploring how we can strengthen this in each of our churches.



## Pastoral Care

The current crisis has put the spotlight on the pressing need for Pastoral Care, making sure that we maintain contact with everybody in the parish, and especially the isolated and vulnerable. Before the crisis, discussions on this progressed at district level, recognising the differences in scope and expectation of pastoral care in the varied sizes of community across the parish. The focus of discussion was on making sure that we provide support to members of the church at moments of personal difficulty. In Tring the DCC is working on initiatives to ensure that personal issues, e.g. unexplained absences, are picked up by the church; it is also working on the welcoming role (which fits into inclusive worship, see below). In the small villages the view is that networks of church members and friends are generally able to spot serious personal problems. In Aldbury discussions are continuing about how best to be more effective.

## Inclusive Worship

This group has refined its objective as being 'To encourage a welcoming worship environment for all'. It has been busy researching the many good ideas generated for the January PCC. It is focusing on a programme to support the evolution of the sidesperson role into that of church welcomer, including a role description, support and training, and badges. It has a range of suggestions to make our worship more accessible for differing ages and abilities, including: revamped children's bags and play areas

and consulting Dementia UK experts for input on our services/pointers/tips. It is also continuing to explore a number of other specific ideas.

## Promoting Small Groups

This working group has been discussing how to provide a wider range of teaching and support groups. Lent groups were set up at a variety of times and places (and even if the meetings were suspended, the study guides are available online). The next priorities are to arrange a study group on the Beatitudes during the summer, and to trial a Pilgrim's course.

As we learn how to keep in contact by a variety of electronic media, ranging from the humble phone to multi-platform video-conferencing, we can, I hope, use these means to further our discussion

and planning of our parish initiatives.

The diocese gives us support and guidance in what it terms our Mission Action Planning (MAPs), and we draw on resources from its Flourishing Churches programme. There is, of course, a form for us to complete, to discipline us in following a structured approach to our priorities. I have been working on a draft of the form, drawing on the material from the Vision Day and subsequent discussions. I'd be happy to share the draft with anybody who would like to read it or contribute to the process.

More important than the form, per se, is the process of thinking and praying together to work out what Growing in Discipleship means for us in our parish. In the cycle depicted in the chart, we spent last year mainly at the first two stages: Looking at where we are, and trying



to Discern together what our priorities should be. The current restrictions may limit our ability to Act, but we can continue to Plan, and not least, to pray for guidance as we learn to live in a new environment.

**John Whiteman, St Peter & St Paul**

# Food collection and delivery to Tring and District



Tring's Justice & Peace Group have produced a useful list of local businesses that will arrange for collection or delivery of food and other products

without the need for people to go into shops. It covers Tring and several of the villages and can be found on [www.justiceandpeacetring.org](http://www.justiceandpeacetring.org). The list is updated regularly.

**Michael Demidecki, Justice & Peace Group**

**Food collection and delivery to Tring and District**  
Compiled by Justice & Peace Group, Tring (Updated 16 April 2020)  
Please send any amendments to [michaeldemidecki@gmail.com](mailto:michaeldemidecki@gmail.com)

**Supplies**  
**Beechwood Fine Foods, 42 Frogmore St, Tring. 01442 828812**  
Have regular bread, fruit and vegetable deliveries. Offer to provide food supplies as follows: can take orders over the phone and put them together for collection or delivery. You can pay online and then collect your order from the shop, or outside the shop, or have it delivered to your car (e.g. while you are parked in the car park). You can't believe ask for delivery to your home too. You can pay by credit card by the door to avoid having to go into the shop. Current opening hours: weekdays, 8am to 3pm; Sat, 8.30am-3pm; Sun (no deliveries this day), 10.30am-12.30pm.

**Healthcare Health Food Shop, 53 High St, Tring. 01442 822311**  
Offering collection. Phone to give order. Payment can be made over phone by card. Can wait outside shop or in car park for order to be brought to car. Believed that local deliveries can be arranged too. Open 9am-5.30pm, Mon-Sat.

**P E Mead & Sons Farm Shop, Wilstone Green, Wilstone, Tring. 01442 828478**  
Can deliver to over-70s, vulnerable people and NHS frontline workers. At moment delivering to Mentmore, Cheddington, Wilstone, Marsworth, Buckland, Long Marston, Pilscombe, Dryton Beauchamp, Tring, and Weston Turville (possibly - need to put in application). To order send list of wants to email address or use online submission form on website. Currently putting together a product list. £20 minimum order, with £2.50 service and packing fee.

**Dunsley Farm Shop, London Rd, Tring. 01442 825667**  
Deliver to Tring and surrounding area, you can place your order by phone. They offer fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs, bread, also anything else they have in their shop. They are open: Mon-Sat, 8am-5pm; Sun, 10am-5pm. Deliveries are currently taking place two days after order is placed.

**Sandwich Plus, Dolphin Square, Tring. 01442 826489**  
Can deliver orders of fresh bread, pasties, classic and speciality sausage rolls, feta and spinach slices, quiche and goats cheese and red onion tarts along with a selection of cheeses, fresh free-range eggs, cakes, apple pies, dried pasta and savoury cutting pies. Minimum order of £20. No del. charge. Message or call, Mon to Fri, 7am-12 Noon.

**Grooms Farm Shop, Ivinghoe. 01296 668326 [info@groomsfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@groomsfarm.co.uk)**  
Please place any orders via website or by email and only phone if you do not have access to email. Ring or go online to order, can pay by card or online. Deliveries to Tring and nearby villages on Wed-Sat. Open for collection of pre-ordered items Thurs-Fri, 8am-5pm. Supply home-produced meat, eggs, poultry, vegetables, cheeses, and deli.

**Kings Farm Shop, Wendover. [www.kingsfarmshop.co.uk](http://www.kingsfarmshop.co.uk)**  
but you cannot order online and collect. We are only offering local delivery, no collection from the shop. Please note there is a maximum of 2 boxes per household and that these boxes are being offered as a priority to the elderly and people who are self-isolating. Delivery within 5 working days. Orders over a 10-mile radius will not be processed, and we will refund you. We are now closed on Sundays, reopening on Monday at 10am.

**Wigginton Village Shop, The Sports Ground, Wigginton HP23 6HH. 01442 891061**  
[wiggintonshop@gmail.com](mailto:wiggintonshop@gmail.com)  
The shop is doing deliveries, mainly in Wigginton and to our volunteers, one of whom lives in Tring. We are also now offering Cholesbury and St Leonards residents the service too, as they don't have access to a nearby shop. Complete attached order form and send scan/photo to email above. If received before 10am, delivery should be on following day. You will be phoned to make payment arrangements.

**The Espresso Lounge, Tring**  
Order via [www.baristalife.co.uk](http://www.baristalife.co.uk) Coffee and eggs. Delivering locally or collection.

**Dunsley Farm, London Rd, Tring. [brewery.co.uk](http://www.brewery.co.uk)**  
or online, pay by card, give car registration no; phone when outside shop on Tue, 11am-5pm; Wed-Fri, 9am-6pm; Sat, 9am-5pm.

**Tring. 01442 823392**  
on the next day (or for delivery after 3pm the next day, but only if people are

**Wendover HP23 6HF. 01442 244447 [carolnathwait@shopmenorfd.com](mailto:carolnathwait@shopmenorfd.com)**  
to collect at farm gate. Pay online or by card over phone. Orders placed on following Friday (telephone when on way so order can be put outside).

**Zoleshill, Amersham HP7 OJX. 01494 729418**  
[info@zoleshill.co.uk](mailto:info@zoleshill.co.uk) Meat: free-range lamb and pork; rabbit, pigeon and game (seasonally varied); livestock; dry-cured, home-reared bacon. Customers can collect from farm shop.

**296 585022 [www.2poundstreet.com](http://www.2poundstreet.com)**  
including ready-cooked meats, fresh bread, eggs, milk, butter, wine gettable boxes (mix of salad veg, cooking veg and fruit) in 1-, 2- or 4-kg bags in pay by card or online. Will deliver within 10m radius of Wendover (so but with orders taken on Sun/Mon first delivery would be on Tue.

**Tring Workshops, P.E. Mead & Sons Farm Shop, [puddingstonedistillery.com](http://www.puddingstonedistillery.com)** Offers range of Campfire gins. Can purchase online with free delivery of some items. See website for details.

**Meals**  
**Mrs Green's Rather Nice Soup, Tring. 07930 404411**  
Local producer making homemade soup and meals (e.g. shepherd's pie, lasagne) and puddings (e.g. bread and butter pudding, fruit crumble). Soups and puddings are £2.50 each, main dishes are £4 each. If you order £10+ free delivery.

**Passion Fruit Catering, based next to Mead Farm Shop, Tring. 01442 891367**  
<http://www.passionfruitcatering.co.uk/menulists>  
Local catering company preparing and delivering meals for 1-4 people from £7.50. Weekly menu updates. Order Wednesday by 4pm for Friday delivery, order Thursday by 4pm for Saturday delivery.

**Bhujon (Indian). 01442 891062 <http://www.bhujon.com/>**  
Take-away or home delivery plus ordering online.

**The Kings Arms Pub. 01442 823318 <http://www.kingsarmspub.co.uk/>**  
\*Menu updated\* Take-away service (both collection and delivery) Wed-Fri, 11:30am-2pm, 5pm-8:30pm; Sat, 12 Noon-8:30pm; Sun, 12 Noon-4pm. Closed Mon-Tue.

**Olive Limes (Indian). 01442 828444 <https://www.olivelimes.com/>**  
Take-away service, Thursday-Saturday, 5pm-9:30pm.

**Tamarind (Indian). 01442 822333**

**Woodz Pizza (Pitstone). 01296 531520 <http://www.woodzpizza.com/>**  
Stone baked and wood fired pizza. Open Wednesday to Sunday 5-10pm. Delivery only during Covid19.

**Chicken 'N' Pizza, Tring. 0144 289 0077 [brewery.co.uk](http://www.brewery.co.uk)**  
Telephone to order, open 3-9pm.

**Mighty Bite. 01442 828556 [www.mightybite.co.uk](http://www.mightybite.co.uk)**  
Menu only, phone to order.

**Greyhound pub, Aldbury. 01442 851228 <http://www.greyhoundpub.com/>**

**Mela (Indian restaurant), Aston Clinton. 01296 630110 <http://melarestaurants.co.uk/>**

**Other local shops (non-food and drink) offering a delivery service**

**Almar (Tring) Ltd, 24 High Street, Tring HP23 5AH. 01442 823934 [www.almarprinting.co.uk](http://www.almarprinting.co.uk)**  
Printer paper, inks, exercise books & arts & craft activities for children. We can also run small print jobs at the moment. Free delivery within 5 miles of Tring. Open Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm.

**Metcalfe's Home Hardware, 51-52 High Street, Tring HP23 5AG. 01442 823144**  
Delivery to Tring and district. Open Mon-Sat, 9am-4pm; Sun, 10am-2pm.

**G Grace & Son, 68 High St, Tring. 01442 820950 <https://www.grace-son.com/>**

**Fancy That, 67 High St, Tring. 01442 828925 <https://fancythat.co.uk/>**  
The shop is currently closed but they will deliver most items free of charge to Tring and surrounding area. Orders can be made through the website, by Facebook message or by phone. There is a virtual shop on the website.

**Our Bookshop, 87 High St, Tring. 01442 827653 <https://www.tringbookfestival.co.uk/bookshop>**



# Life in social isolation



I thought that when, just after Easter, Annette asked for my thoughts on the self-isolation we are all undertaking, it would be easy to write about. But the more I tried to put my thoughts

in order, the more jumbled my writing became. Compared to many others, I am fortunate and some of this article must seem rather trivial. However, this jumble is a reflection of how I am feeling, as we begin the sixth week of lockdown.

Well, I'm not exactly isolating on my own. I am stuck at home with my husband, Mike! Previously, we both had various volunteering activities, social groups and clubs, family gatherings, the odd local concert, not to mention Church attendance. Some we participated in together, but during the week, we were often out separately 'doing our own thing'. This worked well. We always had our own experiences to talk to each other about and enjoyed our shared activities all the more for a little time apart.

In the beginning, as I watched the news, the severity of the situation became increasingly alarming. The one thing I will never forget that brought the seriousness of our situation home was the comment from Boris Johnson; 'Some of us will lose family members before their time.' I was frightened for my family and friends. My son cut his holiday short and flew back to Australia just before they closed their borders. And we, along with the majority, obeyed the order to stay at home.

I'm a half full sort of person, so with usual positivity, I made a list of long-delayed tasks both inside the house and in the garden. This isolation was a nuisance, but I would make good use of my time, I thought. I set off with determination to complete some of the list. The weather has been kind, so the garden tasks have been completed, with the exception of painting the fence. (No leftover paint here, and none to be bought in Tring.)

Mike kept his list firmly in his head and plodded along in his quiet calm way. We only need the recycling centre to open up, so we can clear our garage of items we have 'decluttered'.

I have been impressed with the goodwill of my neighbours, a young family, whom I did not know until

now, who put a message through the door offering assistance if necessary, for shopping or medicine collection. Suddenly I had been placed in the 'old' category. That made me pause for thought.

I do realise that I am very lucky, despite being deprived of many of my freedoms. I live in a family home, where there is enough space for two of us to rattle around. The garden has proven a delight. Not only providing us with tasks to keep busy, but space for relaxing, reading and drinking tea! The quiet was most noticeable. No jets going to Luton, few cars on the bypass (although there are more now), birds increased in number and species and surely sang louder and longer. The colony of newts in our pond have eaten all the tadpoles. Time to sit and watch.

I've embraced new technologies, watched the Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals broadcast on Friday each week on YouTube, subscribed to Facebook to see what is going on in Tring and attended the virtual church services. The latter have been remarkably well put together and someone out there has plenty of technical knowledge to do this, for which I give thanks. I should also like to thank the clergy for presenting the services in a most accessible manner. It is fascinating to see who likes a script and those who would dearly like to go 'off-piste'. My book reading group members are now communicating via WhatsApp and have extended communication from book discussions to general observations, tv recommendations, jigsaw swapping, photos of our beautiful countryside and other ideas to keep spirits up.

My relatives in Australia (also in isolation) have found me on Facebook, including my 91-year-old aunt. A cousin in Oregon has re-established contact after several years of silence.

What do I miss? Most of all, my two grandchildren. Some readers might remember that I wrote about baby Freya, who was born on Christmas Day last year. I saw a lot of both grandchildren in January and February. Weekly visits and overnight stays ceased abruptly when Axel developed a cough and cold, followed by a temperature. This was in mid-March. It was enough to keep me away. So, I haven't seen any of the family except via Skype. Axel, at two and a half doesn't understand. He asked why Grandma didn't like him anymore, and

my heart broke. He won't remember this pandemic, but I will always remember his heartfelt question.

In retirement you can, within reason, do what you want depending on your health. I have missed many of my little activities that fill the day; a walk to Wendover Woods and a coffee in the café, a walk around Whipsnade zoo, attending Church, the U3A monthly meeting, co-ordinating a book group, delivering Village News, chatting with friends, visiting garden centres, running a writing group. All very simple things that make up my very comfortable life.

After five weeks and no real end in sight, I realised that I am beginning to slow down, not just in deed, but also in thought. I have had a several lethargic days recently and am beginning to realise the dangers of this sort of prolonged confinement to our mental health. On my daily walk I stop to chat briefly to complete strangers. They nearly always respond and clearly social contact is sorely missed by everyone.

The thought of families stuck inside a small flat in a city, or someone completely alone, makes me realise how fortunate I am. Personally, I know of only a few people who have had the virus and as yet no one who has died. I can't begin to know the depth of grief that thousands of families in this country have suffered and my heart goes out to them.

I have tried to pray for all those worse off than myself, but it has not come easily. I have found that setting a time aside for prayer other than during our church services, just hasn't worked well for me. Instead, I've often found that whilst thinking of other things, I have changed to praying without realising it. The short video at Easter on the Team website summed up my prayer difficulties. I hope God knows.

When this is all over, or at least the virus is under control, I wonder if we will all rush back to doing all the things we did before? I would like to think that people have learnt what the important things in life are. I hope we become a kinder more caring society, more tolerant of each other and less attracted to the materialist world we have been creating. I suspect that a few things may change but not as many as I would like. Social distancing is surely here to stay for a while but I could really do with a haircut!

**Vicky Baldock**  
**St Cross, Wilstone**

# High Street Baptist Church - Tring

Growing in the message and challenge of God



Although we are not meeting physically at this time, we continue to 'be' church. Please join us at our prayer meetings or use the links for resources and to stay connected.

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

**Church office** 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](http://www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk)



Tringbaptistchurch



High Street Baptist Church

**For kids' activities, links and resources:**



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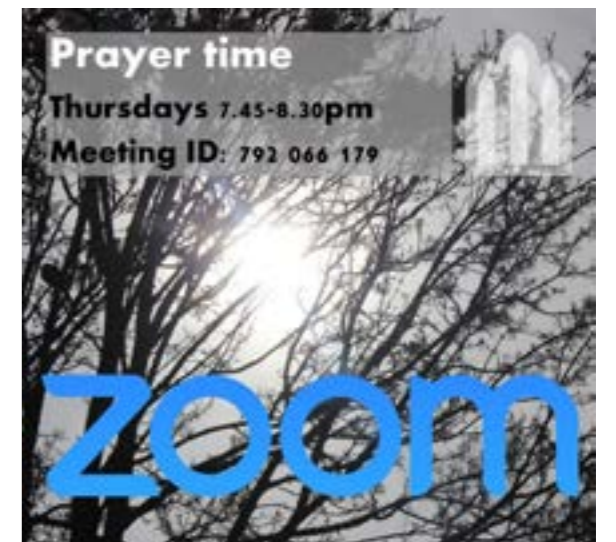
[www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/services/sermons/](http://www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/services/sermons/)



We have a 'Worship at Home' WhatsApp group to

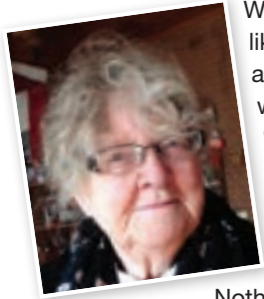


help us stay connected with one another. Please email us with your mobile phone number if you would like to be added to the group.





# Re-imagine, rethink and reboot!



We are a family who likes board games and last Christmas we were given 'Pandemic'. The mission is to stop the spreading of an epidemic across the world.

Nothing less than the fate of humanity is at stake. You race against time as the epidemic inexorably spreads across the globe. Unusually the game has no single winner, success is achieved only if all work as a team – all win or all lose. As in real life, to get such total unity is far from easy. Only once did we defeat the virus.

Today the situation is no longer a game; the death tolls surge from country to country as Covid-19 crosses boundaries bringing grief, suffering, hardship, solitude and pain. However imposed solitude can give a sense of suspended animation, of inertia. Unless we are directly involved, life seems to be going on somewhere beyond our confined space. The numbers can seem meaningless and we turn off the television, tired of politicians, experts and graphs. The reality is that beyond our closed doors, this is a time of extraordinary change. This virus will eventually be defeated, at least for a period, but as time goes by and the fatalities ease off, the question looms, what will be the outcome? Will things ever go back to the way they were? Or should we, as WHO leader Tedros Ghebreyesus warns, 'be prepared for a new normal'.

If we look back at previous pandemics, the story is pessimistic; but in the long term there is some optimism. Truly a glass half empty in the sense that there is heartbreaking loss of human life but amongst the survivors can be found a determination for not just survival but regeneration and enterprise. Eventually the glass is half full. The 14<sup>th</sup> Century Black Death, the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Plague and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish Flu are all examples of how, out of the most appalling of situations, humans can create new horizons.

The Black Death lurked across Europe for decades, creeping along trade routes and attacking cities before turning into a complete pandemic in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Numbers vary but between 1346 and the 1350s it is estimated that

60% of Europe's population died. 'O happy posterity who do not experience such abysmal woe, who will look upon our testimony as a fable' wrote Petrarch, locked down in Florence. The bubonic plague was transmitted by fleas which were hosted by the carrier the black rat. It arrived in England in the 1340s, inflicting demographic carnage as, over the next few years, approximately 50% of the population died.

The plague did eventually recede; however, the result of the devastation was both dramatic and long lasting. Indeed, the whole edifice of the feudal system was eroded as the social bonds of allegiance and service were broken. Peasants revolted for higher wages, land was suddenly plentiful and, in Britain, serfdom virtually disappeared, giving room for the growth of an enterprising thrusting middle class.

The Great Plague of 1665, also carried by fleas, caused considerably less loss of life, but it is estimated that 65,000 died in London alone. We know that coronavirus is the cause of our pandemic. People of the 17<sup>th</sup> century had only suppositions as to where their pestilence originated. Some thought it arose from an 'effluvia', the breath or sweat of a person, or it was carried by a 'miasma' in the air, dogs and cats were blamed for spreading it and killed. But for the majority, it was a punishment by God for mankind's iniquity. However, as with us they decided that the contagion could only be stopped by isolating the sufferer... 'the infection was propagated insensibly, and by such persons as were not visibly infected, who neither knew whom they infected or who they were infected by' wrote Defoe in 'Diary of the Plague Year'. That certainly strikes a chord.

Whilst the death toll was not as enormous or the effect as universally traumatic as that of the Black Death, the Great Plague also provided opportunity for change – or the acceleration of already established trends. This was the period of the Restoration. With a sweeping away of puritanical laws and practices, Charles II was welcomed back. Pepys' diary gives a graphic account of the atmosphere of extravagant hedonism after the plague receded and London was 'cleansed' by The Great Fire. There was a surge in creativity – not just in art, literature, the theatre and architecture, but also in science.

The period after the slaughter of WWI,

together with the added death toll of the Spanish Flu pandemic, produced a combined effect even more life-changing. Up to 500 million people died worldwide and 250,000 in the UK. Added to the trauma of war, this produced what could be described as a complete paradigm shift. As with the Black Death, trends that were already emerging took off, exacerbated by ineffectual government response. In the UK there was no centralised organisation of resources or planning: this was left to committees set up in individual towns and areas, each of which made its own rules and suggestions. ('The News of the World' promoted eating porridge.)

The rise of fascism and communism can obviously not be blamed on Spanish Flu; however that plus the results of the war produced a decade of economic turmoil, political discontent and social unrest; added to which is an artistic surge of creativity that produces the BauHaus, Art Deco, surrealism and cubism. Again, relief produces a hedonistic atmosphere: jazz, cinema, flappers; the world of 'Great Gatsby'.

Can we learn anything from these early pandemics and the aftermath? Will we have social upheaval as after the Black Death? Will the arts flourish as after The Great Plague? Can we look forward to a 'roaring twenties'? Predictions are dangerous, but certainly we can prepare ourselves for the fact that things will change. There is no question of putting the clock back and all will return to what it was. Leaving aside the enormous economic impact of the bale out of the last few months and the depressing effect on business and industry, there have been social changes in ways of working, travelling, education and most of all in technology. Perhaps most importantly this pandemic is not regarded in terms of a local event but is a global concern. All our information and the government's calculations take into account global developments – this is not just affecting our country but our world. Perhaps Covid-19 will help achieve Greta Thunberg's aims for a united approach to our endangered environment.

So now is the time to re-imagine, rethink and reboot how a vision of the future can be nurtured and work for all parts of society. Our weapons of control and development are more sophisticated than in the past and the problem is not just ours but global; so as the 'Pandemic'

# How are you getting on?



During the current lockdown crisis our clergy have been putting together services, week by week, which provide on-line as many of the essential features of our regular pattern of worship as possible. So prayer and praise, confession, absolution and blessing are included, culminating in 'spiritual communion'. And there are a sermon and hymns, with music provided by Cliff Brown on the organ. Members of the congregation give the appropriate readings and intercessions. Owing to all the social distancing restrictions, the contributors are filmed singly, in their own homes, and edited together to make a seamless liturgy.



The abrupt imposition of lockdown, just before we entered the very special period of Holy Week and Easter, was a huge challenge which our ministry team rose to sensitively yet powerfully, helping to connect us to the reality of the Passion and Resurrection. The professional quality of the results has been most impressive.

We personally are finding this

game illustrates, working alone cannot be an option. Brexit appears to have been shelved for the moment, but it will be an important part of the equation.

However, there is one thing common to all these pandemics: they involve human beings at their most vulnerable – in fear of death. Reading contemporary diaries, commentaries and newspapers

alternative style of worship most effective and helpful, a real morale booster; the warmth and intimacy of the whole experience embraces us all, even if we are set apart from each other just now. From the perspective of choir members, the new regime is a complete turnaround: normally we can see the whole congregation throughout and have a close-up view of the back of the clergy heads, or at best their profile. Now we can feel a more personal connection to the individual on screen and we thank very warmly all those who have taken part.



The Church Times TV critic, the Rev Gilleen Craig, wonders what lasting effect this new approach will have on our worship when the curfew is eventually lifted. He offers three possibilities: (1) that as a result of this collaborative effort our Sundays will be deeper, broader and more nourishing than ever; (2) that far more people will have discovered on-line the inspiration and challenge offered

shows that just as important as politics and economics is sociology. As we have discovered over the last five weeks, it is people that count. Our community response is what has proved so impressive. Let us join with the hopes of Michael Morpurgo, who writing on 3 May in 'The Times on Sunday' says, 'I hear that some can't wait to be back to



by Christian worship and will flood in to fill up our pews; or (3) that we might, alas, find that sitting snugly at home, staring at a screen, cup of coffee or glass of sherry to hand, is so much more comfortable that no one ever goes to Church again!

No. We do not share his pessimism. We, like all of you, are looking forward to the day when we can once again physically meet as God's people and worship him together.

**Martin & Carole Wells**  
**St Peter & St Paul**



normal. No, normal won't do. Surely out of this must come a moment of hope for humanity, that we gather ourselves to create a world community and learn how to live together more equitably, in peace, in harmony with one another and our planet'.

**Caroline Elwood**  
**St John the Baptist, Aldbury**



# Renewing your wedding vows



Being happily married is truly a God-given gift and one that should be celebrated at every opportunity; not just annually, because if you are in love then any day is an excuse

to throw the windows open and yell it to everyone in the street: a form of communication we are all getting used to during this strange period of social distancing!

So, at the start of 2020, for our 33<sup>rd</sup> year of marriage, we decided we wanted to celebrate in style by renewing our wedding vows at St Peter & St Paul's. The wheels were set in motion with the wonderful Revd Jane and as luck would have it, our anniversary will fall on Saturday 6 June, a perfect day to bring all our friends and family together again.

Invitations were drawn up and the event even given its own name, 'The Still Do Do'. The excitement started to build.

Imagine our surprise when we, an already married old(ish) couple, were invited to a 'wedding welcome' for all the new young couples who are planning to get married for the first time. This in itself was a lovely gesture by the church and emphasised the fact that we would be getting married again in the eyes of the Lord.

## Why renew your vows?

Renewing our vows will be the sincerest way of restating to the Lord, our family and friends, that we still love each other. Like all long-term marriages, it hasn't all been plain sailing and our faith has helped us get through the low periods and conversely made some very special high points. Our belief in this divine intervention goes right back to the start of our relationship and looks a bit like this:

In June 1973, we were first placed together in a room at St John Ambulance Club, Tring. We were 9 and 11 years old at the time and we didn't really remember meeting until much later. We'd like to think that this was just God testing out whether we would be a good match in years to come.

On 6 June 1977, the big man upstairs decides that a school romance would be a great way of introducing us to each other properly. We started going out.

In February 1978, Lynne moved to Hampshire... doh! Clearly God had decided that the relationship was very special but we were too young to stay together at this time.

In the summer of 1979, despite our best efforts, we split up and lost contact... double doh! We both moved on to other relationships, never dreaming that God had more and better plans for us as a couple!

In the summer of 1985, God really worked his magic. After six years, Bruce bumped into and chatted with an old mutual friend, idly saying those immortal words, 'I wonder where Lynne is now?'



On 2 October, Lynne gets a letter (no email then!) from this old friend, just passing on that Bruce was asking after her. Three days later Bruce gets a very warm cold call from a lady in London that started with the words, 'Hello. Remember me?' Being both single we thought it would be fun to simply catch up on the last six years. Little did we know that on meeting again face to face it would be love at first sight... or should that be second sight?

Our love proved to be so strong that after a crazy period of courting (now that's an old-fashioned word) we got engaged in Rye on 6 March and married only three months later.

Now some might say this was all just coincidence but we like to think this incredible sequence of events was pre-ordained by a higher being!

So, why renew? In our case it just feels like the right time to do it. We've both been beaten up a bit in life's rich adventure. We have been brought closer together (if that is even possible) by Bruce beating cancer and Lynne being

affected by MS. These sort of life-changing events test a marriage and we like to think we rose to the challenge. Renewing our vows is our way of saying, 'despite everything we still love each other more than enough to get married again'.

Numbers are also important to us and multiples of three have featured a lot in our life. Renewing on a Saturday (6<sup>th</sup> day of the week) of June (6<sup>th</sup> month of the year) on our 33<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary ticked all the right boxes!

## Why Tring Parish Church?

Or perhaps the question should be, why Church?

While we have a very strong faith, we are not your conventional 'go to church every Sunday' sort of people. Like too many others, rather than go as we should to the big beautiful building in the town centre, our lives took us away from the social interaction of the church. We do, however, feel we have lived our lives in the Christian spirit; so, by renewing our vows in Church, here is our chance to thank God in his own house.

Also, despite having shied away from church for a number of years, Tring Team Parish has welcomed us back in with open arms, without judging us and with its very friendly approach. We feel like we belong!

## What now?

All was going well until a rather annoying bug reared its ugly head in the form of Covid-19 (not a multiple of three!). All of us have been affected in one way or another and we have personally lost friends to this horrible pandemic. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone at this time. Such tragedy puts everything in perspective and our renewal of vows, while very important to us, can wait until we are all safe again.

As of now we simply don't know whether the ceremony will happen and, even if the lockdown is lifted, whether anyone will want to come to such a large gathering. We do appreciate that we are already married and have been very fortunate in so many ways. We can't begin to think how couples are coping if their plans have been scuppered after so much planning and preparation. We pray that everyone gets through all of the challenges presented to us at this time.

**Bruce & Lynne Sherring-Lucas**

# William Shakespeare & virtual communion



I am writing this on Shakespeare's supposed birthday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, St George's Day, having had two virtual High Street Baptist Church communions via Zoom. Where is the connection?

Shakespeare was, in theory, a Protestant; in his day, attendance at a Protestant Church on Sunday was obligatory. However, many experts believe that Shakespeare was a secret Catholic and thus strongly opposed to Lollard beliefs which were very much anti the Catholic belief of the transubstantiation of bread and wine during communion. Lollards on the whole believed in the 'virtual' presence of Christ in communion through consubstantiation (Christ's presence and the bread and wine existing together, but separately) – and many died for this belief.

One of the leaders of the Lollards was Sir John Oldcastle, a close friend of King Henry V, who was burnt for insurrection and heresy (belief in consubstantiation and denying the need for penance) in 1417 after rebelling against the king. Shakespeare originally called his comic hero Falstaff by the name of Sir John Oldcastle – until forced to change it to Sir John Falstaff after protests by Sir John's family. His audience would have known about Sir John Oldcastle and his Lollard anti-transubstantiation beliefs. Oldcastle/Falstaff was thus a buffoon derided in Shakespeare's plays originally because of his belief of Christ's 'virtual' presence

only in the communion of bread and wine (as opposed to actual presence).

Pope Francis has said that Catholics cannot attend Mass and take communion during Covid-19 lockdown, but instead pray: 'My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart... I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.'

This, I think, is effectively a virtual communion (although I am no theologian). So it looks as if we are all going to have virtual communion and virtual worship for the next few weeks at least – maybe more. If you are over 75 it seems likely you will be asked to self-isolate until a vaccine is available.

Virtual means either something that is very, very, nearly the real thing ('she was a virtual prisoner in the cabin since seeing a bear outside') or something

that only exists with the use of a computer (he got a degree from a virtual university). I am not sure that virtual communion and services are really either. After all the virtual communion exists in reality for each person

and we see the other people in their reality (or listen to them by phone if we don't have a computer). In a way it is like the hagioscope or 'squin' in a medieval Church, which was a small tunnel through a wall from a 'safe area' into the altar area where the sacrament was being performed. In this way someone with, for example, leprosy, could witness communion without danger of infecting anyone. St Mary's Church in Pitstone has one, I think. Our virtual communion is a modern version of the squint, to prevent infection.

So – nothing new, really. For the next few weeks (or months) we will have our personal squints to take part in a service without danger of infection.

Oh – and in case you wondered, Shakespeare only used 'squin' once, in 'King Lear'. He never used 'virtual' although it was in use at the time meaning 'virtuous'. So maybe we are being virtuous in being virtual for communion.

**John Allan**  
High Street Baptist Church

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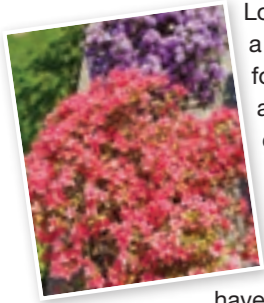
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**TEN YEAR GUARANTEE**



## Lockdown blues?



Lockdown has been a traumatic time for all of us, but in amongst the daily communications from the Government and the appalling statistics there have been, as we know, some wonderfully uplifting moments both on the wider stage and in our everyday lives.

For most of us though, what we have done, and are doing at home, to keep ourselves 'occupied may have been an insight too.

There have been the obvious: the gardening, cooking, TV and radio, odd jobs, exercise(!), but these tend, to some extent, to go on all the time. What about the other activities? From a personal perspective (and very aware that as there are two of us it makes it much easier), the telephone, email, WhatsApp, Zoom and Skype have never been so busy while we keep up more than ever with regular friends and those we don't usually tend to contact so much. We have been delving into the pile of jigsaws that we had inadvertently accumulated over the years, and hadn't realised quite how many we possessed. I discovered the first 1000 piece jigsaw I ever owned, bought for me by my parents when I was about 10 years old – it's *The Old Mill* published by Tower Press if you're interested. And Brian's love of trains is reflected in the number and variety of our puzzles featuring steam engines. An unexpected and interesting side effect was finding ourselves in memory lane: some we remember buying in particular places or because

they celebrated a particular event (VE Day is a popular one) or even just because we liked them – not to mention the ones that arrived as presents and the ones that make us wonder why we ever thought the subject matter interesting. There is also the 5,000 piece one I bought some time ago which, if we are honest, we will never start let alone finish.

One of the grand-daughters set up a WhatsApp family page, which is being a riot, and we also unearthed the Wii and have spent time making ourselves laugh – a real necessity (the laughter not the Wii).

And Brian, of course, is combining exercise with practicality, by deciding to repaint the hall, stairs and landing. This may just be the start of a complete overhaul! All of which brought me to wondering how everyone else has been spending their time. The newspapers are full of ideas: take up a new language, spring clean your home until you don't recognise

it, or make your garden perfect. But there must be people who have genuinely found something different and interesting to do whilst others have taken the time to stand back and reflect. Do share your lockdown with us.

**Chris Impey**  
**St Peter & St Paul**



## Zooming through lockdown



The first week of lockdown, members of High Street Baptist Church received details of services that we could participate in via Zoom. I had never heard of this and thought it might be like Skype or something and a camera would be needed. I was advised that this was not the case but an App was downloaded and that was it. I was

sceptical – but it really is easy.

We were sent notes of the meeting ID for services and prayer meetings and I joined the first service and was pretty amazed that I got straight in and could see people. It really is an excellent system and we use it for our church services, two prayer meetings a week and, more recently, three coffee mornings per week.

We have an amazing selection of people joining our Sunday services including our Interns from Germany, people who have moved away, and some

travellers who are visiting. Lately, Polly has found a way for people to join this who do not have computers but dial in from their phones. Grateful thanks from us all to Kevin, Joe, Ruth and Polly for organising all this. We also have a 'Worship at home' WhatsApp where people put songs, texts or talk about how good our God is. It's really lovely to be able to get together like this and see and hear people from church even when we can't meet together physically.

**Thelma Fisher**  
**High Street Baptist Church**

# Wartime Memories

## Commemorating VE Day 1945

### My war



WWII seems a long time ago, but as I am thinking about it, so many details come back to me very clearly.

Following Neville Chamberlain's earlier broadcast, where he declared 'Hitler had missed the bus', Father, Mother and I gathered around the wireless on 3 September 1939 to hear that we were at war with Germany. My father thought Mother and I would be safer away from our home in North London and so persuaded us to self-evacuate to various places around the country. However, it turned out that none of these places were much safer, and so we returned home after about three months and I returned to my old school.

My school was a small one and, to start with, we all went down to the shelter in the playground whenever the air raid sirens went off and we did our lessons there. During the early part of the war, I remember Mother and I sleeping under the dining table; it obviously did not occur to us that this would have afforded us little protection if a bomb had dropped on our house!

There were various bombs, including land mines, incendiaries – for which the air-raid wardens were provided with stirrup pumps to put out any resulting fires – V2s and doodlebugs, with the fearful silence until they dropped and exploded.

I do hope that I appreciated how resourceful my mother was in producing tasty and nutritious meals for us from the meagre rations available – for example, two ounces of cheese and

I left school in 1943, having taken and passed my School Certificate exams. I travelled to college and law school every day on the Piccadilly Line. As one passed through most stations, one could see where local residents had spent their nights sleeping on the platforms, sheltering from the bombs.

At the weekends my friends and I often went to small local dances, coming out into very dark streets. There were no street lights and, of course, no lights coming from houses – if home owners didn't draw their thick black-out curtains, they would hear the shout of the air-raid warden: 'Put that light out!'. However, there was usually a nice young man who would see you safely home. The girls from college in central London would tell me of the adventures they had with the overseas servicemen.

We were fortunate that as a family we had no one away serving in the forces and so did not have the continual worry that we would hear news of a death, injury or capture.

On VE Day I went up to London with friends and we all waved our flags, full of hope for the future. But that was not the end. Over the following few months, many lives were lost.

**Betty Aston**  
**St Peter & St Paul**



one egg per person per week! So-called luxury items, such as a can of fruit, were issued on a points system and so we would save up if there were a special occasion. Part of my mother's weekly routine was queuing up at Mac Fisheries in the hope that there would have been a delivery of ration-free fish. We also had clothes rationing, and I clearly remember my green coat made out of an old blanket!

### VJ Day

We will celebrate seventy-five years since VJ Day on 15 August, one way or another. If you have any memories of that day or any more war stories you would like to share, please contact me as soon as possible so we can get something in the July/August edition of **Comment. The Editor**



## VE75 Commemoration 8 May 2020 – *The Director's Cut*



Imagine you had plans for a large event in and around St Peter & St Paul's Church, involving an Act of

Remembrance,

live music, beer, young people talking about their grandparents' memories of WWII and finally (drum roll please) bagpipes on the Church roof. Then imagine that none of the above was permitted to take place because of the Covid-19 lockdown. What would you do?

The answer is that you ask the excellent people of Tring to be adaptable and to 'do their bit' in their gardens or in their kitchen, in whatever way pleases them. You then ask them to send you the results on film. Finally, you then use the wonderful natural resources of Tring as a backdrop to fill in any gaps. Sorted!

That was the cunning plan that Huw Bellis, Zoey Child and I devised, standing by Huw's wheelie-bin one morning, as Zoey and I were on our daily permitted walk. We invited twenty-five people to record different parts of the VE75 commemoration that was originally planned. Zoey would then edit it all together and I would stand around making unhelpful suggestions. The result would be played on YouTube at 2.50pm on Friday 8 May. It was all good fun, although there were a few challenges to overcome...

### *How to lay wreaths whilst obeying social distancing rules?*

We felt that the laying of wreaths was an important part of the Act of Remembrance and Sir Michael Simmons and our town Mayor, Roxanne, were more than happy to be involved. Sir Michael led the charge, in full uniform, by laying a wreath on the War Memorial a week ahead of time, on a lovely sunny afternoon. In the video it looks as if Roxanne lays her wreath straight after Sir Michael. In fact, she was filmed a week later when the sun had gone in and the grass had grown quite a lot. Then we cut to the War Memorial with cherry

blossom wafting in the breeze. Cherry blossom that had all blown away by the day itself. It made us realise how hard continuity must be in film making!



### *How to include Church bells when the Church is locked?*

The final element of the original VE75 Day was to have Church bells ringing out for peace across the land at 6.55pm. But our Church tower was locked. Luckily, many years ago, someone called Jemma had made a film and put it on YouTube. Chris Hoare managed to track her down and she was only too pleased to allow us to use the film.

We also had an issue with the piper. The national plans included bagpipes playing 'The Battle's O'er' and we thought it would be great fun to ask him to play from the Church roof. Richard Shardlow had a contact via his charitable work with The CastleTrex Pipers and all was arranged. But then the lockdown was threatened, and all service personnel were confined to base. However, CastleTrex came good



and made a film for us, of a solo piper. It made a beautiful end to the film.

### *How to edit together twenty pieces of film when you're supposed to be at University?*

We were lucky that Zoey's summer Uni term was taking place in her bedroom and so she could work on gluing the film together. I don't know much of the detail, but she disappeared for many hours and must have watched the content a million times.

Huw knocked his camera just before starting to speak and the first minute of film wobbled so much it made me feel sick. We asked for a 'take two'. He then filmed on a beautifully sunny evening, with birds singing, came back indoors – and realised the camera was switched off. 'Take three' was perfect.

Laura's film was great. She was talking about her grandfather, had beautiful diction and was even wearing a Union Flag tee-shirt. But in the background Zoey was convinced someone was running a bath (?), then someone walked past with loud footsteps, then walked back again. And then someone started playing the drums? We hope you can't hear them once she'd 'smoothed out the audio'.

Finally, we had a Zoom conference call of everyone involved in the film, to make a toast to the heroes of World War II. This toast was supposed to happen nationally at 3.00pm in all the pubs and bars, but instead we all sat at home, raised our glasses and I took a screen shot to put at the end of the film. That just about sums up the Covid-19 lockdown doesn't it?

Thank you to everyone who took part, especially to Pippa who had to encourage her cast of thousands to appear, to Zoey for all her technical expertise and to Huw for making sure the whole experience kept the spirit of commemoration of WWII.

Now that you know the back story, the film is still available on [www.TringTeamParish.org](http://www.TringTeamParish.org) if you would like to see it.

**Vivianne Child**  
*Tring Together*

## Thanks

Thank you to the whole cast and crew, all listed here for posterity.

Revd Huw Bellis, Rector of Tring Team Parish

Vivianne Child from Tring Together

Air Commodore Mark Chappell reading part of 'For the Fallen' by Laurence Binyon and the Kohima Epitaph

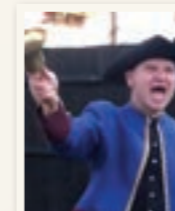


Richard Waring playing The Last Post and The Reveille

Air Marshal Sir Michael Simmons laying a wreath on behalf of the Armed Services

Councillor Roxanne Ransley, Mayor of Tring, laying a wreath on behalf of the town

Steve Berry, Tring's Town Crier reading 'The Cry for Peace Across the World'



Pippa Brush Chappell and contributors to 'Tring Remembers'; Lewis, Henry, Olivia and Annabel, Laura and Jon. The 'Tring Remembers' website can be found at [pippabc.wixsite.com/tringremembers](http://pippabc.wixsite.com/tringremembers)

The bells of St Peter & St Paul, filmed by Jemma

Richard and Jane Shardlow from Tring Brewery Company leading the loyal toast

Cliff Brown playing The National Anthem

The CastleTrex Pipers playing The Battle's O'er. Thank you to Richard Shardlow for the contact.

Mike Bass for the photos of Tring during WWII

Phil Cartwright for tidying the War Memorial

Zoey Child, Technical Director

On behalf of Churches Together in Tring, Tring Together and Tring Town Council

## A tale of two cities: Brussels and Dresden



On a recent trip to Norfolk we went with our two friends (formerly of Hunters Close, Tring) to Norwich Cathedral. In

the Cathedral Close we saw the memorial to Edith Cavell, the British nurse shot dead by German soldiers at Schaerbeek, Brussels.

Edith Cavell was born in a Norfolk vicarage in 1865. After working as a governess for several years, she returned home to nurse her father through a serious illness. When he recovered, she decided to devote her life to nursing and started her training at the age of 30 at the London Hospital.

After her training she worked in various hospitals and as a private nurse. In 1907 she was recruited to a training hospital in Brussels, a city in which she had previously served as a governess.

In November 1914, after the German occupation of Brussels, Cavell began taking in British soldiers and helping them escape through neutral Netherlands. Wounded British, French and Belgian soldiers and civilians were cared for in secret in her Brussels home. In August 1915 she was arrested and imprisoned after being betrayed. She was charged with 'war treason' and held for ten weeks, the last two in solitary confinement.

The British Government tried to get her released, but to no avail. British diplomats in Washington thought that German leaders would listen to the (then) neutral United States of America, but the US Legation in Brussels likewise could achieve nothing. The German Governor, Count Harrach, said his only regret was that there were not 'three or four old English women to shoot'. While other German leaders

in Brussels wanted her saved, she received no reprieve.

The night before her execution she received communion from the Anglican Chaplain, the Revd Stirling Gahan. She told him 'Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone'. At midnight the American and Spanish Ambassadors to Brussels made one last failed appeal to the German Governor-General. She was shot, along with a young Belgian

architect, at 7.00am on 12 October 1915 by eight German soldiers. She is remembered in the Church of England on that day every year.

In early 1945 my father was one of the first British soldiers into Dresden in the east of Germany. On the 14 February 772 RAF planes dropped over 2600 tons of bombs 'on target' to the city centre of Dresden, not the railway yards or the industrial area, but the houses where women, children and old men were living. Many of these were incendiary bombs which

produced a firestorm so great that underground air raid shelters had the air sucked out of them, leaving those in them to die of asphyxiation. It is difficult to know how many died but the figure is probably close to 25,000. At least 22,096 bodies were recovered at the time and a further 1,858 bodies were discovered during reconstruction works from 1946 to 1966.

My father seldom spoke about his war, like many men of his generation, but he could never accept that this attack on non-combatants was morally justified. Interestingly my eldest son, while training as an RAF pilot, wrote an essay on the ethics of war, saying the same thing about the bombing of Dresden without ever hearing what his grandfather thought on the subject. Perhaps the Church of England should remember 14 February as well.

**Jon Reynolds**  
*Tring Team*





## War diary of a Jewish refugee

We are privileged to have Jackie Robinson living in Aldbury, whose mother, Rosi Schul, came to the UK in 1939 as the teacher accompanying a Kindertransport. Rosi settled in Epsom as a Kindergarten teacher, probably recommended by the Jewish Board of Governors. In September 1942, she returned to London to take up a place at The Royal College of Music, studying the piano under Herbert Howells. That year she met Jules Ruben (a jazz pianist) at a Jewish club in West Hampstead and they married in June 1943. Jackie was born in 1944 and her sister Stephanie in 1949.

Rosi ran her own Kindergarten from 1953 for twenty-one years. She loved playing table tennis and was champion in Germany and in England. Since her arrival here in 1939, she knew nothing of the whereabouts of her parents and seven siblings. By the end of the war the Red Cross had traced them all and put them in touch with Rosi: they were all in Belgium, having survived various degrees of hiding, each having had incredible individual experiences during those years of loss and survival.

It wasn't until 2014, when the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reunion of the Kindertransport was commemorated, that Rosi, aged 99, reconnected with two of her Kinder from that journey. Now in their 80s, they recognised her as soon as they saw her and said she'd been like a mother to them.



When presented to Prince Charles, she immediately explained to him that she was NOT a Kind but had been their Chaperone. She was easily the oldest in the room. Rosi never lost her deep love of Germany and rued the fact that her life had been displaced from her beloved homeland. She died at home at the age of 103, having outlived all her family and even these remaining kinder.

Thanks to Jackie, we will be reproducing extracts from her mother's war diaries over the next few issues of *Comment*.

### Poland, 3 November 1938

The Thursday evening reading group embodied for me the most wonderful time of being at the orphanage in Esslingen, because it gave me a totally new and previously unknown experience. Theodore Rothschild (known as Herr Vater), his wife, Aunt Adele, Samuel Jonas and I would sit together and chat. On this particular evening we were not discussing Kuenkel or any other psychologist, but we were focusing on our possible destiny – emigrating to America. We moved on to talk about the present situation and then suddenly it all became too real – the doorbell rang and we were very surprised: 10.30 at night!

'Is Herr Rothschild there? Police!' We were chilled to the core, our hearts missed a beat. Police arriving at this hour of the night meant only one

certain thing – arrest and interrogation for unfounded or fictitious reasons. Rothschild took 'the gentlemen' into his office and before we could even adopt a cheerful or ironic attitude as to what it could mean and whom they were seeking, Herr Vater returned white-faced and called me out. I was merely surprised as what lay ahead for me was completely unimaginable. Jonas' laughter reassured me and I still felt calm. The Gestapo man, an unfeeling and unsympathetic fellow, spoke in a factual expressionless voice. 'Frau Schul, please get dressed and come with me to the Police station. Tomorrow you are travelling to Poland'.

I did not answer nor did I ask anything. In the face of such relentless, harsh, and terrible power as Germany's there is no point in responding with surprise, indication or entreaty. Also I had no unpleasant feeling. This was happening to me and I only thought, 'You must just let it happen, for whatever will be, will be.' The thought and significance of being separated from the work and the people, whom I loved, had not even occurred to me. For weeks and days beforehand I had had a feeling that this indescribably happy time could not last. In fact, the day before I had written about it in my diary. I fetched my keys from the living room and ignored Samuel and Jonas' alarming questions. I shut out what was happening and didn't want to discuss it nor ask any questions or express regret. Fraulein Leib, Herr Vater and Frau Rothschild had already gone upstairs to the dormitories to collect three boys. In the meantime I had learned that all Poles were to be deported from Germany within 24 hours, in fact by the 29 October.

Despite being heavily guarded I was allowed to go up to my room to dress, and I did this quite calmly. It was clear to me at that moment that cold, hunger and work awaited me and so I dressed accordingly. I pulled on a pair of thick knee socks over my silk stockings, wore my heavy lace-up shoes and a thick jumper and jacket under my coat. A very upset Fraulein Leib asked me, 'How can I help you dear child?' I needed a small case for my pyjamas, some underwear, stockings and toiletries. In the meantime

Jonas had come upstairs and watched this scene silently. When he heard I needed a suitcase he brought his own new suitcase. I refused it but he insisted I should take it. He could buy himself another one. His behaviour was that of a true and loyal friend and it touched me. Time was pressing on. As well as Jonas, Herr Vater similarly upset and shaken, asked me what else he could do. Give me money? Send news to my home? or whatever. Then I went back to my room – my wonderful beautiful room – and retrieved my diaries and letters from my little locked cupboard and placed them in my suitcase. Then I walked along the corridor and down the stairs into the hall for the last time. The three boys, Vitus Mandelbaum, Heinz Alter and Theo Sperber were downstairs and we said goodbye to everyone. I pretended to be my easy-going happy self and told the boys to be cheerful as Herr Vater had pointed out that at least we Esslingers could be together and that I indeed had some of my children with me. The others were all very serious whilst I acted

casually. The goodbye from Samuel made my stomach turn over. Jonas said nothing more. Saying 'goodbye' to these dear fellows was the hardest thing for me.

Then for the last time down the back stairs – those stairs which I had rushed up and down so many times dressed in my sports gear. To leave, to leave forever. Then outside into the wonderful courtyard for the last time, down the long flight of steps and out into the cold moonlit autumn evening and along the footbath. Being in complete control of myself I found myself calmly chatting with the officials and going along with the childish remarks made by the children whilst inwardly wondering what was to come.

At the police station we were inspected by the police and officials in a manner that was partly apologetic and partly disdainful. Personal details were registered and money was inquired about. 'Into which cell should they go?' asked an official. Then we were led along a passageway across a courtyard, up a staircase and through a large barred gate into a corridor where the cells were situated. I enquired after the Golds and I was led into a cell. Frau Gold was lying on an iron bed against the wall crying and Ingelein her daughter sat next to her puzzled and uncomprehending. I tried to comfort her but she only cried in distress 'Gentlemen, please send me a doctor.



My heart is failing.' The officials ignored everything. Ruth Gold was expected back from a Peter Kreuder evening in Stuttgart. I wanted to be with her in a cell but Frau Gold thought we should all stay together in her cell. I didn't want that. One night in this small cell with four people and this possibly sick woman with her wailing would only succeed in dispelling my cool calm and cause me to be weak and vulnerable. Self-preservation became the most important thing – enough sleep and peace. I thought it over very carefully and allowed myself to be led to a single cell. An iron bed, a little table, a seat in the corner, a pail with a cover on a large stone slab and above it attached to the wall a lavatory seat and also a

cold radiator. The official was pleasant and polite and apologised for everything being so primitive. I could only discern everything in the cell by the light shining from the corridor. Then the door closed. Some bolts slid in place and I heard the sound of the key being turned several times. Yet another door was closed and darkness surrounded me. I lay down straight away. I took off my coat and wrapped myself up in a linen sheet. Amazingly I experienced neither fear nor disgust as I lay down without any kind of sheet on the straw mattress on which many a job or criminal had laid before me. I was really warm and I had plenty of time to reflect on all that had happened, whilst hearing the

sound of a male choir tunelessly singing the same melody over and over again.

I was not at all surprised at everything that had happened. It was now clear to me that this unbelievably lovely time – this happy and fulfilling work and phase of my life had ended... In particular, situations and memories of people that I loved. I would not be seeing all

my friends again. Away with my plans for Chanukah. What would become of my beautiful room? My books, my records and pictures? What would Horstel and Katchen be saying? What would become of Samuel? And all the time the sound of men singing and the clinking of the prison warder's keys. An awful sound. I could not sleep however hard I tried. I heard Ruth Gold arrive and her joyful manner did me good. She chattered brightly with the warders as her head was still full of the Peter Kreuder melodies. In spite of the heavy doors one could understand every word, Then the sound of the doors and the keys and the cell door shut behind Ruth.



## Face shields made in Tring School



When the shortage of PPE first became apparent, many schools and colleges gave their safety goggles and visors to hospitals and nursing homes. Many

others realised that they had the capability to make them, and this included the fantastic D&T (Design and Technology) department at Tring School.



Miss Corney and Miss Jones came in to school in the first week of the Easter holidays with the plan to make 100 face shields, ten of which would go to St Joseph's in Tring. A crowd-funding page was opened in the hope of making

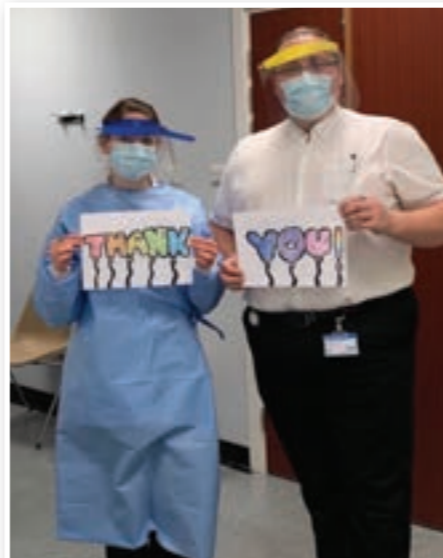


£500 to pay for the materials. In a week, £3000 was raised! Miss Corney and Miss Jones were able to make 1000 face shields which went to forty-two different organisations, including local surgeries and nursing homes. Here are the shields being worn by staff at St Peters Ward,

Hemel Hospital, The Paul Strickland Scanner Centre and Stoke Mandeville Intensive Care Unit.

And their great work continues!

**Jane Banister**  
*Tring School Chaplain*



## 'I would like to rise very high...'



My family is very lucky to live on the eastern edge of Tring, next to fields which stretch down to the Grand Junction canal. From our garden we can see Ivinghoe Beacon (and there is one tree in profile which looks just like James' Giant Peach Tree in Roald Dahl's book). The closest hill to our house is Tom's Hill, which sits above the one remaining quarry by Pitstone.



I love to be in the garden, looking at the view, whether on a sunny day, as in the photo, or on a bleak day; or in the evening, when the sun is still shining on the Beacon, but no longer on us. That is no surprise, you will say: we all enjoy the theatre of a beautiful view, and Tring is blessed truly to be in an area

of outstanding natural beauty.

What is more intriguing is that I like to walk to Tom's Hill – about a mile and a half from home, with a steep climb at the end – and then look back at Tring. But not just at Tring: I strain to see my own

house set in the midst of the buildings and trees (there are lots of trees in Tring). It's just in front of the Sports Hall, which is a bit of an eyesore but very handy for locating features of Tring. I have to wonder why I find it so satisfying to walk more than a mile and then just look back at the building that I can see up close any time that I like. I feel that it's about seeing my home in the context of all the other homes in Tring, of perhaps being re-assured that it has its place, literally but also symbolically, in the wider scheme of things.

I am reminded of the prayer by Michel Quoist, a French priest who published originally in the 1960s. Quoist says 'If only we knew how to look at life',



and one of his prayers starts: 'I would like to rise very high, Lord, /Above my city, /Above the world, /Above time./ I would like to purify my glance and borrow your eyes'.

As we struggle to live with the impact of Covid-19, and to understand why it has happened to us and to so many victims, we need re-assurance that we are still in some way encompassed in God's plan, that we are not forgotten, despite the 'hateful snags of sin' that Quoist refers to.

You can read the whole prayer in a Google preview of Quoist's book of Prayers.

**John Whiteman**  
*Tring Team*

## Book Group survives lockdown & flourishes!



The parish Book Group is one of the lasting legacies of Didier Jaquet's time with us, first as ordinand and then (2011 – 2019) as assistant clergy.

The group meets monthly and the subject matter of the book discussed has varied hugely; we sometimes discuss learned theological texts, but fiction – and semi-fiction – is also regularly included. As well as teasing out the principal themes and their implications from the current offering, we very much enjoy not only debating whether or not we found our latest book gripping, but also finding out why others differed – which almost always happens! Book Group binds us together as a community and makes us discover more about each other than might happen over a post-service coffee. It also challenges and broadens our thinking on an enormous range of subjects. That's why it has such a loyal following.

Of course, in Didier's time, it always met in St Peter & St Paul's Church behind the font; it was unthinkable that it could be otherwise. So could the group survive a locked Church? We now know the answer to that question – it is a resounding YES!

Our first live on-line discussion

in April, connected nine households by the magic medium of the internet, courtesy of Zoom. It was preceded by a week-long 'chat' forum, taking the form of responding in writing to eight questions about the book; the debate this generated was both fascinating and impressive. Many of the participants were in a (very) senior age group and found the format, far from being daunting, actually rather conducive to participation. Thus, the written contributions during the preliminary chat permitted more time for pondering (we seniors are good at this!). Moreover, during the live on-line debate, technology allows only one person to speak at a time and you can turn up the volume or use headphones to hear clearly what everyone is saying (we seniors sometimes found this difficult in Church!). Of course, the technology did exclude some, so in future, people can join the live on-line discussion by dialling from an ordinary landline telephone, rather than using a computer. That will, we hope, enable more people to take part, contribute and experience the joy of meeting our church friends again in a familiar format.

The book we discussed in April was Iris Murdoch's 1958 novel 'The Bell'. It concerns a motley group of characters forming an Anglican religious community, housed in a decaying mansion next to an ancient priory, still occupied by a thriving, but closed, community of nuns – who in

some respects emerge as the heroines of the novel. One wise comment on the book from our group was that the effect of lockdown on the nuns, in their closed community, was (in Iris Murdoch's version) by and large highly positive.

Most of us found the novel hard to put down; that included me – well, the novel was my choice, although the previous time I had read it was when it was a set book at school. Issues of faith, belief, sexuality, self-control and wisdom appear prominently – and generated excellent debate. The book is also very funny in places; I thought so, anyway. If you want to get a flavour of what was said, the transcript of the debate from the preliminary chat forum has been posted on a special page of the church website.

If you want to know more about how to join the group and access the Book Group website page, please contact John Whiteman: john@tringteamparish.org.uk. Anyone from *Comment's* readership – and beyond – is most welcome to join.

**Edmund Booth**  
*St Peter & St Paul*



## Getting to know you...



There were plenty of interesting issues raised by 'The Bell' and I would like to have discussed a number of them more fully, which was difficult given the medium

and the time we had available to us. There was one comment I wanted to think more about because it was discussed variously by members of Book Group who had differing opinions. On arrival at Imber Court, a place where Dora Greenfield has come somewhat reluctantly, she begins to ask questions. 'What did you and your husband do before you came here?' She is met by Mrs Mark's response: 'We never discuss our past lives here... And when

you come to think of it, when people ask each other questions about their lives, their motives are rarely pure, are they?'

Now I realise that when I encounter new people in any walk of life, I ask exactly those sorts of questions. It is certainly curiosity because I am interested in people: it is a way of finding out who that person is, having a context to build up a picture of them and thus get to know them better. It is not so that I can be judgemental but so that I can get beyond whatever else I can see to better understand who they are. At work (meeting people from all over the world) it is a way of building relationships in order to be better at what I do. I will remember that this Croatian has just returned from maternity leave and ask to see a photo of the baby; that this Dutch publisher lost her husband to a brain

tumour the year before and ask how she is faring. At Church I usually ask a newcomer how long they have been living in Tring and go on to find out what brought them here: which can lead in many different directions. It's called conversation! At the Jazzercise class I used to attend, where I used to stand rather awkwardly and shyly at the back, I was much better at welcoming newcomers to the group than making friends with established members who already knew each other. Asking one of these what she did for a living led to the conversation which enabled us to become foster carers last year.

So what do you think? I was only surprised that some of the group agreed with Mrs Mark!

**Annette Reynolds**  
*St Peter & St Paul*



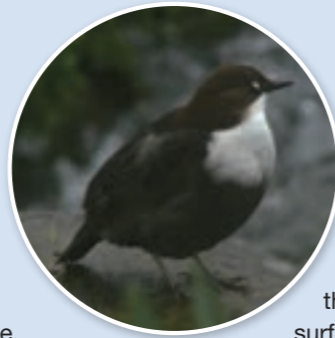
# Tweet of the month

In mid-March this year, just prior to the lockdown, there was news of a Black-bellied Dipper in High Wycombe in an area called The Rye. Given that the closest Dippers to Tring are normally in The Cotswolds and Black-bellied Dipper is a rare winter visitor from Scandinavia or possibly western Europe, one fifteen miles away was too close to ignore; so I went over to see it.

Black-bellied Dipper is a subspecies of Dipper, which these days is also known as White-throated Dipper to distinguish it from the other four species of Dipper. Brown Dipper is found in Asia, American Dipper is found in North America, White-capped Dipper is found in northern South America and Rufous-throated Dipper is found in central South America. The White-throated Dipper is found across Europe, in a small area of NW Africa and scattered across Asia. All the Dipper species seem to prefer rocky, fast-flowing streams and rivers and are frequently found in hilly or mountainous areas – not really how you would describe High Wycombe!

All of the Dipper species belong to

the Cinclidae family and their scientific generic name is Cinclus, which is derived from the Ancient Greek word kinklos which was used to describe small tail-wagging birds that live near water – appropriate but not unique to Dippers, as this would equally apply to Pied and Grey Wagtails and Common Sandpiper. The English name Dipper refers to their habit of diving in water which is very unusual behaviour for a small songbird. Most birds that dive under water are not songbirds and it may be that Dippers are the only songbirds that dive underwater. Their affinity with fast-flowing water stems from how they actually stay under water. Unlike most other diving birds Dippers don't have webbed feet or lobed toes to push themselves down into the water so instead they angle their backs so that their heads are lower than their tails and then the fast water rushing over their backs forces them down to the bottom of the river or stream where they feed



on insect larvae or small Crustacea. Once they have finished feeding, changing the angle of their back allows their natural buoyancy to take them back to the water's surface.

Anyway, when I got to High Wycombe, the River Wye was indeed a fast-flowing narrow river and after a couple of hours searching, the Dipper was found feeding in the river in a garden and when not feeding, it frequently perched on a log next to the river and gave excellent views.

Water is a symbol of life throughout The Bible and to the Dippers it is definitely more than a symbol. Baptism with water is a declaration of belief and following the example set by Jesus and provides us with spiritual nourishment. To a Dipper, immersion in water is required to provide it with physical food and I think that is a lovely parallel to our need for water in both our physical and spiritual life.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

# Crossword

## ACROSS

- 1. Son of Abraham (5)
- 4. Abbey or cathedral (7)
- 8. Residence of nuns (7)
- 9. Despondence (5)
- 10. Summer flower (4)
- 11. Married (3)
- 12. A particular level (4)
- 15. Discover (4)
- 16. e.g. Jerusalem (4)
- 18. Move round (4)
- 19. That person (3)
- 20. Looped gateway (4)
- 24. Cannot see (5)
- 25. Introduction (7)
- 26. Everlasting (7)
- 27. Send money (5)

## DOWN

- 1. Morally perfect (13)
- 2. High Priest – Acts IV-VI (5)
- 3. In charge of cooking (4)
- 4. Talk very quietly (6)
- 5. Near (4)
- 6. Threesome (7)
- 7. Major building improvement (13)
- 13. Single (3)
- 14. Healthy (3)
- 15. Pardon (7)
- 17. Small place of worship (6)
- 21. Kingdom (5)
- 22. Paradise garden (4)
- 23. Understand (4)

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# No John the Baptist in Aldbury?



It is, perhaps, surprising that the striking east window in St John the Baptist Church in Aldbury does not include a picture of its patron saint. The window is topped instead by images of the four gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and each of them is wielding a writing instrument of some sort.



Then the main panels depict scenes from those Gospels. In the left there is the angel Gabriel appearing to Mary, as described in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. Below it is the birth of Jesus, shown in a stable with shepherds paying homage, a bright star overhead and an angel holding a banner saying 'Glory to God in the Highest', as described in chapter 2 of Luke.



The centre panel shows Jesus' crucifixion. The inscription at the top of the cross, INRI, represents the Latin phrase meaning 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'. This was the notice Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, had nailed over Jesus as he lay dying on the cross, according to chapter 23 of Luke's Gospel. The right hand panel shows Jesus' resurrection and, above it,

his appearance to the eleven remaining apostles as recorded in chapter 16 of Mark's Gospel. Notice the stupefied expression of one of the soldiers in the resurrection picture.

The three lower images in the east window are largely obscured by the reredos, the stone backdrop to the altar table, but it is worth peering around the reredos to see them. The left hand panel shows the Garden of Gethsemane, with Judas kissing Jesus (and the other apostles asleep), the story from Matthew chapter 26.



The centre panel shows the last supper with the apostles, as described in chapter 13 of John's Gospel. There is a glimpse of Judas holding a bag of money, presumably the thirty pieces of silver, his reward for betraying Jesus.



The right hand picture is of Jesus being laid to rest in the tomb, after his execution on the cross.

An inscription at the bottom of the window relates that it was donated in 1866 by the rector, the Rev Mountford Wood, in memory of his mother-in-law, Georgiana Oddie. The Wood family dominated Aldbury church for some eighty years from the middle of the 19th century, and made a number of donations to the building.

The offending reredos, which rather constrains the view of the glorious east window, was erected in 1891 in memory of Emma Bright, a rich lady who lived in Stocks House.

St John the Baptist is not forgotten by the church that bears his name. There is a large fresco (wall painting) above the chancel



arch, showing John preaching. It was originally painted in 1906 and refreshed in the 1960s. That picture is in memory of Fanny Wood, wife of Rev Mountford Wood. More recently, in 2010, the people of Aldbury created a mosaic of John the Baptist. It hangs in the north aisle.

When we are no longer in lockdown, you can visit this pretty building whenever you like, as it is open every day. There is a church service every Sunday at 10.00am, where you will be welcomed by the people of Aldbury and Tring Station (and even some from Tring.)

John Whiteman, Tring Team





## Belonging before believing



Before we were not able to 'go to church' at all, I became a 'secret worshipper' at Aylesbury Vineyard Church. If you had told me forty years ago that I might not only be visiting a Vineyard Church, but going back for another service soon afterwards, I would not have believed you.

I was baptised into the Anglican Church at St Mary's in Sunbury-on-Thames. My parents were married there but neither were church-goers. I know I was taught Christian principles, however, so when, aged 16, a friend invited me along to the Church she attended regularly, All Saints, Laleham, I went. My eyes were quickly opened. Here were people who were taking their faith seriously in every way and I was challenged to look hard at what I believed and decide whether I was in or out. A new teacher (still a life-long friend) came to my school that year and she started a Christian Union. A combination of going along to Girl Covenanter Bible classes, Church, people praying for me, that CU, the work of the Holy Spirit and the relationships I made in that church, led to the decision to make the Christian faith my own.

When I moved away to start my degree I went first to an Anglican Church in Canterbury, St Mary Bredin, but finding this didn't quite suit, joined a United Reformed Church attended by many of the students in the college Christian Union. I can't quite remember how long I attended this Church but I know I found my spiritual home later in an FIEC, a free independent evangelical church. The biblical teaching was closer to what I had been used to but it wasn't just that, I was made to feel that I belonged. I was part of the church family.

When Jon and I married we attended another URC, St George's in Hemel Hempstead. I helped with Crusaders, became part of a team who visited women in a mental health ward in Leavesden and was fully involved for a number of years.

When the minister left and someone else came instead, we knew it was time to move on. After just three weeks of the new minister we moved to St Lawrence's Church in Bovingdon. There again we

found that we belonged and felt at home. We attended housegroups and became part of the church. (I later found out that Daphne Nash, whom I now bring to Church most Sundays, was also a member there, though not at the same time).

When we moved to Cheddington we tried to attend St Giles Church in the village but the Vicar kindly blessed our house and sent us up the road and over the county and diocese border to Long Marston! You can read into that whatever you like! We were part of the congregation at All Saints, Long Marston, for twelve years. Paul Wilson was the Vicar at first and we became part of a house group (who prayed with us through the pain of childlessness), I was a member of the DCC and the Mission Committee while Jon trained to become a Reader and led the Sunday School. Four children later, we left to become part of St Peter & St Paul's Church in Tring. That was just after Easter twenty-two years ago.

What I believe, the basis of my Christian faith, has always been very important to me. It's been the basis of why I have stayed or left a church. But it's also more than that. I don't always find I agree with the positions held by others I worship alongside in Tring Parish Church but, like a family with different personalities and opinions, I feel I belong there. I am probably not a very good Anglican (and indeed was called a heretic by someone in a housegroup a few years ago because I don't hold a very orthodox Anglican view of the Communion service!). But I believe that the family of the church is very important. We are not all the same and we don't have to be. But if we are joined in a common aim, can love and support each other through the various trials of growing older, look outwards to what we can do for others, can forgive and be forgiven, and find something useful to do, then we are probably in the right place. The church has been there for me through the death of both my parents and more recently through our decision to become foster parents, supporting us and welcoming the children who joined our family last year. Two people have recently referred to that decision as God's calling for us, which was very affirming.

I long ago decided that the more charismatic churches did not make me feel comfortable. So when I found myself

in one in February, I was very surprised to find that I felt welcome and very much at home. I was engaged in conversation within minutes of being inside the modern building and offered tea and a doughnut. The service was very different from an Anglican service and began with a sustained period of worship songs led by a brilliant band before the prayers and the sermon. There was no liturgy. At the offering visitors were requested to pass the plate along as giving was only for members, but we were invited to take a chocolate from the basket also going round. And people were invited to take a break and talk to each other when Anglicans share 'the peace' (that very controversial part of the service). Afterwards several people recognised that I was a visitor (despite there being some 300 people there) and came to speak to me. I felt I belonged because these too were members of the body of Christ and they made me feel welcome.

In conversation I was told that the church welcomes everyone and makes them feel they belong. Believing can come later. We are called to love others.

I liked that. I liked that very much.

**Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul**

## Hello, everyone!

Although we have not been able to meet normally over the past



few months, I understand that people in Tring do see one another over the garden fences or over the road or while out shopping. Those of us in the far outposts are not so lucky, so it was lovely to find that Gill and Andrew Kinsey were alive and well in Ivinghoe, while we were on our permitted daily exercise.

Can you send a photo of yourself – or get your friends and neighbours to do it – so that next month we have a wave from as many of you as possible to all the other readers of *Comment*? If you are one of the people unable to get out, ask the person who does your shopping to take a photo of you from a window or doorway and send it to [comment.magazine@gmail.com](mailto:comment.magazine@gmail.com).

**The Editor**

## Letter from Orkney



These are very peculiar times we are experiencing. For us, in Scotland, we are under a different set of rules from you in Hertfordshire. Our NHS does not communicate with NHS England. Our Police have little contact with Police down South and our Government is initiating rules not applicable in England, and all of these are even less applicable to Orkney. Very strange when it's supposed to be a 'United Kingdom'.

We are very blessed and fortunate as our ports have been closed to all but freight and residents; it's the same with air traffic. The virus here is static at seven cases out of a total population of 22,000 spread over some twenty occupied isles.

### Mac's Pizza Extraordinaire

#### The Pizza Base

7g pkt of Dried Yeast  
1 tsp Sugar  
2 x tsp Dried Oregano or Basil  
2 x Tubes of Tomato Puree  
8oz Plain Flour  
1/4 tsp Salt  
150ml of Warm Water

#### Filling Suggestions

(in my case all of them)

Pancetta or Bacon Lardons  
Anchovies (not too many)  
2 x Small Peppers finely chopped  
Mushrooms chopped  
Pitted Black Olives (green if you prefer)  
Capers (not too many)  
Grated Mozzarella  
Prawns, chopped if you prefer

(Tring is about 15,000.) Whilst we are adhering to social distancing, life has not changed so dramatically as for some poor souls. We did not escape the great loo-roll rush or the current flour shortages but we do have space, loads and loads of space, so the police are much less apparent than the rest of Scotland and when they are here, it is usually Kirkwall, Finstown and Stromness that enjoy their company.

We still have our Thursday NHS Clap though no one can hear, and send supplies of chocolates to our local surgery to boost morale and say 'Thank You'. Carrie misses contact a bit more than me, as she is a member of 'Orkney Rocks' Choir and a volunteer for the Citizens Advice Bureau plus a keen café-culture person (she would kill me if I said she were 'A lady who lunches').

Life goes on, Carrie has joined Gareth Malone's 'The Great British Home



Chorus' on YouTube, and makes frequent video calls to friends and family. She also has a new-found art of baking. Me? Well, I am painting and studying 'Colour' and when required, doing exercise, not my favourite pastime; however the 6 o'clock Yardarm has its compensations especially in the land of Whisky.

Please stay safe Everyone – we love you all!

I thought of something simple for our recipe this month and also something the kids would want to get involved with so it's pizza: hoooooraaaay!

**Mac Dodge**

**St Mary's Stromness**

#### Method (preheat oven to 180°C)

#### Dough

Combine water, sugar, salt, herbs and yeast, stir really well until dissolved. Mix in the flour and knead properly for a minimum of five minutes. Leave to rise to double its size in a warm location.

Split dough into two portions to make two pizzas.

#### Pizza

Coat non-stick trays (Pizza Trays if you have them) and press dough into thin rounds. If too tacky, sprinkle with a little flour. Coat each pizza with a liberal amount of tomato puree.

#### Topping

Load up each pizza with all the various toppings which appeal and finally coat with a thinly sliced layer of Mozzarella or whatever you choose in the way of cheese. Bake in preheated oven @ 180°C for 25 mins, checking at 20 mins.

#### To Serve

Cut up Pizzas and serve with Green Salad. Make sure you wear a bib.

## A balcony view

I enjoyed immensely the latest edition of *Comment* and Trinity in Lewes is also doing a grand job to keep our spirits up. Lewes, where I now live, is a ghost town at the moment but we shall get through it. I am coping but, of course, not happy with the isolation. I see my children 'on screen' or the occasional wave by the front door of my flat which is on the second floor.

I have not ventured very far and my balcony is a blessing, otherwise I would feel like a bird in a cage. I can see the town, the castle and bit of the Downs. Let's hope and pray for better days to come.

With love and best wishes to you all in Tring.

**Hannelore Kettle**  
**formerly St Peter & St Paul**





# What is the purpose of life?



Are you the sort of person whose glass is half-full or half-empty? Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Do you ever wonder what life is all about? If so, you will find food for thought in

the book called Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament. It is a book unlike any other in the Bible. It raises problems that still concern us. It is a book which was trying to reconcile faith with experience in a 'modern' world undergoing rapid change a few centuries before Christ. However, it does not present us with a thought-out system, but with apparent contradictions and unsolved problems which are still with us.

In the Hebrew Bible it is one of five short books, the Five Rolls, for books then were written on rolls; books with pages seem to have been an innovation of the Christian Church. Their position in the contents of the Bible varies. In the Hebrew Bible they were near the end but, in the Greek Bible, Ecclesiastes was put after Proverbs and in between the great narrative complex of history and laws and before the prophetic writings, Isaiah to Malachi. Then in the Latin Bible, and hence in the English Bible, we find Ecclesiastes after Psalms and Proverbs. Both Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are attributed to Solomon, but Ecclesiastes belongs to centuries after Solomon's time. Indeed, it is one of the latest books in the Hebrew Bible.

Its opening verse does not actually name Solomon but says 'The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem'. The word Teacher' is a translation of the Hebrew *Qoheleth*, which can also be rendered 'preacher' or 'arguer' or 'assembler'. This last meaning refers to the office of leader of an assembly. In Greek the word for assembly is *ekklesia*, (also later translated church) which gives the book the name

Ecclesiastes (not to be confused with the book of Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha). Of Ecclesiastes one scholar has written 'it is perhaps the most fascinating book in the Old Testament' and another scholar started his introduction to the Old Testament with this book, rather than, say, Genesis, because it represented the point of view of many people today.

Before going any further it may be worth reminding ourselves that the Hebrew Bible was originally written without vowels or punctuation, and was meant to be heard rather than read by most people. So we cannot always be sure about quotations or questions as there are no question marks or inverted commas or the like. We have to ask ourselves sometimes whether the author means this or is he quoting someone. Similarly we have to guess the tone of voice, which words are stressed and so on.

The second verse of this book sums up the message and provides its puzzle. 'Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher'. Vanity translates the Hebrew word *hebel*: other translations for this include vanity, worthlessness, image, breath, and is a word used in parallel with words like emptiness, wind and such like. Much of the theme of this book is that we live in a natural world which carries on in the same old way ('there is nothing new under the sun') and it does not matter what we do as we can make no lasting difference, nor can we understand why some things happen as they do. So Solomon, apparently addressing well-to-do young men, allegedly when king of Jerusalem, tried to understand creation but found it all 'chasing after the wind'. He relates what he has done: building houses, planting vineyards, accruing wealth and possessions and all his heart desired. 'I made great works only to find it all a chasing after the wind'; there is nothing lasting to be gained in this life. Hence he concluded there is nothing for mortals to do but eat and drink and find enjoyment in their work. Many still just

live for the day and accept what it brings, as Ecclesiastes appears to say, yet fewer go on to say with him 'This is from the hand of God'.

Chapter 3 has a particularly familiar opening with a famous passage sometimes used at funerals. It starts 'For everything there is a season' and continues 'a time to be born and a time to die' ending up with 'a time to love, and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace'. This is true from experience, but, as Christians, we see the need to change ideas such as a time for hatred and war. Yet, in practice, Ecclesiastes seems to be right! But along with all these ideas, Ecclesiastes has a firm faith in God as well as a recognition of human limitations. 'Whatever God does for us endures for ever'. We humans are no different from animals – 'the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other'. Ecclesiastes is suggesting we make the best of this life. (We need to remind ourselves that resurrection and eternal life are not Old Testament ideas.) Ecclesiastes wants us to make the best of life for good or bad and accept that life is not fair. We cannot always understand God's ways. The Preacher is both a pessimist and an optimist we might conclude. It is a good world created by God but...

This is a book which contains contradictory statements – 'On the one hand... on the other hand...' seems to sum up the ideas and, in so doing, encourages us to think for ourselves, to have faith in God, but also to accept our limitations in understanding this life and God's purposes.

The last chapter starts 'Remember your creator in the days of your youth before the days of trouble come' and ends with the often-quoted verse 'Of making many books there is no end and much study is weariness of the flesh'. Yet Ecclesiastes is worth studying! Finally, 'The end of the matter – Fear God and keep his commandments'.

**Martin Banister, St Albans Cathedral**

# The Foundling Hospital

It was Thomas Coram, a philanthropic sea captain, who campaigned for the creation in 1739 of the Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children, known more popularly as The Foundling Hospital, in Bloomsbury, London. He had had the idea because his business journeys to and from the city caused him frequently to be horrified by the sight of dead babies by the side of the road.



Among its benefactors was painter William Hogarth who also fostered foundling children with his wife Jane. Handel held benefit concerts to raise funds for the charity which included the 'Halleluja' chorus from the recently composed Messiah. In 1750 he donated a pipe organ for the chapel. A tradition was established of an Easter performance of 'Messiah' in the Hospital Chapel and Handel attended every performance until his death in 1759.

Mothers brought their babies to the Foundling Hospital to be cared for, with many hopeful that their circumstances would change so they could one day reclaim them. The hospital arranged for foster families to care for the babies and young children until the age of five. They were then brought to live and be educated in the Foundling Hospital until the age of 15, many being trained for domestic or military service.

A basket was hung at the gate so that children could be placed there. Every child admitted to the

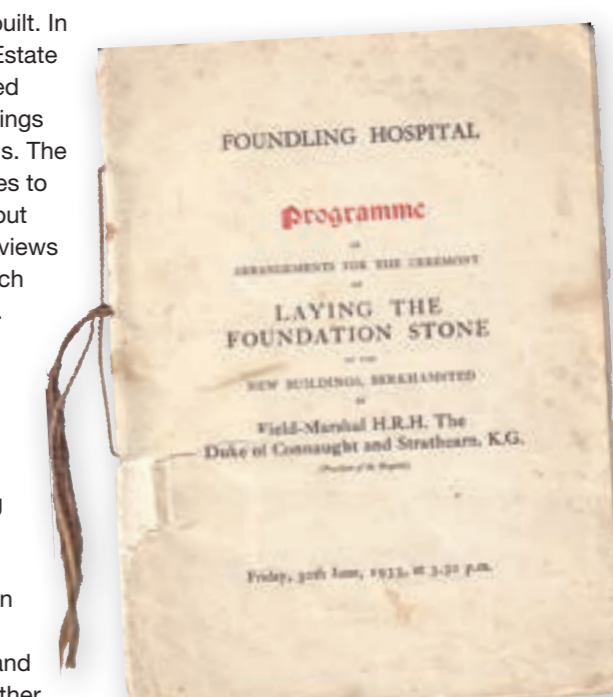
Foundling Hospital was baptised and given a new name. Mothers also left small mementoes which could be used to identify their child if they returned to reclaim them.

The need was seen to be so great and so many children brought to the hospital that branch hospitals were opened in six different counties in England. The site of the London hospital was sold in 1926 and a temporary home was found in Redhill while a new home and school was being built. In November 1929 the Ashlyns Estate in Berkhamsted was purchased to provide more modern buildings and more healthy surroundings. The new site consisted of 200 acres to the south of Berkhamsted about 500 feet above sea level with views over Berkhamsted, Northchurch Commons and Ashridge Park.

The accommodation was comprised of dormitories, class rooms and recreation rooms for boys and girls, a chapel, assembly room, dining halls, a gym, swimming bath, administrative offices and a board room. The buildings provided for between 200-250 boys and girls and accommodation for the staff and there were playing fields on either side of the site. The foundation stone

for the new building was laid on Friday 30 June 1933 at 3.30pm. King George V was its patron and among its vice presidents were our present Queen and MP Stanley Baldwin. The school was opened in 1935.

Daphne Nash's father, George Broughall, worked for the Secretary of the Foundling Hospital in Berkhamsted and it is thanks to Daphne that we have this programme of the event. Of course, many today will know the building as Ashlyns School.



## Parish registers

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

<b>David George Turner 85</b>	<b>Myra Goodson 87</b>
<b>Patricia Anne Hart 75</b>	<b>Patrick Bannon 80</b>
<b>David Chapman 80</b>	<b>Diane Sandy 87</b>

## Generous gift

Thank you to all who came to the funeral of Leslie Barker and gave so generously to one of his most important charities. We were able to pass on £700.00 to DENS.

**David Barker, brother**



# Colombia, more than coffee and cocaine

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

After what turned out to be a rain-soaked night in Buga we headed north along the Cuaca Valley then west to Pueblo Rico on the east side of the Western Andes Cordillera at 1,500 metres (4,921 feet). Here we transferred to a four-wheel drive vehicle for the drive down to the Montezuma Rainforest Ecological at 1,350 metres (4,429 feet), and on the western slope of the Western Andes.

The Ecological is in the Tatamá National Park and this part of the western slope of the Western Andes is the wettest part of South America with rainfall exceeding 8 metres (320 inches) per year. To put this into context, Oxford averages 66 centimetres (26 inches) of rainfall in a year. Amazingly, less than ten miles to the east of the Montezuma Rainforest Ecological the rainfall is less than a quarter of that experienced in the national park! We were very fortunate when we were there as prior to our arrival one group experienced five days of continuous rain and the one full day we were there it was dry from before dawn to just after 2.00pm.

We started the day in the dark and disturbed a Nightjar off the road as we headed slowly up the road in the four-wheel drive to the Tatamá National Park Military Post, perched on the top of a mountain at 2,500 metres (8,200 feet), almost twice the height of Cairn Gorm in Scotland and gave us a spectacular view across the Cerro Tatamá – although it was overcast and quite dark. Even at this altitude Hummingbirds stole the show and the change of slope and habitat meant that new species of hummingbirds, Velvet-purple Coronet and Rufous-gaped

Hillstar, vied to be the commonest Hummingbirds in the National Park along with Purple-throated Woodstar which we had already seen.

Velvet-purple Coronet is a near endemic in Colombia with only a small part of its range north-west Ecuador. While it can look almost dull, when the light hits it at just the right angle it is as beautiful a hummingbird as any of the others. It is very much a mid-altitude bird found between 700 and 2,300 metres in rainforests.

The Rufous-gaped Hillstar is found from 1,000 to 2,500 metres on the same slope of the Andes as the Coronet but obviously at slightly higher altitudes as well. It would be remiss of me to fail to mention the other wildlife spectacle at the Montezuma Rainforest Ecological and this was the moths. I know they are not everyone's cup of tea but the hall outside my room had white walls and was covered in moths, probably because



Rufous-gaped Hillstar

of the rain, and I estimate I saw over 100 species in that hall – some of which probably don't even have a name yet! Some of the moths were massive for moths and bigger than hummingbirds. The one in the photo has wings at least 10cm (4 inches) long.

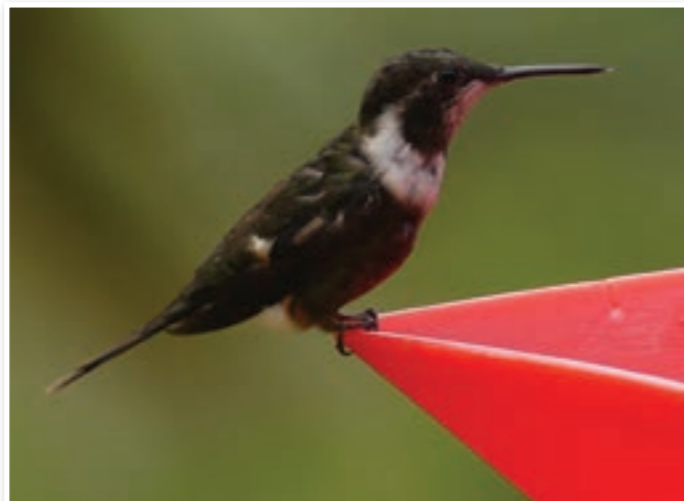
The rain that had started the previous day in the mid-afternoon had continued through the night and so we decided to leave the Ecological a few hours earlier to see if we could find somewhere dry! So we went back to Pueblo Rico and exchanged the four-wheel drive vehicle for our more spacious mini-coach and headed east then south across the Cuaca Valley, through Periera, to the Otún-Quimbaya Reserve which is mainly subtropical dry forest, relatively flat and about 1,900 metres (6,200 feet) above sea level. This reserve has the Rio Otun flowing through it and this fast-flowing river is one of the best places in Colombia to see Torrent Duck; White-capped Dippers are also seen here. Fortunately we saw both of these



Moth



Velvet-purple Coronet



Purple-throated Woodstar

charismatic species along with Red-ruffed Fruitcrow and the endangered Cauca Guan, which is not only endemic to Colombia but is also confined to the subtropical dry forest of the Cuaca Valley. While Crowned Woodnymph was not the

commonest hummingbird in this reserve it was the last day we saw it and it is too beautiful to miss out – even if this one does look a bit patchy in the photo. It is found from sea level up to 2,100 metres, and in a variety of forest types including

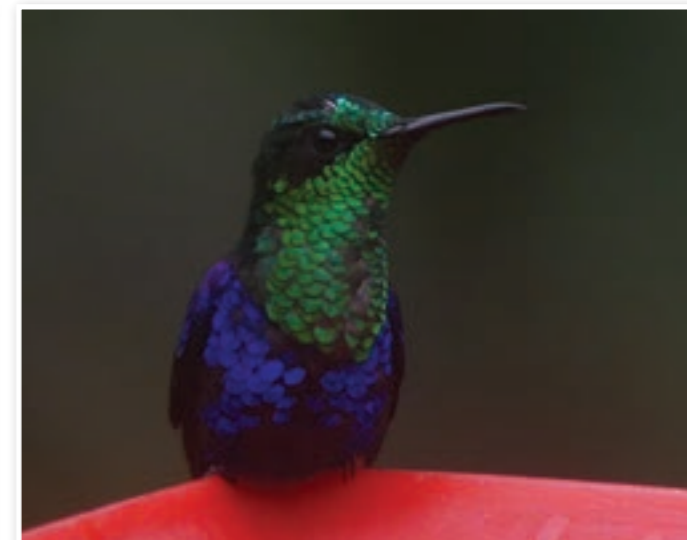
subtropical, so seeing it here was no surprise.

To be continued...

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul



Mountain Velvetbreast



Crowned Woodnymph

## Essential lockdown lingo

### Coronacoaster

The ups and downs of your mood during the pandemic. You're loving lockdown one minute but suddenly weepy with anxiety the next. It truly is 'an emotional coronacoaster'.

### Quarantinis

Experimental cocktails mixed from whatever random ingredients you have left in the house. The boozy equivalent of a store cupboard supper. Southern Comfort and Ribena quarantini with a glacé cherry garnish, anyone? These are sipped at 'locktail hour', ie wine o'clock during lockdown, which seems to be creeping earlier with each passing week.

### Blue Skype thinking

A work brainstorming session which takes place over a videoconferencing app. Such meetings might also be termed a 'Zoomposium'. Naturally, they are to be avoided if at all possible.

### Le Creuset wrist

It's the new 'avocado hand' – an aching arm after taking one's best saucepan outside to bang during the weekly 'Clap For Carers'. It might be heavy but you're keen to impress the neighbours with your high-quality kitchenware.

### Coronials

As opposed to millennials, this refers to the future generation of babies conceived or born during coronavirus quarantine.

### Furlough Merlot

Wine consumed in an attempt to relieve the frustration of not working. Also known as 'bored-eaux' or 'cabernet tedium'.

### Coronadose

An overdose of bad news from consuming too much media during a time of crisis. Can result in a panicdemic.

### The elephant in the Zoom

The glaring issue during a videoconferencing call that nobody feels able to mention. E.g. one participant has dramatically put on weight, suddenly sprouted terrible facial hair or has a worryingly messy house visible in the background.

### Quentin Quarantino

An attention-seeker using their time in lockdown to make amateur films which they're convinced are funnier and cleverer than they actually are.

### Covidiot

One who ignores public health advice or behaves with reckless disregard for the safety of others can be said to display 'covidioty' or be 'covidiotic'.

### Goutbreak

The sudden fear that you've consumed so much wine, cheese, home-made cake and Easter chocolate in lockdown that your ankles are swelling up like a medieval king's.

### Antisocial distancing

Using health precautions as an excuse for snubbing neighbours and generally ignoring people you find irritating.

### Covid-10

The 10lbs in weight that we're all gaining from comfort-eating and comfort-drinking. Also known as 'fattening the curve'.

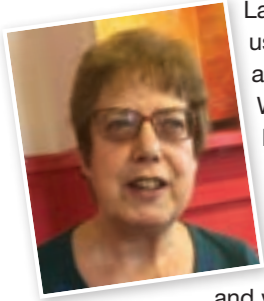
### Finally

One sentence to sum up 2020, so far: At one point this week, 1 loo roll was worth more than a barrel of crude oil!

Passed on by David Whiting  
St Peter & St Paul



## Holiday plans



Last year, four of us went to Pisa for a four-day break. We stayed in a hotel close to the Leaning Tower. We had a wonderful time. We visited Florence by train and walked around

the city marvelling at the sights and the beautiful buildings. We had enormous ice creams and saw so much. On Sunday we visited Lucca and it was fabulous and we shopped and saw some beautiful Churches. Monday morning found us in Pisa where we had local pastries and coffee in town and later flew home.

We decided that it had been great so we wanted to do it again. We met in the Autumn and settled on five days in Verona, Italy. We booked the flights and hotel and looked forward to our trip on 2 April. In February/March there were rumours that Coronavirus was rife in Northern Italy. Soon, Verona featured on the maps of infected areas. We realised that we wouldn't be going as the area was in lockdown and so applied for returns of our airfares.

After a while this was achieved but the hotel wasn't keen on a refund at first. We were all sorry that our trip had to be cancelled and decided that on 2 April we would all have an Italian meal that evening. We shared our menus and I have



sent a photo of my meal of pasta with bacon, olives and tomatoes and a starter of prawns and avocados.

After all, there's always next year!

**Thelma Fisher**  
High Street Baptist Church

## The long retreat

I have been self-isolating in my Village flat since returning to New York. So far, so good.

As Edinburgh was already shutting down when I left Scotland, the near complete closure of New York has not been as shocking as it might have been. Then, too, I am inclined to live in solitude anyway, so I am not greatly inconvenienced. Food is readily available. The first hour of trade in shops is reserved for pensioners and there is a supermarket just around the corner. We who are fortunate enough to live near the Hudson can take exercise and soak in a little sunshine, a welcome break from indoor routine, but even that has become risky and I only do it early morning. I have some friends who only go out at midnight. Otherwise, I spend my time reading, writing, solving crosswords, watching films on television, and sorting through books and papers I've been meaning to deal with for ages. Prayer Book offices and my meditation practice have been essential to give each day shape and rhythm.

The silence of the city is a welcome respite from the usual drum beat of getting and spending. It's like a summer Sunday morning all the time now, quiet and peaceful. The flowers and trees are in bloom on the terrace I see through my window, and the weather has been properly spring-like, so it's hard to take in that there is a massive medical emergency and national/global catastrophe unfolding all around us. Just one mile to the north the Javits

Convention Center is about to open as a 600-bed extension to the hospital system. The same is happening in Central Park and other spots around the city. The death toll mounts dramatically.

I get my news from the printed New York Times, the Guardian on-line, Public Broadcasting, and a daily bulletin on BBC Radio Four. I pretty much avoid corporate media, which by its very commercial nature tends to ramp up the drama of current events and highlight controversy. It makes me, and I suspect everyone else, jittery, to say the least. My recommendation to everyone is to stop watching so much television, or at least be very selective when doing so. Above all, don't listen to the president! You'll live longer.

It's amazing how easy it has become to tune out the president. He doesn't seem to know what he's doing, and he has nothing to say that either informs, enlightens, or inspires, and so in a way he seems to be fading away – especially in light of the medical experts around him and the very capable leadership being exercised by governors and local authorities. In any case, my mental health is greatly enhanced by not paying him too much mind.

The personality of the president has brought to mind my father's views on qualities of manhood. My dad believed in 'the regular guy,' the one who worked hard; had no pretensions or inflated expectations; didn't blow his own horn; was dutiful, honest in his dealings, and treated others decently. My father, a man

of committed Catholic faith, referred to certain men who weren't regular guys as 'blow-hards,' 'four flushers,' and 'big-feeling fellas' who were 'full of themselves.' I am grateful for the opportunity to recall these expressions of my father's values and his verbal playfulness.

I am also grateful I had a month in Orkney and Scotland before returning to America in its current state. I just read a reference to an essay by the art historian Kenneth Clark. His article, without pejorative intent, is entitled 'Provincialism' and describes 'the particular qualities of art formed outside the great urban centres'. Clark lists the characteristics of a 'positive and independent provincial art: It tells a story; it takes pleasure in the facts; it is lyrical and it achieves a visionary intensity.'

That description goes a long way to articulating what I find so compelling about Orkney life, Orkney writing, and Scottish literature in general. It's what I've been writing about in terms of living locally; life that is vibrant and immediate and unpretentious. On my shelves are books by Orkney and Scottish writers and on my walls are works by Orkney artists. There's also a small cameo portrait of a young George Mackay Brown, the master story teller, lyricist and visionary. They gladden my heart in these troubling times.

**Written during Lent and forwarded to us by Mac & Carrie Dodge**  
St Mary's Stromness

## Something to smile about!

Once lockdown began there were ideas popping up on social media as to how we could keep everyone's mood up. One was to paint or draw or display rainbows in the window to make people smile on their daily walk; another was to put a teddy bear in the window so small children could go on a Bear hunt whilst exercising.

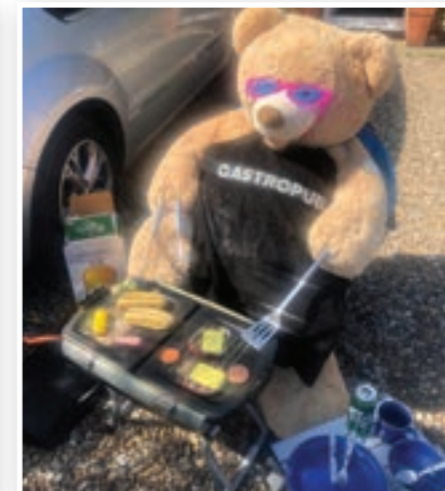
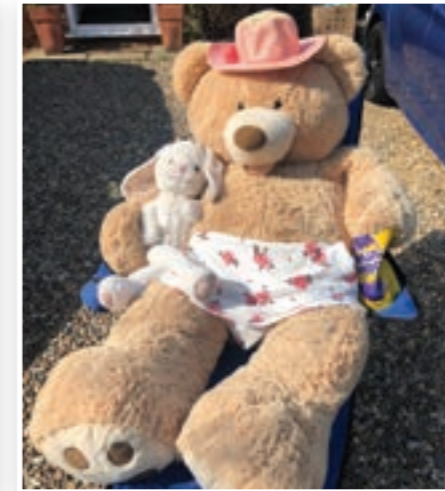
We thought we could take this one step further. We have a 5ft teddy bear named Jeremy Bear aka Jezza Bezza! We are very fond of him. He wanted to put a smile on faces of the passersby.

We started one sunny day with him relaxing on his deck chair in the sun. Then it was Easter so he sat with bunny on his lap and enjoyed an Easter egg or two. As passersby started to become interested, we continued daily with all sorts of themes – a trip down the river, building work, at the beach, weight training. Then a neighbour informed me that she was emailing updates to a work colleague of hers who worked at Luton & Dunstable hospital. She shared the photos of Jeremy Bear with Doctors and Nurses who have taken much enjoyment

out of seeing what he's been up to daily! So we continued... games, puzzles, hairdressing, bike riding, picnicking, BBQing, celebrating Captain Tom's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and even working at Tesco!

We have many more ideas for many days to come, and are very glad to be able to help put a smile on people's faces and brighten up their day, especially children and those key workers who are doing such a remarkable job at this strange time.

**Caroline Newton, daughter of Margaret Gittins, St Peter & St Paul**





## ‘Normal is just fine, thank you!’



A few years ago I read a book entitled: ‘Where did it all go right? Growing up normal in the 70s’ about a guy recounting his formative years in Northampton. It was well written and a

pleasant read, but if I’m entirely honest, not particularly gripping. What makes for a good novel? Complex characters, tragedy, suspense, unrequited love, plot twists? Yes. But not normal. However, it did make me think in these abnormal times, that normal is just fine, thank you!

We have all seen and experienced things over the past few weeks that very, very few of us would have any familiarity with – panic-buying, widespread closure of schools, cessation of sporting events and public gatherings, grounding of entire airline fleets, our work places and places of worship closed – the whole concept of ‘lockdown’. This is not normal. And it’s not comfortable. It’s bad. But it is not all bad.

I remember as a child my grandparents talking fondly about something called ‘the war spirit’. Most of us will have a good grasp of what we understand by this, despite only the oldest in society today having any direct experience of it. As I reflect on what we have seen and experienced over the past few weeks, I have seen glimpses of

this concept of the war spirit – from the weekly clap for our wonderful healthcare workers, to the army of volunteers signing up to support the NHS, to politicians across all parties using words like ‘kindness’ and ‘love’, to DT teachers making visors and seamstresses making scrubs in the national effort to source PPE. And fittingly, the widespread national celebrations of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day.

It is bad. But it is not all bad. I have seen parents with teenage children going for their daily constitutional walk together – as if this is what they always do of an evening. I have seen working parents out for a cycle ride with young children in the middle of a working day. I have seen people stop to talk to each other in the street – at least two metres apart of course! Our environmentalists have welcomed an unexpected opportunity for our stressed planet to briefly ‘breathe’. I have seen a softening of hearts in our communities. I have seen countless pictures of rainbows displayed in windows, depicting God’s timeless promise of hope.

But we all know this is not normal and for some this is very challenging. We tend to focus on the physical and economic toil of this crisis but perhaps the greater long-term damage being done is to our mental health? I have heard a useful illustration doing the rounds, which I think can be developed to apply to both our

mental health and spiritual health: we are all in a storm. In fact, we are all in the same storm, but in different boats – some in tiny dinghies being absolutely buffeted by the storm and others in huge cruise liners hardly affected at all. But here’s the thing. We are each in different boats on different days and at different times. Some days we may be in the dinghy; some days we may be in the cruise liner. We don’t know which boat we are going to be in on any one day.

So if we are so susceptible to the effects of this raging storm, where does our help come from? I remember learning a song as a young beach mission member in Cornwall in my late teens; ‘With Christ in the vessel you can smile at the storm, smile at the storm, smile at the storm....’ Smile? Really? In the Bible, the Apostle Paul talks about ‘giving thanks in all circumstances’ (1 Thessalonians 5:18). All circumstances? Surely not! Paul spoke from the context of his sufferings, persecution and imprisonment. He was in a storm. His security, his peace, his hope, was in the Lord Jesus Christ who alone can bring us peace with God, forgiveness for our sins and hope of heaven ahead. And so Paul could rejoice and give thanks. And so, we too, in the storm of coronavirus, can similarly rejoice and give thanks that Jesus is Lord, and look to him for peace and hope at this time.

**John Heasman**  
**Akeman Street Baptist Church**

## A typical day in Vicarage lockdown



Our youngest child is doing school work in the study. Her father is in the same room and irritates that youngest child by breathing; talking is even worse.

The dog lies at her feet, still not sure why she is at home but determined to make the most of it.

Our middle child eats vast quantities of food: ten pints of milk sees us through four days. He chops wood to fill time and be useful. He eats more food, sleeps for twelve hours, eats more food, cycles. And repeat.

Our eldest child has managed to keep social life going in a very impressive manner. We are given

instructions in the morning as to when she can have her evening meal that will fit round quizzes, parties, chatting etc.

My long list of ‘things to do’ remains. So far, I have managed to lose a car key, crack a phone screen, and still avoid tidying my work area. Endless repeats on Radio 4 Extra (my preferred station of choice) means that every time I turn it on, I seem to hear the same programme, and not only that, but at the same point. Desperation leads me back to a CD of favourite hymns that came free with something. Good to hear, but the over enunciation is a bit much.

Plusses are teaching my parents to Zoom (although it would help if hearing aids were put in), and I have washed a pair of curtains! Not quite sure what came over me that day.

Life seems to swing between the

trivial (What’s for tea? How many walks has the dog had today?) and the list of worries (Are we contacting everyone that we should? How are the schools managing? What happens next? How long will this continue? and so on).

In a Zoom meeting with Bishop Michael, he says one thing that he learnt in Africa was that when things are going badly, we praise the Lord. So we do.

Psalms 19: ‘The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

**Jane Banister**  
**Tring Team**

## The value of a local distribution network



For every company the Distribution Department is a major part of their business. It’s not just about making the products or selling the products, it’s

about getting the product to the right place at the right time. So big companies like Tesco, M&S and Amazon spend huge amounts of money moving their products around the country, hoping they will arrive with the end customer by the deadline. Now I hesitate to put *Comment* magazine in the same bracket as these esteemed organisations but, in just the same way, there are similarities.

When each magazine is printed, it is delivered in five boxes to St Peter & St Paul’s Church – all 320 copies! From there, our ‘Distribution Manager’ prepares bundles of magazines, up to eleven copies in each bundle, for onward distribution to our end customers. Some of these bundles are collected from Church but some of them are delivered around Tring. It is then down to a team of thirty-seven local distributors to take the magazines on the final part of their journey to you, the reader. Some of these very loyal and dedicated volunteers have been

distributing *Comment* for decades, ten times a year, in all sorts of weather and, come what may, they get the magazine to you on time. They may only meet you once a year, when they collect your annual subscriptions, but we owe them a huge vote of thanks for all the work they do to deliver *Comment*.

And then Lockdown...

We were advised that the *Comment* team shouldn’t ask people to hand-deliver the magazines; it would be putting our trusty distributors at risk. As we know, Covid-19 is spread by touching surfaces that have already been touched by an infected person. The risk would be low – but there was a risk.

Did this mean that we would have to cancel this month’s magazine? Well, no! At this time, more than ever, it is important to keep people indoors, to keep them safe and to keep them entertained. So how could we get *Comment* delivered to your door? Despite the lockdown, the postal system has still been working. The cost of delivering one *Comment* magazine is £1.40 per magazine. To deliver one magazine to Orkney a cost of £1.40 is good value for money. However, delivering one magazine to a house across the road does not seem like such good value for money. But what other options did we have?

Luckily *Comment*, unlike Tesco,

M&S and Amazon is a ‘not for profit’ organisation. Although the cost of printing is almost twice the cost readers pay for their copies, the small amount of money we charge for advertising bridges the gap and we currently have some surplus funds in the bank. What better than to spend it on something essential at this difficult time? We could reduce the cost of postage by sending some magazines out by email, but most people have said they prefer a printed copy. It’s still quite a large postage cost, but certainly we could do this for a couple of months. Some people have offered to pay postage too (thank you!) and one individual has paid towards the total postage bill for those who can’t pay the extra (a big thank you!).

So that’s when my part in this enterprise started: 320 magazines delivered to my house, 95 email copies sent out to people happy to receive *Comment* in electronic format, 150 address labels printed, envelopes stuffed, stamped and off down the Tring sorting office – with a little bit of help from my locked-down family! I hope you enjoyed the result.

So the value of a local distribution network? £210 per month? No, priceless!

**Chris Hoare**  
**Comment Treasurer**

## The coronavirus-safe Megastick Walk



Plans for the sponsored Megastick Walk for Christian Aid were put on hold in early May because walkers from the Tring Team could not walk together as usual.

Restrictions were relaxed a little by 16 May so the Bellises and Munroes walked the whole half marathon in one day and Richard Abel ran the distance as usual. But Janet Goodyer and I decided individually, but at the same time, that we would create our own targets and methods to walk within the rules to raise money for Christian Aid.

Janet’s target was to walk from her home in Tring every day to a different

Church or Churches, covering a total distance of more than 40 miles! She will write about her experience and the eighteen Churches she visited in the July edition of *Comment*.

My intention was to cover the half marathon by walking from my home in Cheddington – yes, a different county and diocese – visiting five Churches in Bucks and including fields, woods, canal paths, roads and bridges as we usually



do. As Maths and Geography never were my strongest

subjects, I managed the latter in the half marathon distance but only visited three Churches (and a windmill)! So a further walk was organised and I managed 20 miles and six Churches in three walks.

Many people sponsored us at short notice and I was able to get matched funding. We have raised £8,265 at the time of writing but if you can support me, please use the link here to donate [www.justgiving.com/owner-email/pleasesponsor/AnnetteStPandStP](http://www.justgiving.com/owner-email/pleasesponsor/AnnetteStPandStP); or contact me and I will receive money any way necessary to help Christian Aid.

Thank you!

**Annette Reynolds**  
**St Peter & St Paul**





## Zooming



Did you ever get bored in Church services and flick through the hymn book? One of the last hymns in St Peter & St Paul's book is 'Zip bam boo, zama lama la boo'. A hymn with such a glorious title is crying out to be sung, and it turns out to be an Easter hymn. Whenever someone mentions 'Zoom' I think of this hymn.

A few months ago most of us didn't know what Zoom was and it wasn't part of everyday conversation; now no one bats an eye at Zooming the Grandparents or the school! It has become a noun and a verb in our language. We had a Zoom toast for VE day, I Zoomed the Bishop, Book Group now meets on Zoom. Like it or loathe it, video conferencing has become an important part of our day-to-day life. We are missing many of our normal relationships. We are already using it a lot in our churches, and are wondering

as lockdown continues, should we make more use of it?

Would you like to join a Zoom café? You would make your own cup of tea or coffee and come to a coffee morning for random chat. If you are interested, let me know and we can see if we can make this work. As ever with technology, no promises, but in the words of the hymn 'Zip bam boo, zama lama la boo', there's freedom in Jesus Christ. Maybe there is a little freedom in meeting to chat.

**Huw Bellis, Tring Team**

## In memory of Fred Morris

Frederick Ernest Morris died peacefully, at home, in March 2020 in his 90<sup>th</sup> year. A much-loved father and grandfather, Fred was a quiet, generous and caring family man, who had moved to Christchurch Road in Tring in 1961 with his wife and young family. He had been Treasurer of both Tring Hockey Club and New Mill Scout Group and, having lived in the same house for nearly sixty years, was a familiar figure around the town. He was respected and well liked as attested by the many heartwarming tributes to him that the family have received.

He died as Covid-19 was reaching pandemic proportions and the inevitable processes took place under its shadow. On that Tuesday morning his son, David, found him in his bedroom and called 999. The paramedics responded promptly but Fred had already been dead for some time and, because the death was unexpected, the police also arrived to interview David. This was to be the last 'face-to-face' contact any of us had with anyone involved, until we met the Vicar at the graveside on the morning of the funeral.

David was advised by the Police that the matter would be referred to the Coroner and, that he would hear from him in a few days. Fred, although nearly 90 and taking medication for raised blood pressure, had not been ill and was still capable of making his own porridge and tea the previous morning, so the family were keen to know the cause of death. After a week and a couple of email enquiries, the Coroner informed us that the death had been certified and the cause was 'frailty of old age'.

Under ordinary circumstances, a

'green form' would have been issued to us which would have enabled us to register the death and instruct the undertakers but in fact the Coroner dealt directly with the Registrar who issued the death certificates by post, and the funeral director was able to act on receiving our telephone instructions. It had been decided, on the death of his beloved wife Betty, that they would be buried in the same plot in Tring cemetery.

We found that florist shops were closed and also cemeteries and Churches. No cars could be provided for mourners and the coffin was selected via the internet. Only ten mourners could attend a funeral in our area: we were lucky as elsewhere some authorities would allow no mourners at all. Our funeral directors were very accommodating and arranged the flowers as long as we accepted that there was limited choice. The Rector, Huw Bellis, was very helpful, sent information and offered to meet us but with two different households and social distancing involved, we agreed to exchange information by email and phone.

Although there could be no service in Church, we were able to have a service by the graveside that differed very little from the norm, apart from the absence of hymns and mourners. We have also been offered a memorial service, at a later date, if we would like.

As I write, I realise that some families would be made very unhappy by this situation but, we are a fairly small group and Fred was not a man that sought the limelight. We decided that a low-key affair would have suited him and therefore us. We carefully prepared a eulogy, decided

on Psalm 23 for the Bible reading, and a poem, 'Instructions' by Arnold Crompton. We had the marvellous idea of including Oliver, Fred's only grandchild and based in Australia, in the service. We arranged a 'Skype' connection so that he could 'virtually' attend and he read the poem. Our 'Order of Service' would not have shamed a much larger gathering and so we were ready.

The day of the funeral was gloriously sunny. We eight walked separately to the cemetery and were there met by the Revd Huw Bellis and the hearse arrived shortly afterwards. The spray of spring flowers that adorned the coffin was lovely and the service very simple and suitable in a most beautiful setting.

David has since sent a copy of the service, eulogy and poem to all the friends who have written and to the family who could not attend.

On the day before the funeral, our local authority re-opened cemeteries to the general public and we have been able to return to see the grave, the messages and the flowers. It was strange parting at the cemetery gate. We were not able to invite our fellow mourners to the house. No wake; no food and drink afterwards to ease the tension and allow time to reminisce: we found that difficult.

Overall and under the current situation, we feel that we 'did Fred proud'.

**Linda Morris, daughter-in-law**



## In memory of Maurice Stedman

For all of us, especially in our early years, but actually throughout our lives, we lean on our dads. We lean on them in many different ways – physically, emotionally, financially. We need their guidance and their advice. They instil in us our core values and beliefs and they are often our role model. My dad, Maurice Stedman, was that sort of man: strong, knowledgeable, selfless, but also he had a softer side, caring, supportive, loving.

Reading the wonderful sympathy cards we have received and talking with his many friends and family recently, I have been struck by the part he has played in so many people's lives. He was a loving neighbour, a great friend, a man well-loved and respected, a lovely man, easy to talk to.

He was always there for me. We used to cycle together to many Watford matches at Vicarage Road, paying 6d to park our bikes and standing beneath the Shrodells Stand to watch 3<sup>rd</sup> division south games, whilst Cliff Holton scored forty-eight goals in one season. When I had a plaster cast wrapped around my body for three months to repair a bad back, he sat with me in the arm chair for nights on end as I couldn't lie down. When he recognised my despair at going to a secondary school where they played rugby instead of football, he started up a local football team to make me happy. I went with him to Lords to watch a test match and listened to him reminisce about Len Hutton or Denis Compton and moan about Kevin Peterson.

Of course, the person who leant on him most was my mum. He was her rock for seventy-two years, protecting and providing.

Dad was born in Lowestoft in 1924, moved to Lincoln and was brought up as a young boy in the family newsagent shop, where he learned values of hard work, a sense of duty, fair play and neighbourliness. He was an excellent sportsman, excelling at snooker and at cricket. He would have had many more good times on the sporting field had the war not interrupted and changed his life.

He was called up in 1943 aged 18. He trained to be a signaller, part of that training being conducted at West Ham United's Upton Park stadium which must have delighted him, especially when later learning that my mum's family were ardent Hammers fans. Training completed, he joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne

Division and was shipped off to France in June 1944. His first assignment was to help secure the important, German-held Pegasus Bridge. It was such a significant part of the D-Day advance and was later called the most perfect operation of the Normandy invasion. He writes about his first experience of battlefield death in Caen 'seeing Black Watch soldiers lying dead and being shelled by mortars continuously for 3 days'.

A short break back home brought the prospect of Christmas in Blighty but the Germans broke through in the Ardennes and his division was ordered back. They landed in Ostend on Christmas Eve 1944, spending that night in the open in sleeping bags in sub-zero conditions. This left an indelible mark on Dad as he would often tell us this story when we were about to enjoy our Christmas celebrations. By February 1945 Dad was in a glider with a jeep, trailer, two motorbikes, five other soldiers and two pilots, with a mission to go on an offensive into northern Germany. They missed their planned landing spot and ended up in a wood, surrounded by Germans with an array of machine guns. They found the comparative safety of a farmhouse but were soon flushed out by the Germans and captured. The march to the prison camp took about four days and dad supported his best pal who was sick for the best part of the trek.

Conditions at Stalag 11B in Fallingbostal, northern Germany, were pretty horrendous – very little food, beds full of lice, freezing cold temperatures. Six weeks in the camp left Dad frail and ill with dysentery and malnutrition; there was elation when the Americans arrived at the camp in April 1945 and released them. By this time his parents had

given up hope – 'missing, believed dead' the local newspaper had reported, so the joy of their reunion in Lincoln must have been immense.

He described his view of Lincoln Cathedral on his return as 'a sight I will never forget'. He had survived where so many had perished. His release papers described him as 'of exemplary character, clean and tidy and entirely reliable, presently holding an acting role of sergeant'.

Demobbed, he was married to Joan in 1946, and they first lived above the shop in Lincoln. They moved to Watford with Michael in tow in 1950, soon to be greatly enhanced by my arrival. They lived in Watford for the next sixty years, thirty-five of those years working in the print at Odhams. He made friendships wherever he went: neighbours at Bellmount Wood, colleagues at the Chorleywood branch of the British Legion, fellow players at the Herts Bowls Club.

It was a big step to move out to Wilstone in 2014 to join us, with Mum leaning on him heavily to overcome her anxiety and misgivings about such a move. But both of them were so happy in the village. Dad connected with many people in Wilstone, his 'one-mile walk' to the village shop and the along-the-way conversations are legendary, as was his flirting with all of 'his girls' in the shop.

He died, as he had lived his life, bravely, without a big fuss, stoically facing up to the situation and never losing his sense of humour; and, deep down, longing to be with his Joan again.

**Tony Stedman, son**



## Update from Corpus Christi

### Prayers

Fr David has invited the parish to have Prayers at Noon each day. We pray for our parish and our fellow parishes in Tring. We pray for the sick, the isolated and all frontline workers.

There will also be a Candlelight Vigil at 7.00pm each day. Do light a candle and place it in your front window as a symbol of Christ's light which overcomes all darkness.

### RIP

We are sorry to announce the deaths of two longstanding parishioners of Corpus Christi:

Christina Toole, whose funeral took place on 21 May at Tring Cemetery; and Adeline Lewis. Please pray for Adeline and her granddaughter Vicky.

**Tricia Apps  
Corpus Christi Catholic Church**



# In memory of Diane Sandy

Born 18 July 1932 in Southampton, Mum was an only child and grew up in the city until the outbreak of WWII.

She was evacuated to Surrey away from her parents as their house was close to the docks and next to the super marine spitfire factory. During an air raid one night, the house was flattened. At the end of the war, she returned to Southampton and joined a church youth group where she met her future husband Derek. They were engaged and then got married on Diane's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. They then went on to have two children, Karen in 1959 and myself in 1962.

Derek was then relocated with his job to BP at Hemel Hempstead in early 1963. While house hunting, they stumbled across Tring where they purchased a new bungalow in Dundale Road. They joined and got involved in the church of St Peter & St Paul, before having another daughter, Anita in 1967.

The Children's Society was their biggest love and it seemed to expand from there, including the annual box opening and garden fete and introducing the Christingle Service. Their network of friends grew and grew within the church; we children went to Sunday School, and Anita and I joined the choir. The whole family were part of the Easter Monday pilgrimage to St Albans, Derek leading

the first one. Diane joined Young Wives, Mothers Union, delivered *Comment* magazine in the local neighbourhood, and was a helper at the Valiant Club.

After Anita started school, Diane became a dinner lady at Goldfield Infants School. They devoted their life to helping others in and around the church and nothing was ever too much trouble for them. Derek retired early at the age of 52 which was a blessing when several years later, Diane was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, and relied on his help.

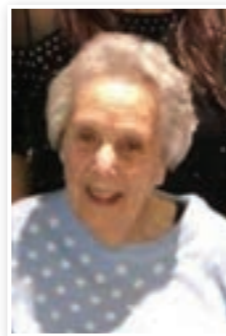
For the next nineteen years they continued with their work with the church and, with the arrival of grandchildren, they spent many happy years together of which all of their grandchildren and great grandchildren have very happy memories.

Sadly, in 2001 Derek passed away after a short illness. Diane battled on and her 'never say no attitude' helped her overcome her MS, knee replacement and broken hip. One of her biggest loves was trying to maintain the beautiful garden they had at Dundale Road. Although a massive job, she persevered. On many occasions she walked down to the town with her rollator, even appearing on Google maps along Dundale Road, often returning home having been caught short with the weather. Cold and wet, she continued to smile.

As time went on her health deteriorated and she was unable to stay at home. She was admitted to the Leonard Pulham Nursing Home in November 2013. For over six years, she had many visitors, mainly friends from the church, also receiving communion from the Tring Team. Although not always remembering names, she was always pleased to see people. Since Christmas her health got gradually worse and the family were told to be prepared. Then with the Coronavirus causing a lockdown on the home, we were unable to visit. The staff continued to send video clips and pictures and her beaming smile was still there. On 30 April we were given the sad news that she had passed away peacefully in her sleep.

The many messages we have received from family and friends have been overwhelming and have really portrayed the person that she was, kind, caring and above all happy and cheerful through difficult times. My thanks goes out to all of you.

**Neil Sandy, son**



# In memory of Brian Robinson

Brian was born in Orpington in Kent on 21 July 1936. He was the second of three children born to his father Tom, a graphic designer and talented amateur watercolourist, and his mother Nell, a keen gardener. As a small child in the war years, his father was away a great deal, but when he came home, Brian would watch him for hours on end as he worked in his shed with the lathes and tools. Brian wasn't allowed to touch but, as he watched he learned and absorbed these skills, later in life showing an astonishing level of craftsmanship in any house or garden construction project he chose to take on.

From childhood he always wanted to paint. Every day on his journey to and from school he would admire each of the four paintings of destinations served by Southern Railway adorning every compartment. His father, however, encouraged him to 'get a proper job', so he left school at 16 to attend Sidcup School of Art where he did a Graphic

Design course. Following National Service he spent the next thirty-five years working successfully in the advertising industry, until computers began to be used increasingly and he took the opportunity to stop commuting and become the full time painter he'd always wanted to be.

Nature was an inspiration to him throughout his life, both personally and professionally. His gardens (throughout the years there were four in total) were gloriously curvaceous and colourful, luscious and wild, and each one adorned with a fishpond and burbling lion's head fountain. His paintings were rich with the colours of woodland and water, sunshine and snow, autumn leaves and spring bluebells.

Brian was married twice. From his first marriage, his son Gideon has inherited his artistic flair and runs a successful bespoke kitchen design business in Glasgow. From his second marriage, to Jackie, a professional

pianist, he is stepfather to her two musically talented girls Katy and Joanna, and also has a daughter Jessica, a well-known singer and comedian, who has definitely inherited his creativity and offbeat, irreverent sense of humour!

Anyone who knew him as a member of Aldbury Bridge Club or Little Gaddesden Art Club will remember him as a funny man and so kind and patient to those less able than himself. He will also be remembered as youthful, even though he reached the age of 83. He was physically robust, striking to look at, with a quiet wit and an eye for detail, and particularly relished opportunities for silliness. His family and friends will miss him very much indeed.

**Jackie Robinson  
St John the Baptist, Aldbury**



# Useful contacts

## TRING TEAM PARISH

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## NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH

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## COMMENT DEADLINES

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

## Crossword puzzle answers From page 24

### ACROSS

- ISAAC
- MINSTER
- CONVENT
- GRIEF
- ROSE
- WED
- TIER
- FIND
- CITY
- TURN
- WHO
- ARCH
- BLIND
- PREFACE
- ETERNAL
- REMIT

### DOWN

- INCORRUPTIBLE
- ANNAS
- CHEF
- MUTTER
- NIGH
- TRINITY
- REFURBISHMENT
- ONE
- FIT
- FORGIVE
- CHAPEL
- REALM
- EDEN
- HEAR



# CHARITY ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

IN SUPPORT OF TRING PARISH CHURCH HERITAGE FUND

SATURDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER 2020, 7.30PM

Parish Church of St.Peter and St.Paul, Tring



LEADER: MARION GARRETT • CONDUCTOR: PATRICK GARRETT  
SOLOIST: ANNA LE HAIR - PIANO



## PROGRAMME

GRIEG: TWO ELEGIAC MELODIES

BEETHOVEN: PIANO CONCERTO NO 4 IN G MAJOR

MENDELSSOHN: SYMPHONY NO 4 IN A MAJOR "THE ITALIAN"

ADMISSION IS FREE WITH A RETIRING COLLECTION  
FOR 'FRIENDS OF TRING CHURCH HERITAGE'

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