

# KINGS NORTON

## Parish Magazine

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Larry Wright explores pilgrimage

### Technology is Alienating People

The growing problem of digital exclusion

### 100 Years of the KNMCC

Kings Norton Motor Cycle Club reaches a milestone



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Items for inclusion in the September 2022 edition must reach the Editor by midnight on **Friday 5th August**.

# Welcome

**EDITORIAL**

The closest we get to advocating physical exercise in this edition is Larry Wright's article on walking (p.4) and our regular reminders that gardening is good for you. But we couldn't let July pass without acknowledging the extraordinary sporting competition which starts this month in Birmingham and continues until 8th August.

Perry the Commonwealth Games mascot (photo opposite) will be popping up all over the city as an audience of up to a billion people tunes in to watch some of the best athletes in the world compete on our doorstep. You can find all the details at *birmingham2022.com* and the fun starts on 28th July with the opening ceremony at the Alexander Stadium in Perry Barr.

Meanwhile, back in Kings Norton, we learn how our ancestors protected the poor from rising food prices (p.12), contemplate our place in creation (p.20), consider the importance of trees (p.18) and explore the problem of digital exclusion (p.24). Mark Sandilands introduces us to the history of Kings Norton's venerable motor cycle club (p.28) while Thelma deplores some unladylike behaviour (p.34).

Looking ahead to the summer, if you or your children enjoyed the experiment that was Kings Norton Beach last August, and about which Becky Debenham wrote in our October 2021 edition, you may be interested to know that it's returning to The Green between 11th-14th August. Last year's free event attracted over 6,000 visitors. This year's sees the return of music, arts, crafts, food and, of course, several tonnes of sand. Bring your bucket and spade!

*David Ash*

# Walking the Way

## *Larry Wright contemplates pilgrimage*

Walking for leisure and exercise is one of the most popular pastimes in the UK. During the last two years, its popularity has increased as a necessity. We are fortunate in the Kings Norton area as we have easy access to public parks, canal-side paths and the Worcestershire countryside. Walking is the easiest form of exercise open to all with a reasonable level of mobility. It's noticeable how walking as a form of exercise is promoted officially for all ages to counteract the effects of sedentary lifestyles.

One aspect of the upsurge of interest in walking for leisure is the increased use and availability of walking trails and paths. The Ramblers' Association, among others, have been promoting public access to rights of way in the countryside for decades. As a result of these efforts, the United Kingdom has some of the most accessible rights of

way in Europe. They crisscross the UK. They are often based upon ancient paths for the movement of livestock (drovers' ways) and routes linked to religious sites. A few of the routes to religious sites became pilgrims' ways.

The most famous of these ancient pilgrimage routes, a path which is still used, is the one which leads to Canterbury from either Winchester or Southwark. By the 12th century, it was attracting thousands of pilgrims each year in the spring and summer as they made their way to the shrine of the martyr Saint Thomas Beckett. Those familiar with The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer, written in about 1400, will be aware of the carnival atmosphere and the tall tales shared by this colourful cross-section of English society as they "wend their way to Canterbury."

An internet search for The British Pilgrimage Trust will provide detailed information of dozens of UK pilgrim routes



**The Revd Larry Wright is the Rector of Kings Norton Team Parish**





PHOTO BY JON TYSON

from the far north of Scotland to the tip of Cornwall. They range from one-day walks to fifteen-day routes. In the Midlands we have the Two Saints' Way from Chester to Lichfield, Sandwell Priory to Birmingham Cathedral, St Kenelm's Way and Trail in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire and the Abbesses' Way in Shropshire. The British Pilgrimage Trust's aim is "to make pilgrimage in the British landscape attractive and open to all".

Beyond the British Isles, there are extensive pilgrim routes all over continental Europe such as the Way of St James or The Camino de Santiago de

**↑ On the Camino de Santiago in Spain, a well-worn pilgrimage route since the 10<sup>th</sup> century**

Compostella. They extend as far as the Middle East. Historically, the most esteemed pilgrimage route was to Jerusalem and other sites associated with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. As early as the 4th century, the Empress Helena made a rigorous pilgrimage to Syria, Jordan and Palestine. As a result of her experiences many began to follow in her footsteps. With modern forms of transport, it is easier to visit these distant sites. Tour operators and specialist travel companies offer packaged pilgrimage tours which are usually excellent value and may be transformative for those who take part.

Pilgrimage is not only about arriving at a sacred place or site; it is also about what we learn about ourselves and others while on the journey. Even when walking a pilgrim way alone, one is likely to meet others on the same journey and with similar motives. On a pilgrimage, we relinquish much of our usual lives, including status, and become one on a journey with others, seeking new experiences and deepening our spiritual life. Most pilgrim routes require walking in natural settings, which itself has therapeutic qualities. As the miles pass, a pilgrim draws closer not only to their goal but to their essential self and to creation's blessings.

In 2017, Kings Norton Parish began a pilgrimage project. It began modestly with a walk to a holy site in Bromsgrove and then a more ambitious pilgrimage to Rome. A trip to Lincoln Cathedral worked well as a day trip with a guided tour of this magnificent building which houses the remains of St Hugh. It ensured that people who would prefer not to commit to walking long distances had a taste of what pilgrimage entails. A further pilgrimage was planned for Assisi in 2020 but had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Perhaps over the next year we should consider reinstating our parish pilgrimage project.



PHOTO BY LES ARGONAUTES

# LIVING STONES

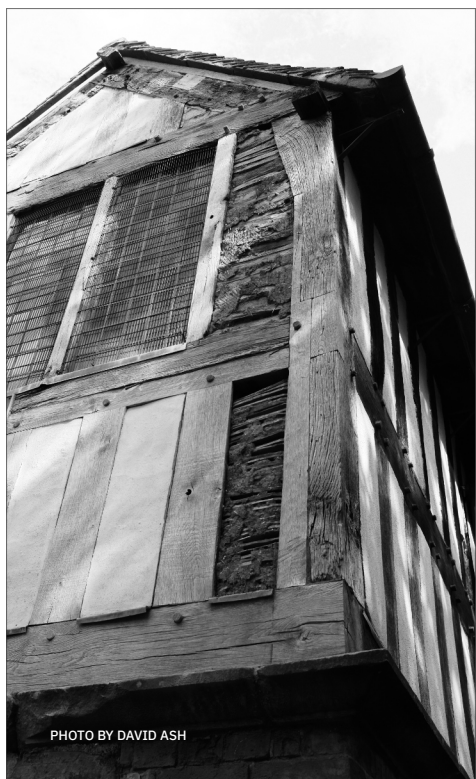


PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

**T**he main news for this month is that work will begin shortly on protecting the Old Grammar School from further damage. Some of the panels of lime plaster have failed (*see photo, left*). Basically, they have fallen off as there is something wrong with the plaster.

We're not quite sure what the problem is and have explored various theories including the effects of the sun or incorrect proportions in the mixing of the plaster. Because we want the actual repair of the lime panels to form part of one of the projects undertaken by the training scheme, we aren't ready to undertake the repairs at the moment. Until we are, we need to protect the building from further damage, especially from the rain.

There has been a long delay in getting this moving which is linked to the various permissions that we need in





PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

order to undertake the work; but at last we can make a start. The damaged panels will be covered with boards to protect them from further deterioration. Don't worry. We aren't boarding up the whole building so, hopefully, it won't look unloved and neglected. Far from it, as the building is crucial to our plans as a teaching centre for the Living Stones project.

Another part of our background work on the project is to understand better the changes that have been made to the church building and to discover some of the details of elements of the building that have been lost over time. It is amazing how some of the small details have been lost, things like the stonework around the west door where pieces are missing. And we don't know what they looked like.

As part of the work we plan to do to restore and repair the church, we would like to see your old photos. If you have any old images of

the church that you could share with us, particularly any taken prior to 1950, we would love to see them. Even if it's only a picture with the church or part of it in the background, it all helps. Please drop them into the parish office or show them to me. We will photograph them and return them to you.

# Adam the Gardener is surprised

You see, I thought that if I advised you, dear reader, to do something, then I should do it myself; so I ordered some hardy hibiscus seeds. This was easier said than done. I eventually found them on eBay and paid for one packet plus postage. Two days later, I received a message from the supplier to say that my seeds had been ordered from Lin Li Yuan in China and would be with me in a week or two! This is a bit encouraging for adventurous gardeners as seed suppliers of established reputation in the UK are continually reducing their ranges.

I have no connection with *plant-world-seeds.com* other than to say they seem to have quite a range at reasonable prices. Keep looking!

A chance prod of the TV controller recently took me to BBC Scotland. There was a gardening programme in English (not Gaelic) and I thought it was really rather good: not too much jollity, not many awful jokes, and presenters who were not afraid to get their hands dirty. There was quite a bias towards vegetable growing. One sequence took us to Shetland where, due to the short summer, all of the vegetables were grown in polytunnels. The variety of tomato

being grown was the "42 Day Tomato" which claimed to be ripe within forty-two days of sowing. Could that be true? The folk of Northern Scotland are not easily taken in so I am going to be trying them outside next year (the tomatoes, not the Scots), or even this year if I can get some seed. You may have to search around for the seed as the 42-dayers are not EU compliant and you might find that they come from China or the USA. This tomato is one of the bush varieties and will do well in a pot.

*The Beechgrove Garden* is now available on BBC2 on Friday and Sunday. If you have cable TV, tune in to BBC Scotland on Thursday, or there are a large number of back editions to watch on the BBC iPlayer.

I am not usually a fan of variegated plants as most look a bit anaemic to my eye; but I have been bowled over by a fine specimen of *Weigelia* "Florida " variegata growing in pebbles plus thin soil. Great arches of pink flowers plus pretty variegated leaves spring from a main stem in May. It seems to be indestructible and, as they are easily three metres tall, I will class this as the **Tree of the Month**. The cream and green foliage



## CISTUS

will really lighten up a dark corner after the flowers are finished. You will have to buy your Weigelia (or Weigela) from the garden centre as seeds wont work.

This month, there is still time to sow seed of Cistus, very tough, sun loving sub-shrubs which I have seen thriving in almost pure sand on the coast of Portugal. The crinkly satin flowers are about 5cm in diameter in white or pink and last just one day. They are followed by a constant stream of replacements all summer long until the first frosts. A free-draining soil and lots of sun will ensure their survival even in our winters. I have sown some seeds of these pest-free beauties and am patiently

awaiting germination (could be two months, it said on the packet). The varieties I have chosen are Cistus albidus "Pink Silk" and Cistus laurifolius, which is a pure white. Both have slightly sticky, hairy leaves, hence the resistance to insect invaders.

In order to maintain my mobility, I go for a gentle walk most mornings and I am fortunate enough to live in an area of interesting gardens. I always keep an eye out for plants I've never seen before and for plants which are doing particularly well locally. They are gems of information for what we can grow in the soil and climate hereabouts. There's no shame in being second!



Beechgrove





### SEMPERVIVUM (THE HOUSE LEEK)

This spring has been particularly dry. Climate change provides an opportunity to look out for new plants listed as “drought resistant”. The Sempervivum, or house leek (called "hen and chicks" in the USA) used to be a modest green succulent appearing between the slates of an old outhouse but has been transformed by careful breeding between species to produce larger and much more colourful rosettes and will do well in a dry rockery. Have a look around your local garden centre. The best ones will be

accompanied by an optimistically coloured plastic label proclaiming their origins.

July is a month to relax a little, to enjoy the flowery spectacle of your well-tended garden and maybe to plan next year's displays. Oh, I forgot. July is also the month for dead-heading and sowing biennials for next year's colour.

Happy gardening.



# Protecting the Poor

## from the cost of living in Elizabethan England

*In the closing years of Elizabeth I's reign, England saw the emergence of arguably the world's first effective welfare state. Laws were established which successfully protected people from rises in food prices.*

More than 400 years later, in the closing years of Elizabeth II's reign, the UK once again faces perilous spikes in living costs. Perhaps today's government could learn something from its legislative ancestors.

Until the end of the 16th century, it was a given throughout medieval Europe that when food prices rose there would be a consequent surge in mortality rates, as people starved to death and diseases spread among the malnourished.

The Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1598 and 1601 turned the situation in England on its head. Now when food became too expensive, local parishes were obliged to give cash or food to those who could not afford to eat. For the first time in history,

it became illegal to let anybody starve.

The laws were clear and simple, and required each of over 10,000 English parishes to set up a continuous relief fund to support the vulnerable. This included the lame, the ill and the old, as well as orphans, widows, single mothers and their children, and those unable to find work. Occupiers of land (landowners or their tenants) had to pay a tax towards the fund in proportion to the value of their holding.

Overseen by local magistrates, the system's transparency provided no loopholes for avoiding the tax. In fact, it encouraged a flourishing culture of charitable giving which provided almshouses, apprenticeships and hospitals



**Simon Szreter**  
is the  
**Professor of  
History &  
Public Policy  
at the  
University of  
Cambridge**



for the parish poor to alleviate destitution.

With this proliferation of localised mini-welfare states, England became the first country in Europe by more than 150 years to effectively put an end to widespread famine. And it also enabled England subsequently to enjoy by far the fastest rate of urbanisation in Europe.

Between 1600 and 1800, huge numbers of young people left rural parishes to find work in cities, safe in the knowledge that their parents would be supported by the parish in times of need and that they themselves would receive help if things didn't work out. Long

▲ FORD'S HOSPITAL, COVENTRY, IS A 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ALMSHOUSE

before the first steam engines arrived, the Poor Laws had created an urban workforce which enabled the industrial revolution to take off.

Then in 1834, everything changed. The cost of this level of welfare support was deemed too high, and replaced with a deliberately harsh new system in which the poorest men and women were separated from each other and their children and provided only with gruel in return for tedious chores in degrading workhouses. The fear of the workhouse was designed to force the poor to prefer work for whatever abysmal wages the market offered.



It is this version of the Poor Laws which tends to stick in the popular memory, familiar from the books of Charles Dickens, and obscuring the achievements of the Elizabethan original. But extensive recent research has started to highlight how Elizabethan law changed British history and provides us with urgent lessons for today's welfare system and the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis.

Just as the old Poor Laws supported an extraordinary period of economic prosperity, so too did the UK's welfare state after the Second World War. Tax-funded investment in education (secondary and higher), and the newly-created NHS saw widened opportunities and living standards take off, as the UK enjoyed over two decades of the fastest productivity growth in its history (1951-73).

Today, people regularly speak of being forced to choose between eating and heating as food and energy prices surge. Yet there is no corresponding compensation for those whose wages and benefits do not stretch far enough. A one-off hand out when millions of households are facing both fuel and food poverty is but a temporary sticking plaster.

Until there is a permanent increase in safety net payments

to those on universal credit, food banks will continue to proliferate and children will continue to go to school hungry. The link between wealth and taxation was effectively used by the Elizabethans to start to tackle inequality. But today's globalised economy facilitates offshore profits and ever-rising inequality.

In my new book, *"After the Virus: Lessons from the Past for a Better Future"* I explore changes in the sense of moral duty and the carefully legislated collective endeavour that formed the foundation of the UK's past, and most recent, periods of prosperity.

The Poor Laws were far from a perfect system of welfare. But the fact that protecting the poorest in society has previously led to widespread economic growth is a history lesson that should not be ignored by any government during a cost-of-living crisis.

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# Platinum Jubilee 2022

Reluctantly, George became King one winter's day,  
But seventy years ago he passed away.  
For sixteen years he served us all with family by his side  
And his daughter became Queen when George VI died.

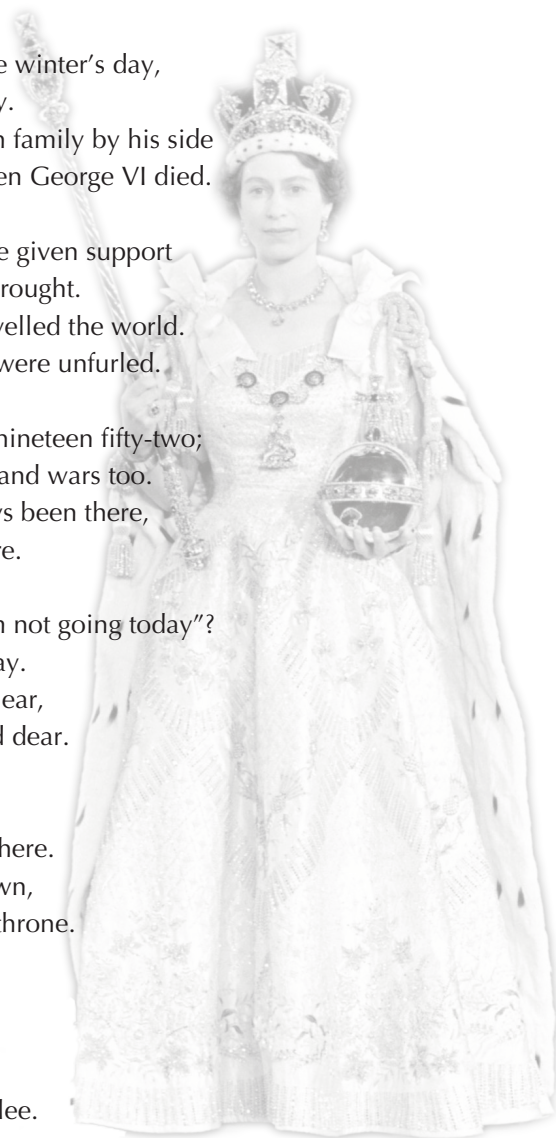
Her husband Philip and children have given support  
Whatever these eventful years have brought.  
Queen Elizabeth and family have travelled the world.  
Wherever they went the British flags were unfurled.

Great changes have happened since nineteen fifty-two;  
Discoveries, space travel, inventions and wars too.  
The Queen, God bless her, has always been there,  
Reigning with dignity, loyalty and care.

Who could blame her for saying, "I'm not going today"?  
But no, she carries on, come what may.  
The Queen visits lands both far and near,  
A wonderful monarch whom we hold dear.

Let's make 2022 a special year.  
The Commonwealth Games are also here.  
Those seventy years have quickly flown,  
With Queen Elizabeth on the British throne.

So the United Kingdom celebrates.  
This country of ours is really great.  
And we salute Her Majesty  
On the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee.



# Going Hangry

Research conducted by many overseas aid agencies shows that a child who receives food at school can concentrate on his or her learning more easily and is likely to stay in school for longer.

Some charities, such as Mary's Meals ([marysmeals.org.uk](http://marysmeals.org.uk)), exist solely to provide school meals in areas of the world most in need of such support. The Ifakara Bakery, a charity which works in Tanzania but which, as many readers will know, was founded in Kings Norton ([bakeryfund.org](http://bakeryfund.org)), knows this very well. The children whom it supports by the provision a daily nutritious meal have better rates of achievement in their learning and more engagement with school life in general.

But how does that translate here at home? In much of the UK, and for most people, food of some variety is readily accessible and we all have access to water. For some, however, that is not the case. All those who run foodbanks know this, and those of you who support us with gifts of food, financial donations or prayer do too. As well as the very obvious point that the people affected go hungry, what further impact does it have on their lives?



SYLVIA FOX IS THE MUSIC MINISTER AT ST NICOLAS' CHURCH AND A RETIRED PHYSIO-THERAPIST

The term "hangry" is a combination of the words "hungry" and "angry". It first appeared in about 1915 and describes the experience of feeling irritable as a result of being hungry. Decision making or learning are seriously impaired when we are hangry. Attempts at making important decisions when hangry may lead to bad choices; and yet some of those in short- or long-term poverty may be expected to make major decisions whilst permanently hangry.

The newspaper article which started my thinking on this subject ended thus. "So, if you haven't had time to squeeze in a lunch break or snack between meetings on Monday, it might just be wise to hold off buying a sports car or eloping to New Mexico". (*Daily Telegraph* Feb 28th 2015). This probably tells us more





PHOTO BY BILL WEGENER

about the readership of the newspaper than anything else; but the point itself is serious. We cannot expect people to make far-reaching decisions about jobs, benefit claims, schooling for their children or responses to health issues if they are either chronically or temporarily hungry.

All the more reason to support the work of those local, national or international charities which provide food for those in most need or support them in growing it themselves.

### The Editor adds...

*The Childhood Trust, a London charity, estimates that 34% of children in the UK went hungry last winter. A 50-page report entitled Cold, Hungry and*

*Stressed examined the impact of winter 2021-22 on the most disadvantaged children in the UK, collecting data from 31 charities and over 1,000 families. Among their findings: 4.3 million children in this country are living in poverty and 28% of women admit that they have gone without food so that their children can eat. (Source: [swlondoner.co.uk](http://swlondoner.co.uk)).*

*In December 2020, the Guardian reported that Unicef was planning to feed hungry children in the UK for the first time in its 70-year history.*

*According to the Social Market Foundation ([smf.co.uk](http://smf.co.uk)), the British Government does not have any official statistics for food insecurity in the UK.*



Ifakara Bakery

#### What's This?

It's a QR code. Point the camera of your mobile phone at it to visit a linked website



Mary's Meals

# Trees

Every day we walk, cycle or drive past countless trees and don't really give them any attention. Perhaps, if one has fallen during a storm and bars our way, we might notice it; or we might comment on one which has been covered in outdoor lights at Christmas or that has beautiful blossom in spring. But often, we just move past and don't pay them any attention, let alone study them closely.

There are so many different types of trees. You may be very good at identifying them all, or perhaps, like me, can only name a few. You may be of an age where you still have a copy of the *Observer Book of Trees* or *I Spy Trees* to help with recognition.

I've recently been fortunate to be out walking in some fantastic woodlands. It has made me really focus on trees and realise how much we take them for granted. I've seen more species than I can name

and have been fascinated by the variety, but also by the unusual. Take, for instance, the trees in the photo (opposite page, top) that look like they are already shaped to be turned into the hull of a boat.

Trees are vital to our ecosystem in many ways. They improve air quality and benefit our mental health and well-being. They provide a home for numerous insects, birds and animals.

This jubilee year there is a project called The Queen's Green Canopy. It encourages us all to plant trees at home and in our communities. It is a great and well-timed initiative. It reminded me of a campaign from the 1970s called "Plant a tree in 73", which was followed by "Plant some more in 74". In fact, I think I probably still have a First Day Cover (remember them?) featuring the slogan and the stamp that went with the



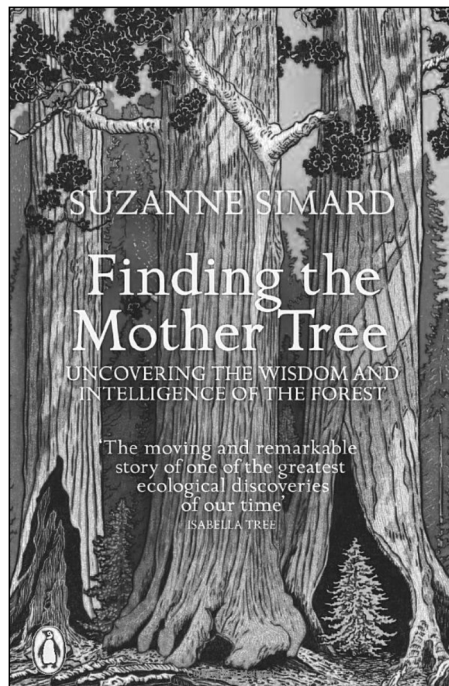
PAULINE IS  
THE LAY  
MINISTER AT  
ST NICOLAS'  
CHURCH,  
KINGS  
NORTON

campaign. I've planted two fruit trees this year as my small part of the green canopy. I also have two small oak trees in my garden but I can't bring myself to remove them, mainly because I read a book called "Wishtree" by Katherine Applegate about an old oak tree that is about to be cut down and now I just can't do it! Personally, I blame the person who gave me the book (mentioning no names but she works in the Parish Office!).

Next time you are passing a tree, remember to take a closer look and be grateful that it is there.



PHOTO BY PAULINE WEAVER



### It's True. Trees Communicate!

Dr. Suzanne Simard was raised in the Monashee Mountains of British Columbia. She is Professor of Forest Ecology in the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Forestry, and has earned a global reputation for her research on tree connectivity and communication and its impact on the health and biodiversity of forests.

This book is the story of how she discovered the truth about trees: their cooperation, healing capacity, memory, wisdom and sentience. Readable, brilliant, revolutionary, it has been described as "a masterwork of planetary significance".

# God's Fragile Creation

*"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'" (Genesis 1:26-28)*

I find that I feel closest to God when I am in a beautiful place, be that in the middle of a forest, on top of a mountain or on a beach at sunset. This short passage from Genesis takes us back to the very beginning of the Bible and the familiar story of creation, the creation of God that is all around us. It tells of the creation of humankind. We are made in God's image, according to God's likeness, both male and female. What does it mean to be made in God's image?

Although God took human form in the person of Jesus, I do not believe that this is what meant here. Maybe it means that we are reflections of God's glory and have the ability to share God's characteristics such as love, patience, kindness,



forgiveness and faithfulness. Maybe being made in God's image is about relationship with God. In his letter to the Colossians (chapter 1, verse 15), Paul talks about Jesus as the "image of the invisible God". Jesus, as the Son of God, had such an intimate relationship with God that he reflected God's image. To see the true image of God we need to look at Jesus.

We, as humans and as an important part of God's creation, also have a relationship with God. We are set apart by God to have dominion over other creatures and that gives us a relationship with God. Our relationship with God is a precious gift even though it is far from perfect. Jesus reflects God clearly but we, as humankind, produce a more hazy reflection of God. The more we build our relationship with God the clearer our reflected image of God can become.

Even though we are made in the image of God and have a relationship with God, we still have responsibility. We have the privilege of being God's representatives on earth and have been given dominion over animals or, as the Good News Bible words it, "power over the fish, the birds and all animals". God has the ultimate power but has delegated some of this to us. With any sort of power, however, comes a great deal of responsibility. We have seen, all too often, that when power gets abused much damage is done.

I find this power and responsibility quite terrifying! In wondering how I personally use my power as one of God's representatives, I feel that I do not use it well. Although I try to do my part to protect this planet, God's very fragile creation, I also do things that harm it and know that I should try harder to take my responsibility more seriously.



RUTH IS A  
NURSE AND  
A MEMBER  
OF THE  
KINGS  
NORTON  
MINISTRY  
TEAM

We are all created in God's image and have a relationship with God so that we may reflect the glory and characteristics of God on earth, albeit imperfectly. With this we have been given power and responsibility. My prayer for us all is this: as we continue to grow in our individual relationships with God, may we strive to reflect the characteristics of God more and more, and take seriously our responsibility to care for God's fragile creation.

## **YOUR PARISH CHURCH**

If you cannot find what you are looking for here, you will probably find it on the Parish Website ([www.kingsnorton.org.uk](http://www.kingsnorton.org.uk)). Alternatively, please ask questions at the Parish Office, which is open between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

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0121 458 3289 • [www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam](http://www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam)**

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Assistant Rector.....	The Revd Eliakim Ikechukwu
Parish Lay Minister .....	Pauline Weaver
Curate .....	The Revd David Booker
Honorary Assistant Priest .....	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Methodist Minister.....	The Revd Nick Jones
Lay Readers .....	David Ash, Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman, Parisa Pordelkhaki
Lay Preacher .....	Steve Wright
Music Minister.....	Sylvia Fox
Pastoral Care Advisor .....	Susan Farrell
Pastoral Care Team Coordinator .....	The Revd Jayne Crooks

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Hawkesley Church .....	Jim Clarke
Immanuel Church .....	Sue Hartley

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Verger and Groundskeeper .....	Shane Williams
Safeguarding Coordinator .....	Annette Dickens
Regular Giving .....	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Flower Arranging (0121 486 2837).....	Alison Blumer

**W**e are a Church of England Parish serving all in Kings Norton through St Nicolas' Parish Church, and, in partnership with the Methodist Church, through Hawkesley Church, meeting in the Primary Academy.



*We believe that the church in Kings Norton exists to be a worshipping, transforming partnership in Christ, to live out God's radical hospitality for all and to be equipped for work in God's world*

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month</b>	
9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Holy Communion (Children's activity : Muddy Church)
12.30 pm	Baptisms
6.00 pm	Taizé Prayer

<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Month</b>	
9.00 am	Sung Matins (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Morning Praise for All Ages (Child-friendly)
6.00 pm	Holy Communion with Anointing & Prayer for Healing

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Month</b>	
9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Holy Communion (Children's activity : Godly Play)
12.30 pm	Baptisms
6.00 pm	Evening Worship

<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Month</b>	
9.00 am	Holy Communion with Choir (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Outdoor Service in St Nicolas' Churchyard (Child-friendly)
6.00 pm	Compline (Night Prayer)

<b>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Month</b>	
9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	United Service

*All services are held at St Nicolas' Church. For further details, see the weekly newsletter on the Parish Website at [www.kingsnorton.org.uk](http://www.kingsnorton.org.uk)*

# Technology is alienating people

And it's not just those who are older



DR CAROLYN WILSON-NASH (ABOVE) AND PROFESSOR JULIE TINSON (BELOW) TEACH MARKETING & RETAIL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING.



We take it for granted that technology brings people closer together and improves our access to essential products and services. If you can't imagine life without your smartphone, it's easy to forget that people who can't or don't want to engage with the latest technology are being left behind.

For example, there have recently been reports that cashless payment systems for car parking in the UK are seeing older drivers unfairly hit with fines. This has led to calls for the government to intervene.

Age is one of the biggest predictors of digital exclusion. Only 47% of those aged 75 and over use the internet regularly. And out of the 4 million who have never used the internet in the UK, only 300,000 people are under 55.

But older people are not the only ones who feel shut out by new technology. For example, research shows vulnerable people, such as those with disabilities, are also disengaging



from e-services and being "locked out" of society.

## The digital transition

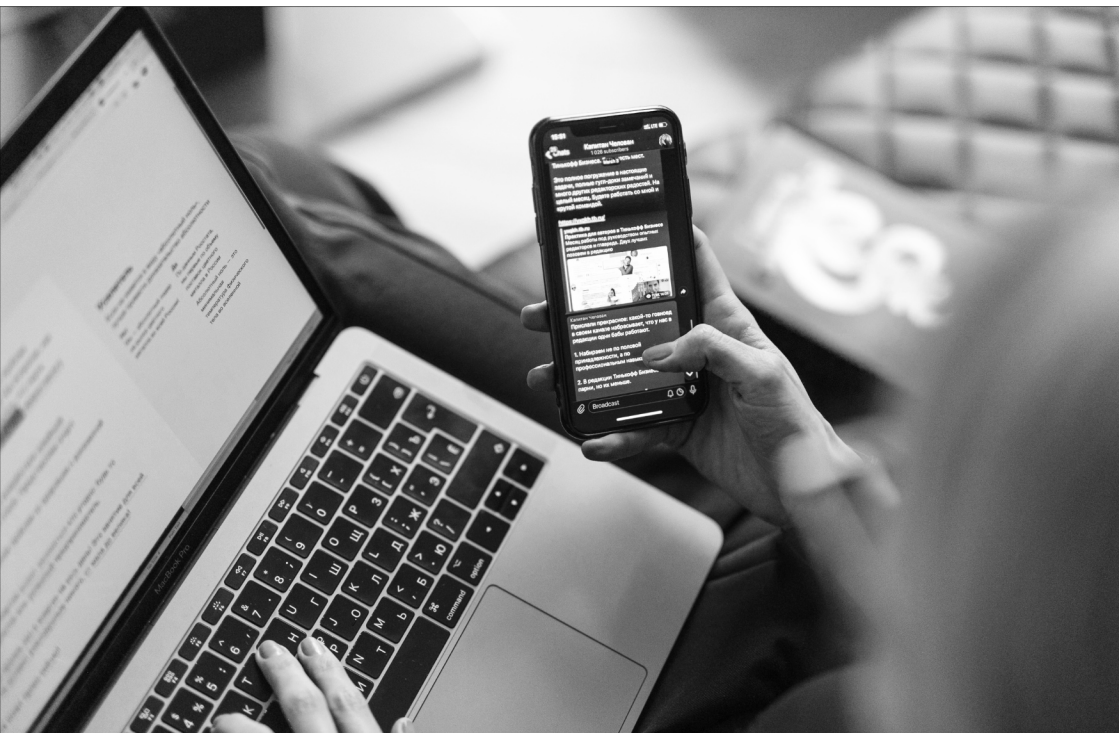
From train tickets to vaccine passports, there is a growing expectation that consumers should embrace technology to participate in everyday life. This is a global phenomenon. Out in front, Sweden predicts its economy will be fully cashless by March 2023.

Shops increasingly use QR codes, virtual reality window displays and self-service checkouts. Many of these systems require a smart device, and momentum is building for QR codes to be integrated into

digital price tags as they can give customers extra information such as nutritional content of food. Changing paper labels is a labour intensive process.

Technology pervades all aspects of consumer life. Going on holiday, enjoying the cinema or theatre, and joining sport and social clubs all make people feel part of society. But many popular artists now use online queues to sell tickets to their shows. Social groups use WhatsApp and Facebook to keep their members updated.

When it comes to booking a holiday, there is a decreasing





number of in-person travel agents. This limits the social support to make the best choice, which is particularly important for those with specific needs such as people with health issues. And once travelling, aircrew expect flight boarding passes and COVID passports to be available on smartphones.

Essential services such as healthcare, which can already be difficult for older and other people to navigate, are also moving online. Patients are increasingly expected to use the GP website or email to request to see a doctor. Ordering prescriptions online is encouraged.

### **Not just older people**

Not everyone can afford an internet connection or smart technology. Some regions, particularly rural ones, struggle for phone signal. The UK

phone network's plans for a digital switchover by 2025, which would render traditional landlines redundant, could cut off people who rely on their landlines.

Concerns about privacy can also stop people using technology. Data collection and security breaches impact people's confidence in organisations. A 2020 survey into consumers' trust in businesses showed no industry reached a trust rating of 50% for data protection. The majority of respondents (87%) said they would not do business with a company if they had concerns about its security practices.

Some people view "forced" digitisation as a symbol of consumer culture and will limit their technology use. Followers of the simple living movement, which gained momentum in the 1980s, try

to minimise their use of technology. Many people take a "less is more" approach to technology simply because they feel it offers a more meaningful existence.

One of the most common reasons for digital exclusion, however, is poverty. When the pandemic hit in March 2020, 51% of households earning between £6,000 to £10,000 had home internet access, compared with 99% of households with an income over £40,000.

Limited access to tablets, smartphones and laptops can result in feelings of isolation. Many older consumers have developed strategies to manage and overcome the digital challenges presented by these devices. But those unable to engage with technology remain excluded if their family and friends don't live close by.

## Smart change

The solution is not simply to give devices to those without smart technology. While there is a need to provide affordable internet access and technology, and offer support in learning new skills, we need to recognise diversity in society.

Services should provide non-digital options that embrace equality. For example, cash systems should not be abolished. There might be a demand for services to become digital, but service providers need to be aware

of the people who will be isolated by this transition.

Retailers, local councils, health providers and businesses in tourism, entertainment and leisure should try to understand more about the diversity of their consumers. They need to develop services that cater for the needs of all people, especially those without access to technology.

We live in a diverse world and diverse consumers need choice. After all, access to and inclusion in society is a human right.

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## The Editor adds...

A remarkable number of campaigns to preserve cash have sprung up in the UK in the past year or so. They include The Post Office's *Save Our Cash*; *Freedom to Pay* organised by *Which?*; the *Keep Cash Campaign* from the Daily Telegraph; and the GMB union's *Save Our Cash Lifeline*.

A recent *Which?* survey showed that, of those people who shopped in person rather than online, 22% experienced problems in paying for their goods. Many were refused to the option to pay in cash.

If you wish to support any of the campaigns to preserve cash, there are petitions to which you can add your name. Oddly, none of the organisers seems to have spotted the irony that you can only sign them online!

# 100 Years Of The KNMCC Kings Norton Motor Cycle Club

On Sunday 29th May, parishioners leaving the 9.00 am service or arriving for the one which starts at 10.30 found a gathering of motorcyclists in front of St Nicolas' Place and may have felt the urge to ask what was going on. Who were all these people and what were they doing there? The answer will take a little explanation.

They were all members of the Kings Norton Motor Cycle Club (KNMCC). "What? a motorcycle club in Kings Norton?" I hear you ask. Well, yes, and the story goes back about a hundred years.

The picture at the top of the opposite page is believed to be of a very early meeting of the KNMCC and is clearly dated 1922. It probably shows

apprentices of the local Beardmore Precision Company, a local motorcycle manufacturer whose employees were the club's founders. Beardmore Precision was formed when Baker Motor Cycles joined the then giant William Beardmore Engineering Group in 1919 and moved into a very large facility off Ekersall Road in Kings Norton.

On the following page is a picture of the KNMCC believed to be of a later date in the 1920's. However it cannot have been taken any later than 1927 as Beardmore Precision had ceased business by that time and the site had been purchased by the Triplex Safety Glass Company supported by a loan from GKN.





**BIRMINGHAM TRANSPORT 3. MOTORCYCLES ON THE GREEN, KINGS NORTON, c.1922**

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We believe that the KNMCC continued to meet in the years up to 1938 but stopped in the run-up to the Second World War. The meeting place appears to have moved from St Nicolas' Place to The Navigation Inn as it is recorded that there used to be a brass plate on the outside wall of The Navigation which proclaimed it to be the headquarters of the Kings Norton MCC when the club reformed in 1944.

We know that at least one of the original members joined the army as a dispatch rider and survived the war, having served in the Normandy landings. He told of having ridden into a French village only to see soldiers wearing strange uniforms. They turned out to be German troops. He

turned around to leave and was shot in the behind during his hasty retreat! I am glad to say that not only did he survive the war but he lived to a ripe old age. He recounted his story to me in the 1980's.

The club reformed on December 21st 1944 at The Navigation and stayed there until April 1945, when they moved their centre of operations to the Hazelwell Hotel, Pineapple Road, Kings Heath. There was always a packed calendar which comprised of sporting activities, a summer gymkhana fun day, dances, film shows, talks, discussions and ride outs including camping weekends. This continues to be the case, although the pattern has



changed somewhat over the years.

From then on, there were regular changes of "clubhouse". After years at the Hazelwell Hotel, the club moved to the Kings Arms Hotel on Alcester Road South, then to the Billesley Community Centre, Yardley Wood Road in 1971, which is where I formally joined it on 9th March 1979. We remained there until moving once more, this time to the Woodbourne Sports Club in Earlswood in May 1993. This was to remain the home of the KNMCC until the pandemic brought a halt to our meetings.

When it was over, it became clear that we would have to move once more so we are now at the Studley Cricket Club!

So why were we gathered in front of St Nicolas' Place, our original home, on 29th May this year? To reenact the original 1922 meeting in celebration of the club's centenary, of course!

*Adapted from a talk given to the St Nicolas' Church Men's Group by Mark Sandilands in May 2022.*



## Baptisms Feb-May 2022

6th Feb	Harry Laurence Benjamin Parkin
3rd Apr	Lottie Violet Anne Dangerfield
3rd Apr	Archie Michael Hodgetts
17th Apr	Oscar Michael Lincoln
21st Apr	Laura Ann Isham
1st May	Paul Jason Ellison
1st May	Kehlani Kapri Ellison
1st May	Noah Breese Robinson
5th June	Ella Grace Scott
5th June	Poppy Rose Scott

# THE HUNGRY GARDENER

## *Community Gardens*



Claire is a keen kitchen gardener, ably assisted by her 6-year-old son Charles.

Food security has been a hot topic over the last few years and it never ceases to be in the headlines. Could there be a way for us to build resilience in our local food systems in our own community?

The industrial food system uses a lot of land whichever diet is kept, relies heavily on fertiliser and often still uses pesticide. As soon as there is a hiccup, be it legislation, borders or a pandemic to mess up the transportation, there are supply problems, not to mention price hikes. If you are growing some of what you eat, if you forage or even grow a few salads and herbs on a window sill, you are contributing to your own food resilience and are well on the way to creating your own food security.

However, there are also community gardens, where a group of people collectively work a piece of land together. There are allotments, but these are typically worked by a single family. A community garden, on

the other hand, is usually worked by multiple families and individuals and there are many advantages.

So what is a community garden? Simply put, it is any piece of land worked on by a group of people for the benefit of the group and the wider community. Their benefits are numerous but the biggest advantage is if a group of people are working a garden.

If, for example, one family has a sickness bug then other members of the community garden can carry on cultivating and maybe drop a small food box of veggies freshly picked from the community garden. You could share the load between your busy diaries. Members will have different skills and interests. Someone might be really good at building wooden structures for raised beds or supports, whilst someone else is a master at compost mixes. Another loves planting flowers and beneficial plants for the insects, another



is a master tomato whisperer, and so on. If you grow together, you'll cook together and share food together too. Recipes, tips and knowledge can all be shared to get the most out of what you've grown and make it go further.

When I volunteered for Garden Organic in South London, I was part of the Wandsworth Community Garden. This was started by a group of people who lobbied the Council for some land and obtained part of a public park in Wandsworth. There were challenges, as it was public land; but there were benefits as well, as passers-by saw members of the group gardening together and enjoying each other's company. Once, a pumpkin was harvested. It was joyous to hear a group member celebrating this and that fact that someone who needed food was able to turn the pumpkin into a meal. Apart from the friendships which developed, we also helped each other and shared our harvests.

To start a community garden, the first thing you need is land. If you discover that there's a piece of public land in a bit of a state that is owned by the Council, this could be an opportunity. Once you have your land, it is essential to do a soil test to make sure it is safe to grow food in the soil. If the soil test comes back with

unfavourable results then you will need to prepare raised beds. I actually find raised beds easier to work in. They're easier on the back and have fewer weeds. They are expensive initially, although, if you can find free pallets, you will have the wood you need. If you don't have suitable soil you will need to buy compost. You will also need a water point. Is there a building where you can fit a water butt to save water? You will need a bit of space to create compost. It will take a while to harvest a reasonable amount of food. However, within 2 to 3 years, you could be harvesting 70% of your veggies from your community garden.

Imagine that! Seventy percent of your veggies with no food miles, super fresh, grown in compost you've either made or selected carefully full of amazing nutrients. And your food will be flowing with many more nutrients than those grown through the industrial food system. You have complete control over how your food is grown and can grow organically without fertilisers or pesticides. Over time, you can save your own seeds, which can really cut costs. The benefits will not only feed your belly but may increase your friendships and wellbeing and those of your children.

# Of WAGs and Women Priests



THELMA MITCHELL IS  
LEAD CHAPLAIN AT  
BOURNVILLE COLLEGE

Have you been riveted by the very expensive spat in court between the "WAGs" Colleen Rooney and Rebekah Vardy, who is also referred to in some publications as Wagatha Christie? No? Neither have I; but it has been hard to ignore and even harder to have any great sympathy for two exceedingly rich women accusing each other of apparently nothing of great import. And no-one's getting fat except, probably, the lawyers. The reputations of these two intelligent women are ruined, whatever the outcome. Another battle which only the legal eagles are going to win.

In case you should be interested: Ms Coleen Rooney, wife of footballer Wayne Rooney, is said to have accused Ms Rebekah Vardy, wife of footballer Jamie Vardy (hence 'WAGs', short for 'wives and girlfriends') of feeding private information to the tabloid press. Ms Rooney is alleged to have set up a "sting" operation by feeding Ms Vardy false news, such as a report of a flooded basement in the Rooney household, which duly appeared in *The Sun*. But it is Ms Vardy who is suing Ms Rooney for defamation. She claims that Ms. Rooney's accusations of betrayal have left Ms Vardy's reputation in tatters. Ms Vardy has said that she and her family have suffered, as she has been abused and traumatized by members of the public and by online "trolls". No, honestly, I am not following the story avidly, though I am fascinated, against my better judgement, as I wonder how far it is going to go. And who can deny the entertainment factor?

The court case played out across the world for six weeks, with many surreal moments, including reports of a mobile

phone containing text evidence which mysteriously ‘fell’ into the North Sea! It was remarked that the phone was now in Davy Jones’ locker, in response to which Ms Vardy asked, “Who’s Davy Jones?” Two journalists were removed from the court room for laughing. At one stage even the judge seemed to have forgotten what the case was about.

It does seem like a big, fat fuss about nothing, doesn’t it? The standing of both women is damaged, but particularly that of Ms Vardy, regardless of who wins the court case.

And yet the Biblical principle is clear: gossip, slander, rumour spreading, especially false rumours, are deeply damaging and forbidden, something which is often forgotten as we focus on other perceived sins. As we read in Proverbs 16:28, "A dishonest person stirs up dissension and a whisperer separates close friends." An ancient wisdom still true today.

In James chapter 3 we are told, "The tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue is also a great fire, a world of evil ... corrupting the whole person."

We know in our hearts that this is spot-on. Many of us will have been damaged by the spreading of false rumours and invented stories, sometimes with long-lasting and painful effects. There must have been better ways for Ms Rooney and Ms Vardy, two former best friends, to sort this out between them. At the time of writing the verdict has not been returned.

Meanwhile, the nearest Sunday to 29th June, which is the feast day of St. Peter, is known as Petertide. This has become a traditional day of ordination in the Anglican Church across the world. Ten years ago this month, in June 2012, when we were living in Italy, we worshipped regularly at All Saints’ Church, Rome, the Anglican chaplaincy. Two women, Dana English and Mary Styles, worshipped and worked with their families to support the witness and mission of All Saints’, as well as its members. (Anglican chaplaincies were created originally to support English-speaking people living and working in a country. Anglican churches, such as St. John’s in Kolkata, India, were usually built by Anglican missionaries or trading companies as parish churches. Today they both tend to fulfil the same functions, being both parish churches and a

centre of support for English speakers.)

Dana and Mary heard the call to ordination and began their long training, which included time spent serving in parishes in England. It is usual in the Church of England for ordinations to take place in the diocesan cathedral. However, the geographical area of the Anglican Diocese in Europe is the largest diocese in the Church of England and covers one sixth of the world's landmass! It stretches from Russia, through Poland and across Northern Europe, down through Switzerland, France, and southward, right across the Mediterranean countries including Malta and into North Africa. Travelling east of Europe, the diocese extends to Turkey and Mongolia. The only European country not part of the diocese is the United Kingdom.

The diocese was formed in 1842 and began life as the Diocese of Gibraltar, because of the major British naval base there. Thus the diocesan cathedral is in Gibraltar, with two pro-cathedrals, one in Valletta in Malta and one in Brussels in Belgium. (A pro-cathedral is a parish church which sometimes serves as a diocesan cathedral.) Dana and Mary, because of the distances they would have been required to travel, were ordained instead at All Saints' in Rome (photo, right). The then bishop and suffragan bishop did not ordain women, so a bishop was flown in from England for the task. It was the most moving and joyful experience for everyone present in that packed church. These were our dear friends whose faith journeys we had shared, supported

and enjoyed together. I still look back on the occasion with fond memories.

One day, crossing Rome, Mary, in black suit and collar, was stopped by a news film crew who asked if she was a nun. She explained that she was a priest. The crew looked at each other, shaking their heads and muttering together that "she's English so she doesn't understand". Mary corrected them and said that she is a priest in the Church of England. More head shaking and muttered tuttings of "Oh, English – hmm, Protestants!"

*La Repubblica* is serious Italian newspaper, the equivalent of *The Guardian*. It ran a full-page feature on them, very impressed that not only were they ordained women but also that their ordination had been held a stone's throw from the Vatican. They did refer to them as the first women priests in Italy, which is not quite true. To quibble a little, the Old Catholics had ordained a woman in Rome a couple of years earlier. However, Dana and Mary certainly had a higher profile. It was a good article, serious and considered, until even *La Repubblica* fell into the trap of comparing their hair styles, how they managed to make meals for their husbands, to help their children with their homework and also to serve as priests!

Dana and Mary served their curacies at All Saints' and are now parish priests, one in London and the other in Somerset. They are two remarkable women who channelled their skills and energies, as well as their faith, so differently from the WAGs and so positively too.





## Funerals May 2022

3rd May	Mark Silk	52	SN.Cr.LH
5th May	Susan Caroline Gaunt	63	Cr.RD
9th May	June Margaret Milner	91	SN.Cr.LH
16th May	Christopher Leslie Roberts	74	In.CY
16th May	Margaret Rose Greene	77	SN.Bu.KN
17th May	Patricia Ann Foster	65	SN.Bu.KN
18th May	Debra Clarke	57	SN.Bu.KN
21st May	Leslie John Oakes	93	In.CY
27 May	Kathleen Hilda Mary Wrenn	80	In.CY

Bu : Burial, Cr : Cremation, CY : Churchyard, In : Interment of Ashes,  
SN : Service at St Nicolas' Church

Cemeteries & Crematoria

KN : Kings Norton, LH : Lodge Hill, RD : Redditch

# To Hell with Accidents!

When I was employed on P&O ships I witnessed the introduction of quite a few innovative schemes. At one point, all ratings were designated as "GPS" or General Purpose Seamen. Though it had not been my area of expertise, I had to attend a five day course in Liverpool learning how to serve on deck and how to handle berthing, ropes and cables. We were even taught how to tie knots. Later on, I earned my steering ticket and had lessons in how to man and sail a lifeboat. We were also instructed in how to fight fires while wearing breathing apparatus.

Papers were issued on safety at sea with titles like "To Hell With Accidents". Those of us working in the galley sometimes came in for a bit of banter at the hatch from some of the seamen, who took the view that "cooks and stewards" would be useless on deck as GPS; but we would simply point out that they would probably be incapable of cooking a meal three times a day for the entire crew.

Safety awareness, then, was an important issue. Each month while we were crossing the oceans a safety meeting was convened in the Captain's office. Heads of department or specialist officers debated safety on board and forwarded any fresh suggestions. I was responsible for taking the minutes, which



**Eddie shares a few opinions about Health and Safety at sea**

usually amounted to three or four sheets of A5 paper.

One particular Captain, whom I will call B.C., was most keen on his safety committee. I was required to print out copies of the minutes, one of which was sent to the London office. B.C. was keen to create a good image and, presumably, to earn "brownie points".

B.C. would ensure that we had weekly drills on board. He would be on the bridge, using his walkie-talkie to organise the event. I was responsible for a first aid party with two stewards carrying a stretcher. Each week, the planned location of the "incident" (a fire, say) and of the "injuries" to which we would have to respond would be kept secret; but we would invariably find out in advance where on the ship it was to take place.

One morning, I discovered that the exercise would be held down in the engine room. I had to don a boiler suit to enter this hot, noisy part of the ship, where the temperature was at least 50° C, and to stay there for about an hour. It was unpleasant and I didn't fancy doing it again, so I had a chat with the cook and we came up with a devious plan.

When the session ended, I contacted B.C. and told him that lunch for all on board

would be at least an hour late as a result of the drill. The news was not well received at all and, mysteriously, future exercises became much shorter! A small victory.

Later that same trip, our training was put to the test. There was a nasty accident in the port of Tokyo in which one of our seamen was badly hurt during docking. I had a busy time, which included having to visit him in Shinagawa Hospital. It was not a good day and, eventually, I had to go up to the Captain's cabin to report on the events of the morning.

As I told him about the accident, he was reading a newspaper. To be fair, he did put his paper down as I finished, but all he said was "Very good, Eddie. Carry on." before going back to the news. So much for his concern for safety and efficiency. A load of bluster! I won't tell you what I really thought at the time.

I did say a prayer of thanks for the strength and wisdom given to me to cope correctly with the day's traumatic event, which was like none other I have experienced.



*Harry L Marks*



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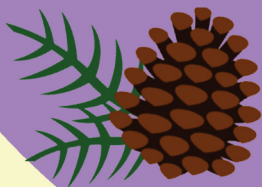


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