



KINGS NORTON
TEAM PARISH

THE MAGAZINE
FOR CHURCH & COMMUNITY

July 2020

£1.50 in print & online



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A Church of England Team Parish serving all in Kings Norton and Druids Heath through the Parish Church of St Nicolas and the District Churches of Hawkesley and Immanuel
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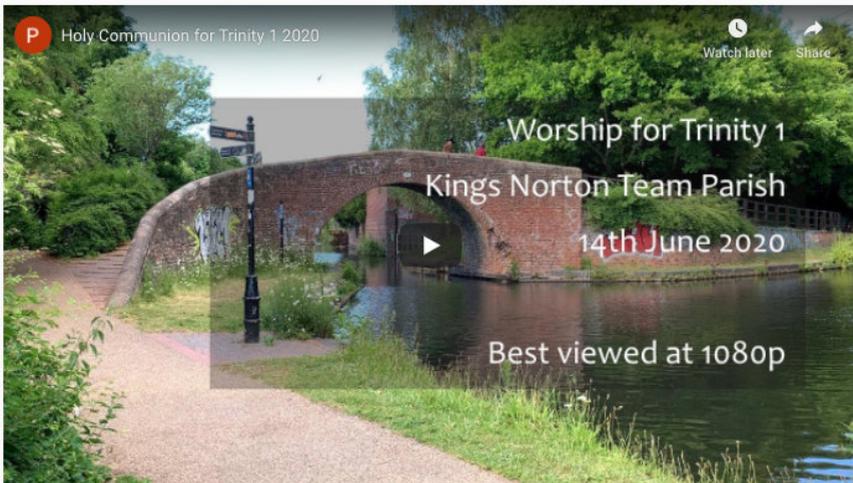
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Trinity 1 - 14th June 2020

The Ministry Team at Kings Norton led by the Rector, the Reverend Larry Wright, offer a service of Holy Communion for the First Sunday after Trinity. Please supply your own bread and wine. The preacher is The Revd Eliakim Ikechukwu. The Gospel is read by Pauline Weaver and the Epistle by The Revd Catherine Matlock. We will be broadcasting content throughout the Covid 19 crisis here and on our [Audio page](#).

Technical Advice

Because this page is updated periodically, please refresh your browser every time you visit it to be sure that you are seeing the latest content by pressing the F5 key (Windows) or ⌘+R (Mac) on your keyboard. For the best picture quality, click the cog wheel (Settings) in the bottom right-hand corner of the video and ensure that Quality is set to 1080p. If the cog has already been overlaid by the red HL label, there is no need to do anything. To be notified when new videos appear, follow us on [Twitter @kingsnortonteam](#), or [Facebook](#).



You are not alone.

Though we cannot gather in person for a while,
your local church continues to meet for worship each Sunday
on the Parish Website.

Join us at kingsnorton.org.uk/video or facebook.com/kingsnortonteam

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Please email items for
publication to:

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Please submit text in an editable
format, preferably plain text or
MS Word. Printed material
entrusted to the Parish Office
should be sealed and marked for
the attention of The Editor.

Submission Deadlines

Items for inclusion in the August
2020 edition must reach the
Editor by midnight on **Friday 3rd July.**

Items for inclusion in the September
2020 edition must reach the
Editor by midnight on **Friday 7th
August.**

At the end of March, Dominic Cummings broke the rules by driving from London to Durham. The furore that ensued is a matter of public record. In May, the media reported that bishops of the Church of England had received death threats for expressing views on social media about Mr Cummings' actions. The email sent to the Bishop of Worcester said simply 'Stay out of politics or we'll kill you'.

We once dared to call ourselves a Christian country. As we face some of the consequences of our past this summer, some would now want to call that label into question. But we know what we mean. A church in every parish, public worship and Biblical values accepted as the norm, the faith taught to children as self-evident truth, and so on. Those days are gone. Christianity is now viewed by most as just another minority pursuit, tolerated among consenting adults as long as it does not raise its voice in the public square.

Which means that most British citizens have entirely missed the point. Christians, their leaders in particular, have no choice. They have to involve themselves in debate and action of a kind that our society deems political, because that is what it means to be a disciple of Christ, fired by compassion, righteous anger and the thirst for justice. The God of the Bible takes sides with the losers, the victims and the powerless and reserves stern warnings for the complacent, the arrogant and the corrupt. When we lend our voice to the voiceless, challenge the abuse of power and call each other to repentance and reform, we are not just meddling in politics, we are responding to a far higher calling.

That is why these pages are always open to articles whose aim is to remind us that, for many in Kings Norton, all is not yet right with the world. It is also why, this month, it is our pleasure and privilege to welcome contributions from Druids Heath on the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign. Because they do.

The Editor

From The Rector

Why Did Our Churches Close?

Years from now, those who are too young to remember this pandemic will ask questions of those who lived through it: How did we cope? What was it like to be 'locked down'? What did 'shielding' mean. They may also ask, 'Why, in a time of a global health crisis, did the places of worship close?' The simplistic answer is that the Government ordered it. Except, at least initially, the government didn't order them to close completely. They ordered all public buildings to close and all gatherings to cease, including worship; but, for a brief 24-hour period in mid-March, our government seriously considered allowing churches to stay open for private prayer. This was reversed when the Prime Minister made his major speech about the national lockdown.

At the highest level of government they acknowledged that, in a time of a pandemic, access to places of worship was important for the spiritual morale of our nation. However, this initial impulse was superseded by the medical and scientific advice and so the



churches closed completely. The Church of England's national leaders then imposed a set of drastic restrictions on all Dioceses, clergy and churchwardens, forbidding clergy to enter their churches even to pray alone. These impositions were controversial and the arguments for and against them in the media, on social media and among Christians were not always helpful or edifying.

Among the many points of view expressed were 'The church is not the building but the people'; 'We can and should be praying at home'; 'We can reinvent ourselves as church by moving to internet worship', and so on.

All these and similar attitudes have a point because they make us think about what the church is? However, these are essentially internal questions asked amongst ourselves as Christians and, in our case, Anglicans. Yet, the Anglican Church has a privileged place in England as the established National Church. We exist to serve not only our regular members and worshippers but everyone who lives in our parishes, whether they come to church or not. In times of crisis, whether personal or national, people who don't usually come to church visit our buildings to pray, reflect or simply to sit and find consolation or peace.

Interestingly, the Roman Catholic leaders in the UK didn't impose prohibitions on their clergy and did not forbid them to enter their churches. You could watch a Roman Catholic service livestreamed from inside your local parish every Sunday from the start of the lockdown. Didn't they get the same medical and scientific advice as the Anglican leadership?

On Easter Sunday, in an interview with Andrew Marr, the Archbishop of Canterbury conceded that the instructions initially given in March preventing Anglican clergy from entering their churches was only 'guidance'. In fact, the authority of the Archbishops to restrict access to churches by clergy was contrary to laws governing the Church of England (Canon law) which requires clergy to say Morning and Evening prayer in their churches and to celebrate Holy Communion on all Sundays and major feast days.

National leadership in a time such as this requires astute judgement, whether in government or the Church of England. Decisions are made which will be scrutinised, criticised and analysed, often in very subjective terms. While holding leaders to account we must also recognise the enormous strain they're under when responding to a virus with no known cure. This doesn't exclude leaders from being challenged for their decisions. We need to question their motivations. The defence that they are relying on medical and scientific advice sounds convincing, but the advisors have not always agreed amongst themselves. As Christians, we have a higher authority than government and science from which we draw inspiration and guidance.

Personally, I was never convinced of the rightness of the decision to close churches for private prayer. Clergy are allowed to enter crematoria for funerals because each crematorium had a cleaning routine after each funeral and only 6-10 mourners were allowed. Similarly, it would have been possible to designate certain churches, particularly larger churches at the centre of their communities like St Nicolas', as 'staying open churches' with restricted access, a cleaning regime and staff on hand to ensure that all safety measures were complied with. Neither was I persuaded that clergy should be excluded from their churches. I ignored the instructions, which became guidelines, and am willing to be called to account for doing so.

The encouragement to move prayer and worship online was equally commendable and churches with appropriate skills and equipment did so. But can we seriously

imagine such online activity could ever replace the benefits of congregations meeting together in church week by week to worship God, pray for each other, support each other and be together in fellowship?

Church buildings are more than places of worship for their members. They are also part of our historical and cultural heritage which stand as witnesses to the evolution of the Christian religion in these islands over 1,500 years. They have been rallying points for our communities in times of crisis and adversity, providing comfort for the grieving, hope for the fearful and encouragement to the anxious. During this 2020 crisis in our nation, the churches were closed even for private prayer. We now wait to see the consequences of these decisions.

The Reverend Larry Wright

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The Awdry Memorial is Coming to Kings Norton

Kings Norton and St Nicolas' church have many historical connections with both famous and infamous people. Within the church a visitor can survey the many memorials around its walls to families and individuals associated with the area. Some are ancient; a few are contemporary. We are about to add to these with a memorial plaque to The Reverend Wilbert Awdry, former curate of the parish and creator of the now world-famous Thomas the Tank Engine stories. All the necessary permissions for the design and installation have been acquired and the Awdry family plan to attend the unveiling later in this year. The plaque will be sited on the south wall, half way towards the side chapel.

Visitors who are fans of the railway stories often visit the church looking for something to show their children and grandchildren but up until now

have left disappointed as there is nothing to see relating to The Reverend Awdry. The new plaque will be a focal point for Thomas fans coming to Kings Norton and a fitting tribute to a much-loved author and dedicated priest.

The plaque is being fashioned by Bellamy's memorial stonemasons and permission has been granted by the worldwide owners of the Thomas the Tank Engine brand, Matel USA, for a picture of Thomas to be included in the design.

An excellent biography, *The Thomas the Tank Engine Man: The Life of Reverend W. Awdry*, by Brian Sibley (Lion publishers 2015) is well worth a read, especially for the pages covering his reasons for coming to Kings Norton and his ministry here.

Details of the unveiling will be circulated in due course.

The Ministry of Encouragement & Support

The Revd Donald Sampson, now retired (in theory at least), is a former member of the Kings Norton Ministry Team and a Methodist Minister.

Being a grateful recipient of the magazine each month leads me to accept the Editor's invitation to make a personal comment.

As one who is heavily indebted to St. Paul for his very Christocentric teaching, I am constantly helped by his rich testimony to Jesus as Saviour and Lord. I marvel that, in spite of living with a quite serious health problem, he travelled 6,000 miles on foot over his missionary journeys. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:7 of his 'thorn in the flesh' and in Galatians 4:14-15 of being quite ill when in Galatia. It is thought by some that he suffered from malaria, which can cause violent headaches. This being said, his consuming desire was to share the treasures of the Gospel which sustained him.

Saint Paul's example leads me to keep some words of John Wesley before me in my study, his rule for Christian living:

Do all the good you can,

By all the means you can,

In all the ways you can,

In all the places you can,

At all the times you can,

To all the people you can,

As long as ever you can.

Many of us who know we are of very senior years and possibly have a few aches and pains, have been inspired by the wonderful

example of NHS fund raiser, Captain Tom Moore.

As one who still gives modest service in our St. Mary's Hospice, (though not visiting during the lockdown), I know that such encouragement and support as I can give is of value.

As we exercise our modest ministries of support through phone calls, emails and, maybe, shopping for the housebound, we are playing a small but significant part in the ministry of Jesus today; as we are when we

pray for each person. Some such work can lead us to have real concern for the individual people we are seeking to help. Again, St. Paul comes to my rescue;

'Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and His Peace will guard your hearts and minds In Christ Jesus.' (Philippians 4:6-7).

The Reverend Donald Sampson

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FOODBANK NEWS

The B30 Foodbank has been continuing to function during the pandemic, simply discovering new ways of working as and when required. Currently, all food parcels are delivered to clients and all referrals are by e-voucher from our own voucher holders or by phone from TAWS (The Active Wellbeing Society) which is a partner organisation of Birmingham City Council.

Our referral numbers are still on the low side, which is mostly due to the large number of other food providers who have emerged in south and south-west Birmingham. As the lockdown begins to lift, these pop-up groups are gradually disappearing, as those running them are returning to work or to their pre-lockdown activities. We anticipate becoming very busy in the early autumn, as other providers stop and as the true level of the economic effect of the pandemic begins to show. Some Trussell Trust partners around the country are experiencing exactly the same story as us. Others are experiencing very high demand already. From the local point of view, we are able to support a couple of our Trussell Trust

neighbours with food stocks as we are still benefiting from generous giving and also the aftermath of the crazy explosion of giving last Advent.

By the time you read this, we will have moved out of our temporary warehouse, which we opened to cope with the aforementioned giving explosion, and will have taken full possession of a second warehouse. The two warehouses back on to each other and an interconnecting doorway is planned. Permission has been granted and we are awaiting the builders.

As both distribution and warehousing are now under one roof, it has made for some complicated rostering of volunteers to ensure that distancing is maintained at all times whilst still achieving all the necessary work. Extending into the car park has been a possibility on dry days, but we cannot rely on this as a long-term solution. Fortunately, those of us leading on the warehouse like to solve puzzles and to use plans and maps.

Many of our volunteers have had to cease working with us temporarily

as they are shielding themselves or family members, or are of an age where 'stay home' was the overriding guidance. Others have been able to stay on and, for some, it has been their only contact with the outside world all week. Many have taken on new roles: working in a warehouse for the first time, or acting as delivery drivers or, in my own case, learning how to use a pedestrian-operated fork-lift truck when the main user had to go off duty for a while. Thankfully, I discovered an experienced user disguised as the spouse of one of our regular volunteers.

Our main needs are financial at the moment. So, if you are able to give

financially rather than in food, I would encourage you to do so. All the details can be found at www.b30.foodbank.org.uk. We are paying rent on two warehouses now and are buying the correct equipment to fit them for safe working. We can still receive food donations on a Tuesday and Friday afternoon (2.00 - 4.00 pm) at 17 Castle Road, Kings Norton Business Park, B30 3HZ. All food needs to be non-perishable and in date. The most useful items currently are cooking rice, tinned spaghetti, long-life whole milk and long-life fruit juice.

Sylvia Fox



BLACK VOICES MATTER

The View From Druids Heath

The Reverend Catherine Matlock writes, ‘The death of George Floyd in the United States has led to worldwide protests about the continuing injustice experienced by black people in our western societies. “I can’t breathe” is the passionate call of the Black Lives Matter campaign, a movement that has been re-energised during the Covid-19 pandemic, when so many can empathise with the loss of life and liberty. I asked my Afro-Caribbean friends in our Druids Heath prayer group for their responses to Black Lives Matter. They offer their individual thoughts and feelings here.’

Esther : A Call for Unity

Dear Brothers and Sisters, from all walks of life, please listen to my cry!

My prayer is that you open the ears of your heart and not look at this in scrutiny,

But you realise that this plea, this petition is a cry out for unity.

But what must we do in order to unite? Well, we must die to self to understand and embrace one’s plight.

Its frightening, I know, to temporarily abandon all the things you've ever known.

The values and opinions you've thought to be true, the sayings, the teachings that's helped to form you.

The assurance, the confidence that your way is best and unto that way you'll teach the rest... cuz we have been the ones to 'show the way'!



To point to the narrow road and there we must stay for our light to shine bright and not to fade.

And now all I'm seeing is a flicker.

Like bombs... ticking time bombs... boldly, blasting, the beauty of another's story and we can't hear clearly.

Have we become deaf to another's cry?

Like in the parable, all but the Samaritan just walked on by, but he noticed the casualty. He nurtured the wound that was caused by this tragedy. He stopped. He saw. He heard. He did.... He crossed the road.

Church, let's stop, look and listen and remember our green CROSS code. Let's stop and remember all the pain they've been through and if you don't know then listen and let them educate you.

Not from research, hysteria, news and media, political platforms or social media.

This is personal... like your salvation was personal to you.

It's that personal relationship that makes us valued, special and true.

He heard our cries before they even filled our lungs...

He saw our destruction and wrong doing yet for us he still longed... now that's special.

He gave up his earthly vessel and intercedes on our behalf so we can be made whole. Let's think about that.....

Now I'm going to slow down the pace and change the tone.

I am dialling your heart right now will you pick up and listen?

Please respond to your fellow black woman, your sister, a Christian.

In my stillness I am reflecting on the pain from 400 years on.

When we were shackled, mocked, beaten, raped, dehumanised and robbed.

But the pain lives on.

People say 'freedom' but how does one know what it is when they haven't experienced it? Like the enslaved Israelites walking round with Moses in circles when they left Egypt.

Their mindset was still enslaved and Moses became enraged and struck a rock when he hit rock bottom.

People are still striking rocks today after pain and grieving whilst feeling forgotten.

Shop windows, bricks, statues you name it...

But before you pick up your rock to hurl back in judgement don't you ever forget.... Breonna, Sandra, George Floyd, Trayvon, Ahmaud, Tamir Rice... the list goes on...

And so do the grief and the unheard cries.

Yet the shouts and destruction are not right but has turned eyes now they realise that Covid-19 claims lives.

Yet they still go and protest.. you can call it suicide but please hear their cries.

Because Christ heard yours...

Christ's crucifixion was the most unjust murder of a human being that we set the table for.

And there's more...whilst we were still sinners Christ loved us!

Because he heard our cry, saw the weight of our judgement that we couldn't carry.

And with our cries he cried out for unity in his last prayer of Gethsemane

And his final cry was Father forgive them for they know not what they do.

He crossed the road... for me and you.

He called you by name showing your value, your worth and that you matter. He heard your cries and was with you in disaster.

So please say Black Lives Matter because they do.

This is not taking any value away from you.

But we need your attention, we need your love and healing.

At the moment Church and the world don't seem appealing.

Saying that we matter signifies worth.

It demonstrates that you've heard our cry and our hurt and crossed the road.

In vision and in culture.

Start a revival in love and carve it in our world's sculpture.

So our lights can shine bright again and people can see

That there is not that much difference between you and me.

We were all made in his image and that we should project.

The light of love bringing unity

A love that protects with an embrace

Like Christ did with his grace.

Let Christ's green cross code set the pace and let's stop, look and listen.

Sandra, another member of the group, would have liked us to print, in full, the lyrics of the song 'Something Inside So Strong' by Labi Siffre. Unfortunately, copyright regulations prevent us from doing so; but Sandra's comment that this song 'says it all' may be enough to prompt you to look up the words on the internet. It begins, 'The higher you build your barriers, the taller I become'.

Tamika

In this world, to be black, I think, is a crime. I think it's ignorant that people would see the shade of one's skin as a reason to hate them and go to an extreme of killing them. It's utterly deplorable.

Black is not a race nor an ethnic group. We are but one race and that is the human race! For people to construct a system that keeps us at the bottom of the totem pole and treats us like animals, is beyond human belief.

I say that to say this; we are all slaves mentally. What I mean is, there's injustice done to all humankind, because others in the world crave wealth and power. That's why so many people are impoverished today. Not just blacks. The wealthy systematically created a society to fit them rather than creating equality in all areas.

We are all victims of injustice in a disguised, hypocritical world, but us black people face it the most. We are the ones who were shackled and lynched and are still experiencing it as we speak. As a black person, it



seems like I'm living in a nightmare, especially these past few weeks.

For over 400 years, our ancestors were shackled and forced to work without anything in return. Also, they would be beaten and lynched without a cause. So today, to see history replaying itself just makes me angry and full of rage. I can't fathom why today, in the 21st century, we are still being treated like nothing.

When I see people taking a stand to fight against the oppression and segregation of my people, it gives

me hope that justice will prevail. We have always been obedient to our masters, but our obedience goes unnoticed, so this has caused us to retaliate in a way that shows we've had enough.

There's a guilt complex within the minds of white supremacists and that generates a fear. A fear that black people, if given the power, would do to them what they've

done to us. However, that is not so. Black people only use violence if necessary and even doing so, it's because we were trained to be animals. Everything was imposed upon us by our slave masters. As a people we were taught to forgive, but never forget and to trust no man but ourselves. It is just the way the system was designed for us, because slaves were never meant to be free.

Devon

In the month of August 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King gave a monumental speech of a dream he had.

He spoke of a vision where the sons and daughters of slave owners mutually break bread with the children of slaves. A dream where the two opposing groups, victims and perpetrators together, share one meal at one table. Not out of duty but out of love.

This love is not one that can be stirred up with eyes closed tight and teeth gritted. Too much has gone on. There has been too much pain. Too much injustice.

So how on earth could such a union be ignited?

By love. Not as the world gives. For our love unions are often based on how you can benefit me. That's not necessarily love. That's convenience.

However, this love is a higher love that asks 'What can I do for you? How can I contribute to make your time on this earth worthwhile?'

In the New Testament, Peter and John, standing at the Gate called Beautiful said (this is a paraphrase) 'We don't have what you want but you can have what we've got.'



King's dream was that, one day, his four little children would no longer be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

This doesn't mean we disregard a person's skin colour or their race, their identity, their history. But we bring ALL these aspects to the table, love one another in spite of our differences and celebrate the richness of our diversity. We can build one another up. Let's be character constructors to one another rather than demolition demons.

King's speech talks of slave owners and slaves. May I suggest that we level the playing field and that, just as King's victory was founded in the

notion that the U.S. Constitution states that all American people are created equal, so we adopt that notion. What a tremendous meal, what a tremendous celebration this is turning out to be!

So, to finish, like Martin Luther King, I would like to declare to the four corners of the earth

'Let freedom ring in our schools! Let freedom ring in our businesses!

'Let freedom ring in our Hospitals and our places of healing and treatment!

'Let freedom ring amongst the people commissioned to protect and serve us!

'Let freedom ring amongst those appointed to govern and lead!

'Let freedom ring in the hearts and minds of men and women, boys and girls from all areas, from ALL walks of life!

'Then can we truly sing from our hearts, the words of the old negro spiritual,"Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, I'm FREE AT LAST!'"

Propagation & Deadheading



Seasonal tips from a green-fingered reader in isolation

We've had a mild but wet winter and now the grass is starting to turn yellow due to the driest and warmest May on record. Guess what? I have just received an email from Severn Trent Water advising me not to use a hosepipe until further notice!

Ah well, there are ways that we can turn the climate change to our advantage. As an example I have noticed that Dahlias can be left in the ground instead of needing lifting, drying, sprinkling with sulphur and storing in a dry cool place until Spring. You could try giving the same treatment to Cannas, tuberous Begonias and (dear to the heart of Dame Edna Everage) Gladioli! All of these and more will appreciate some frost-proofing and I recommend leaf litter spread on the ground, a

much neglected asset.

Our **plant of the month** is another one to benefit from climate change. Hardy Fuchsias are a reliable favourite and indeed grow wild in the hedgerows of Southern Ireland. Now is the time to propagate all Fuchsias from stem cuttings which are best quite short and I recommend using a propagator with transparent lid with the ventilator open in an area shielded from all direct sunlight. Don't forget to water gently when needed. Rooting is quite rapid.

Here is a tip given to me personally from a former president of the Fuchsia Society of Great Britain: look down at the cuttings from above and most



Crataegus laevigata rosea flore pleno
or Double Pink Hawthorn

little leaves will be in a cross formation, two at each growth point, occasionally you will find one with a three leaflet arrangement. Propagate from this one and your plant will be more bushy and all set to win a prize at the next show!

Larger flowered varieties are better able to withstand our Midland winters now but they must be planted fairly deep and given the leaf litter treatment.

There are trees which flower

after the cherries are finished and I have discovered that they tend to have a longer period in flower, up to six weeks.

All the Hawthorns (I particularly like the double reds), Ceanothus and, not quite trees, but they will grow up and through an otherwise rather dull evergreen tree, the many varieties of Clematis montana will fit the bill.

I am a great believer in dead-heading flowers at this time of year. Immediately after snipping



Antirrhinum

away the faded flowers your wonderful plant will forget all about channelling its energies into producing fruit and, in most cases, will either build up a sturdier plant for next year or (and this is the best bit) it will produce a fresh flush of bloom in the late summer or immediately get down to producing more flowers. I can't think of any plants that will object to dead-heading but of course some produce attractive fruit as well as flowers, for example hypericums and old-fashioned shrub roses with scarlet hips to lighten the days of winter, they're best left alone.

Dahlias must be dead-headed regularly remembering to remove the pointy buds hanging down and not the rounded ones. One plant that I have discovered responds double-quick to the removal of seed pods is the *Antirrhinum*. The popular name is of course the Snapdragon and they are loved by bumble bees. They are now available in open-faced varieties which I am not too keen on but also in more miniature varieties with lots of smaller flowers. It is a fiddly job with a pair of scissors to remove the pods but you will be rewarded with repeat flushes of flower throughout the summer.

July is a great month for the weeds and I recommend hoicking them out before they set seed.

You may have seen a television programme about innovative farmers recently and one chap in the Midlands had a smallholding of about six acres. One third of the land was covered by polytunnels and with the help of his wife and four daughters he

grew splendid vegetables for sale at local farmers' markets and through independent green-grocers. Not only was his produce organic but it was grown using the Biodynamic Agriculture Method. I am still trying to find out exactly what this is but it can take six years to be certified biodynamic and this family worked very hard indeed. One of the daughters looked after the

chickens which may or may not be an obligatory feature. I do know that keeping ducks gets rid of slugs and snails! Vegetable growers may like to look up the details as his customers seemed very satisfied.

Have a lovely gardening Summer.

Adam the Gardener

Resources for those staying at home

Access the Coronavirus Covid-19 Community Support Directory online at www.bvoices.uk/Coronavirus

If you are unable to find the help you need, call 0333 772 1931 for assistance/referral

For advice: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice

To find activities or support in your area visit www.r2wbirmingham.info

To download the Birmingham Directory of Community Assets visit www.brumnns.wordpress.com/tag/asset-directory

To find out about goods and services to help you in Birmingham visit www.birmingham.connectosupport.org

To find third sector organisations in Birmingham visit www.bvsc.org/directory

To find NHS services in Birmingham visit www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/patients-public/a-z-services

The Church in the Parish

We are a Church of England Team Parish serving all in Kings Norton through St Nicolas' Parish Church, Hawkesley, in partnership with the Methodist Church, and Immanuel District Churches.

**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
To be equipped for work in God's world**

During the Covid-19 crisis, we have had to suspend all our usual activities including church services. That does not mean, however, that church has ceased to be active. Many of our services have moved online.

Sunday worship from St Nicolas' Church is now broadcast as a video on the parish website (www.kingsnorton.org.uk/video). It is available from early on Sunday morning and throughout the following week.

Sunday morning worship from Immanuel Church is streamed live on Facebook at 10.30 am (facebook.com/Immanuel123Church).

The Tiny Tots Family Service is broadcast live on Facebook at 10.00 am on Sunday morning (bit.ly/2K8KzTS). You can find daily stories and crafts for children on the same page.

Weekly prayers for Druids Heath and other occasional recordings appear as podcasts on the parish website (www.kingsnorton.org.uk/audio).

You can join members of the Ministry Team for morning and evening prayer daily on the parish Facebook page at 10.30 am and 5.45 pm (www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam).

As new initiatives emerge, we will publish details on the parish website.

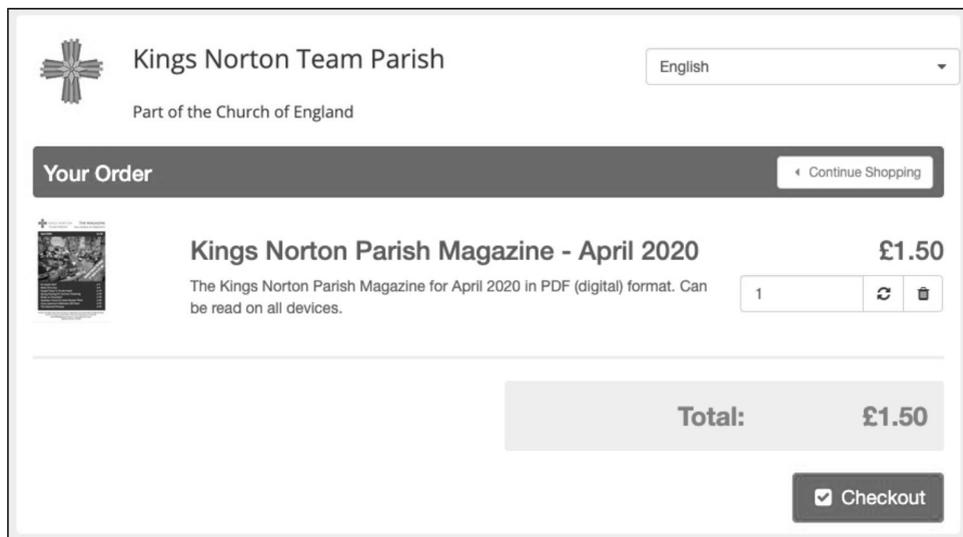
The Parish Magazine is now being sold online as a downloadable PDF which can be read on computers, phones and tablets. Since local distribution has become problematic, we have decided to print fewer copies, but all subscriptions will be honoured.

The Parish Magazine on the Internet

Since April 2020, it has been possible to purchase the Parish Magazine from the Parish Website for the same price as the printed version. £1.50 buys you a digital copy which can be read on any device capable of opening files in the popular PDF format.

Since few of our local volunteers are able to deliver to your door during the health emergency, we have switched to postal deliveries for the time being. If an edition for which you have paid in advance fails to arrive, please let the Parish Office know and we'll send you another copy. If you prefer, we can arrange for you to receive a digital copy instead.

We are looking for a way to offer automatic online subscriptions (rather than one-off downloads for which you have to pay each time) in the hope that an increasing number of readers will wish to adopt the digital format, thus reducing our printing costs.



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BATMAN'S BUTLER

Born in Kings Norton

In addition to the Aherne brothers Pat and Brian, born and raised in Monyhull Hall and going on to Hollywood careers, there was another locally born actor who achieved similar heights.

He was, and indeed for fans of a certain vintage still is, best known as Batman's butler, having had the good fortune to be selected for a major role in one of those pioneering TV series that so caught the imagination of viewers that all further evocations paled into insignificance.

It was the American Batman series starring the actor who for most aficionados is the first and the definitive 'Caped Crusader', Adam West. Our man played the not insignificant role of his butler, Alfred Pennyworth, who for 60s America at least represented the epitome of British gentlemanly cool. His stage name was Alan Napier.

He came into the world in Kings Norton with the exotic name of

Alan William Napier-Clavering on 7 January 1903. He was the son of Claude Gerald Napier-Clavering and Mary Millicent Napier-Clavering (née Kenrick). It was quite a significant lineage, because it meant he was distantly related to Neville Chamberlain, part of the great Birmingham dynasty that helped lead the city into greatness from the Victorian era onwards, and Britain's Prime Minister in the late 1930s. Alan's mother Mary was the sister of Wilfred Byng Kenrick, a pioneering industrialist and Lord Mayor of the city; she was first cousin once removed of Neville.

In line with many well-to-do Birmingham families, Claude and Mary sent their children to boarding school. Alan was sent to



the Packwood Haugh preparatory school in Shropshire, and then attended Clifton College, the independent school in Bristol. It seems that neither he nor his parents had any other vision for his career than acting, and he went from Clifton to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, graduating in 1925. It was probably at this time that he adopted the stage name of Alan Napier.

He became part of the Oxford Players, where he worked with such later-to-be famous names as John Gielgud and Robert Morley. He was apparently fortunate to obtain the position. The manager of the Players was recruiting another actor for a place in the group, and initially interviewed had interviewed another to-be famous name, Tyrone Guthrie, but decided that

he would be too tall for most parts. Rather neglectfully, he interviewed Alan Napier for a place while he was sitting down, not realising that he was actually taller than Guthrie: but the appointment was honoured.

Through the 1930s Alan performed on the West End stage. He described himself as having a particular affinity for the work of George Bernard Shaw, and in 1937 appeared in a London revival of *Heartbreak House* supervised by the great writer himself.

He moved to the United States, where his first stage role was as a romantic lead opposite the current femme fatale Gladys George in *Lady in Waiting*. Though he had begun his film career in Britain during the 1930s he had no particular success until he joined the growing community of British expatriates in Hollywood, around 1941. There he spent time with such people as the celebrated director James Whale, a Dudley-born fellow ex-Oxford Player. Alan then appeared in some notable films including *Random Harvest* (1942), *Cat People* (1942), and *The Uninvited* (1944).

He made a name in some memorable roles, for example in *The Song of Bernadette* (1943), the story of St Bernadette of Lourdes, in which he played the ethically unstable psychiatrist who is hired to declare Bernadette mentally ill. He also played the cruel Earl of Warwick in *Joan of Arc* (1948). He performed in two Shakespearean films: the Orson Welles version of *Macbeth* (1948), in which he played a priest whom Welles added to the story, and as Cicero in MGM's *Julius Caesar* (1953). He also appeared in the comedy musical *The Court Jester* (1955) and in the Hitchcock movie *Marnie* (1964).

In 1965, he was the first actor to be cast in a proposed new Batman TV series, as Bruce Wayne's faithful butler Alfred. It was a role that would give him lasting celebrity and he played it throughout the three year run of the series.

He later explained 'I had never read comics. My agent rang up and said, "I think you are going to play in Batman." I said "What is Batman?" He said, "Don't you read the comics?" I said, "No, never." He said, "I think you are going to be Batman's butler." I



said, "How do I know I want to be Batman's butler?" It was the most ridiculous thing I had ever heard of. He said, "It may be worth over \$100,000." So I said I was Batman's butler!'

Alan's career extended into the 1980s with roles on television, including the mini-series *QB VII*, *The Bastard* and *Centennial*, and the drama *The Paper Chase*. He retired in 1981, aged 78 and spent his final years in Pacific Palisades, California. In early 1988, Napier appeared on the late-night talk show *The Late Show* as part of a reunion of the surviving cast of *Batman*, despite being in a wheelchair.

Alan was twice married. His second wife, Aileen Dickens

Hawsley, was a great-granddaughter of the novelist Charles Dickens. He suffered a stroke in 1987, was hospitalised from June 1988, and died on 8 August 1988 in the Berkeley East Convalescent Hospital in Santa Monica, California. He was 85 years old. He was cremated and his ashes were scattered in the garden of his home at Porto Marina Way in the Pacific Palisades.

In the early 1970s, he had written a three-volume

autobiography which was not published at the time because, as he joked, 'I haven't committed a major crime and I'm not known to have slept with any famous actresses.' In 2015, McFarland Press published the book under the title Not Just Batman's Butler, with Napier's original text annotated and updated by James Bigwood.

Michael Kennedy



Harry L Marks



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THE NEW NORMAL

More reflections from lockdown

What will the new normal be? We suspect that it will not be like the old normal for some time to come. We are having to come to terms with who we are and what our value is.

A prince, a prime minister, a senior government advisor and possibly the president of Brazil have succumbed to Covid-19. While we can say that this virus is no respecter of status, it is NOT a leveller. It has hit the poorest hardest across the world, including in the UK. Covid-19 deaths are twice as high in poorer areas. On the African continent there are only 5 intensive care units for every million people. A Christian hospital in Bethlehem has launched an urgent appeal for donations. They are critically short of the most basic supplies.

One of our broadsheets, in a story repeated in the Church Times (so it must be true!),

reported the story of the death of an American couple during the pandemic, not of the virus but by suffocation, when their 11-ton hoard of lavatory paper fell through the bedroom ceiling from the loft. They had responded to every world drama since the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962 by hoarding the stuff.

Is this how our time will be remembered? We need our responses to be the ones to direct, to control this story! Is it a story of a virus that brought out the worst in human nature, showing up our weaknesses, selfishness and frailties, a world which fell apart in the face of a disease? Or will it be a tale of how people responded with their best, how the virus was a medical, not a social tragedy and how, when we were faced with a challenge on a scale not met before in our lifetimes, we met and overcame it?



The choice is ours and in Europe we seem to be stoically weathering the storm. The social order has not collapsed. We do have 'corona days', raising mental health issues, asking if it will always be like this, but generally we've got our heads down and have got on with it!

We now have the two metre dance when out walking or shopping during our allowed time, moving apart with a smile and, in the UK, an apology. We're able to measure 2 metres by eye so accurately we could win prizes. It is impossible to have a private conversation out of the window but, when we are out, those we meet seem friendlier. There has been a large

outpouring of love for the NHS and for all its workers, for carers, shop workers and those vital delivery people who now always find us at home. There has been a tangible increase in neighbourliness and a desire to take care of each other, with offers of fetching essentials from folks we have not spoken to before. 'Social distancing' has actually made us more sociable.

As we re-evaluate the value of work and workers and recognise the real value of what people do, it is up to us to make the change more than skin deep, to create a more cohesive society. Community life is stronger in more equal societies. In online surveys it is reported that the normal 6% of the UK population who worship regularly has shot up, with 25% saying that they join in online services, and 45% saying that they now pray.

Interestingly, and maybe slightly ghoulishly, the films most downloaded to watch in the past few weeks have been about plagues, pestilences and pandemics! One of these is the 2010 film *Contagion*. Its theme

is 'Nothing spreads fear like fear!' This film almost predicts 2020, with its conspiracy theories and crackpot, dangerous 'cures' like those peddled by a president. In the film, the virus is spread by respiratory droplets and focuses on attempts by medical researchers and public health officials to contain the disease and prevent social disorder. In one scene a bulldozer knocks down a banana tree while clearing a rain forest, disturbing the natural habitat of some bats. One bat finds shelter in a pig farm, dropping a piece of banana which is eaten by a pig. The pig is slaughtered and prepared for the table by a chef who transmits the disease caught from it in a handshake. Definitely prophetic! We should have been much better prepared, heeded the warnings after SARS, swine flu and Ebola.

I will draw to a close with a heartfelt excerpt from an email to the editor; 'I read every edition of the parish magazine on my commute to work. Currently this commute is across the landing as I wander into the home office each

morning. I have become very aware recently that, although we all face the same restrictions, lockdown is affecting us all so differently. A friend who lives on his own is finding isolation very difficult whereas I, with two small children, struggle to get anytime to myself and am finding it difficult.

There has been so much emphasis, I feel, on all the things you can do now that you have SO much free time as a result of lockdown – learn a new skill, do up the garden, clean the house. I, along with many parents, are



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The Answer's Yes!

looking forward to seeing it! I may not be able to leave the house but the truth is, I have never been busier. Time to myself on commutes or lunch breaks is now non-existent.'

We do feel for you and all parents on lockdown, especially when you are expected to be working as well. I think that we all will have a higher regard for teachers now too! Hang on in there. It can't go on forever ... can it?

Well, it is always easier to get into something than to get out of it. Release from lockdown may

be slow and frustrating. The new normal will emerge bit by bit. We will need to embrace it and work with it. I close with some words from Archbishop Ian Ernest, Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome:

'To exist at the moment is to navigate or fend off the flood of grief that threatens to submerge our rare, buoyant moments. We mourn the death of friends and relatives, the absence of human contact and everyday pleasures we once took for granted. We can't stop thinking about the tens of thousands of families facing hunger, bankruptcy and homelessness even as they struggle to endure the loss of someone they dearly loved ...

At heart of this human tragedy however, a rainbow appears bringing colours of hope that allows us to believe in a better future ... a new life appears on the horizon.'

I so look forward to our being together again on the other side!

Thelma Mitchell

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Things Need to Change

The Thoughts of a Lay Minister

*'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To speak of many things,
Of shoes and ships and sealing wax,
Of cabbages and kings.'*

Our world seems to have shrunk. We seem to have very little to think about or talk about except lockdown and the virus. Until George Floyd. Suddenly we are alive with something different to discuss and, for the first time, the issue of racism is getting the attention it deserves. Sadly, though, the subject is being hijacked by the small element of society that turns a peaceful protest of solidarity into something violent and ugly. Just as in the case of coronavirus, it is difficult to understand the true picture. There is so much fake news, opinion and spin.

Strangely, I wasn't going to write about this today; but as soon as I sat down to write, it just appeared out of nowhere. I have no opinion to share, no piece of insight except for one clever little item found online.

'White privilege sounds like this: you keep saying "It's horrible that an innocent black man was killed, but destroying property has to stop'. Instead, say 'It's horrible that property is being destroyed, but killing innocent black men has to stop.'"



It is a simple example of how to change the emphasis of a message and one that is very easy to get caught up in. Its an example of how journalism can turn a story into something very different.

So what can we do? How can we spot fake news or recognise when something is inaccurate or following a certain agenda?

Firstly, don't get sucked in by a dramatic headline. Read the story itself. Check the source to see if it is a reputable news site or a trashy, unheard-of website. Ask

whether the same story is being repeated on other news sites and in the same way. See if the story contains factual information with sources rather than speculation or opinion. Think about the pictures that are used as, these days, photographs can be easily manipulated and do not always represent what is actually happening. The photo might not be one of the event or of the place and time that you think it is. It is very easy to get caught up in emotive and irresponsible journalism.

I'm very conscious that I don't know much about this subject. I have realised that I need to do something about it and have started to look at what I should be watching and reading to give myself more insight into the whole

area of racism and bias. I'm also particularly conscious of the messages we pass on to children and young people. The whole area of unconscious bias, particularly in children's stories, has been brought into sharp focus, especially as I have been re-reading some of our children's classics to children online during lockdown. Every so often, I have to quickly change a word or phrase as I realise that it is no longer something that it is acceptable to say.

We need to educate ourselves and not assume that we are not part of the problem. It is not enough to say 'I'm not racist' anymore. We need to be anti-racist.

Pauline Weaver

Mike Baker

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KINGS NORTON

Hollywood Production Line

Our May edition featured Michael Kennedy's story of Kings Norton born Hollywood actor Pat Aherne, older brother of the more famous star Brian Aherne, also born at the family home in Monyhull Hall Road.

Two readers then contacted Michael, who, in his article, had said that one of Pat's last films was the 1955 comedy musical *The Court Jester*, starring the great entertainer Danny Kaye. John and Angela Taylor say that it's one of their favourite films of all time, one which, on DVD, is always part of their Christmas entertainment.

Michael promised to find out which part Pat played and established that it was Sir Pertwee. But in looking further into the cast list, he discovered something particularly interesting: that there's another Kings Norton born actor in the same film who, believe it or not, actually plays one of Sir Pertwee's fellow conspirators.

He's Alan Napier*, who plays Sir Brockhurst. What a remarkable

coincidence that two locally-born men should have closely-linked roles in a leading Hollywood production!

Alan was later to become particularly famous as Batman's butler Alfred in the much loved 1960s American TV series starring Adam Wade as the Caped Crusader.

It's hard to believe that not only did Kings Norton give birth to three Hollywood actors, but also that they were all born here within just two years of each other, between 1901 and 1903. There must have been an acting bug in the air, particularly as in those years it was still a fairly sleepy rural part of Worcestershire!

**Alan's full story is on page 24.*

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QUIZZICAL



Potential?

The Kings Norton & District U3A includes a group of enthusiastic quizzers called the 'Quizzicals'. They have sustained their activities during the lockdown with a series of online competitions. With their kind approval, here are 20 questions from their latest quiz. See how you do. The use of web searches and books is strictly prohibited!

The answers, all of which have been verified, are on page 42.

Round 1. General Knowledge

1. Which breed has won Crufts most times?
2. What is the drink of the Greek gods?
3. What is a 'wat'?
4. What comes next in this sequence 'Y, G, B, B, P'?
5. Who was Sister Luc Gabrielle, who had a pop hit?
6. What is the only English city to begin with a T?

Round 2. Who or what are the following also known as?

1. The Midlands comedian Chris Collins
2. The TV personalities Sy and Dave
3. The tree called 'salyx babylonica'
4. The international figure Jorge Mario Bergoglio
5. The LNER A3 Pacific locomotive number 4472
6. The pop group called The Quarrymen

Round 3 . Food & Drink

1. What berry is dried to make a 'craisin'?
2. What is the French term for vegetables cut into thin strips?

3. Which Turkish/greek dish is layers of filo party with nuts and honey?
4. Which Benedictine monk invented champagne?
5. What food was first launched as Eskimo Pie?
6. Muscadet, Vouvray and Sancerre are from which French wine region?

Round 4. Our culture

1. What type of fish is used in the production of Worcestershire sauce?
2. What does the initial K stand for in the author's name JK Rowling?
3. Which came first, the Boat Race or the Grand National?
4. In 1800, nearly a quarter of all the women in Britain were called what name?
5. Which Prime Minister is buried in Worcester Cathedral?
6. What is Paul McCartney's middle name?

Round 5. Answer 'true' or 'false'?

1. In terms of average room size, the British build the smallest new houses in Western Europe.
2. The British Dyslexia centre is in Reading.
3. 20 per cent of Americans think that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife.
4. The Eagle comic's 'Pilot of the Future' Dan Dare was originally a vicar.
5. Research shows that British cows moo in regional accents.
6. Birmingham people have the sweetest breath of any UK city.

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ST NICOLAS' CHURCH

Open Again!



From mid-June, the government allowed churches to reopen for private prayers and funerals.

The Rector and Churchwardens at St Nicolas' Church, in consultation with the church council, agreed to reopen St Nicolas' to individuals who wish to visit and to pray, a top priority.

They also relaunched our Open Church sessions on Wednesdays between 10.00 am and 12 noon and on Sundays between 9.30 and 11.30 am starting on Wednesday 24th June.

If you have ventured in already you will have seen the safety signs and the one-way

system designed to ensure appropriate distancing. If you have not visited yet, you are most welcome once again to enjoy the serenity and prayerful atmosphere of St Nicolas' Church.

If you visit for personal prayer, please would you:

- Maintain social distancing;
- Use hand gel;
- Note that no prayer books or Bibles can be made available at this stage.

Candles may be lit in the side chapel.

The Rector & Churchwardens

MAR. & APR. 2020

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John ch.3 v.16)

FUNERALS

3 rd March	John Terence Carroll	78	SN.Cr.RH
5 th March	Kevin Devlin		In.CY
6 th March	Daniel Bartlett	30	SN.Bu.KN
17 th March	John Joseph Tobin	82	SN.Bu.CY
25 th March	Ian Cash	76	Cr.RD
1 st April	Alice Constance James	29 weeks	Bu.CY
2 nd April	Margaret Beatrice Lawrence	85	In.CY
3 rd April	Anthony Junior Dunkley	26 weeks	Bu.KN
6 th April	Terence Alfred Bowen	82	Bu.CY
21 st April	Karen Lesley Wright	64	Bu.CY
23 rd April	Dorothy Roselie Fowler	68	Bu.KN
27 th April	Linda McGreevy	85	Bu.BR
27 th April	Sheila Brennan	97	Bu.LH
28 th April	Dorothy Gladys Clifford	84	Bu.CY

SN : Service at St Nicolas' Church, **Cr** : Cremation, **Bu** : Burial,
BR : Brandwood, **CY** : Churchyard, **In** : Ashes interred, **KN** : Kings Norton, **LH** :
Lodge Hill, **RD** : Redditch, **RH** : Robin Hood

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Of Mountainous Seas

In the 1980s, I served for two voyages on a container vessel that I cannot forget. The ship was called the MV Falmouth Bay. It weighed some 8,000 tons and was therefore much smaller than the 30,000 ton vessels in the fleet that I was used to.



The ship would visit the Far East and would cross the Pacific Ocean from Busan in South Korea to San Francisco on the west coast of the USA. The Pacific is so vast that it would take over 14 days to reach America. As we were due to be moving northwards, we expected dull and stormy weather.

When I arrived, I found a happy ship and a good crew. The Captain was

very popular with all on board. He would sometimes socialise with us and some pleasant conversation and laughter would ensue. Officers and crew together enjoyed a sense of team spirit on board.

It was after the conclusion of my time on board that two dramatic incidents occurred which left me feeling very concerned for all those involved when I learned what had happened.

On the first occasion, a terrible storm hit the ship when it was 1,000 miles from land. Some of the containers on deck were washed away. The engine room started to flood because of wave damage on the forward deck and the ship's lighting was compromised. In short, the *Falmouth Bay* was in danger of sinking. The engineers battled to keep the engines running so that the ship could be kept head on to ride the huge waves. Miraculously, the vessel eventually reached the USA

where repairs were carried out; but the loss of more than 12 containers cost the company many thousands of dollars. One in particular had been full of cameras and optical equipment.

The second drama on board took place when a crew member became very ill while the ship was 600 miles from Honolulu. The Chief Officer, whom I knew well, took charge. The Captain could not leave the bridge because of the stormy conditions at the time. The sick man was, in fact, the Catering Officer. He was in the habit of drinking a lot at times and was not too popular with the crew. But the fact was that he was very ill and was showing symptoms of a burst ulcer.

A distress call was sent out to the Coast Guard rescue service, who took over the situation. An American aircraft carrier was within range. It

sent a helicopter which dropped three medics into the sea as it was too rough for a deck landing. A lifeboat then had to be launched from the *Falmouth Bay* to pick them up. The high seas made it a real struggle. Eventually, the medics made it onto the ship and immediately put the sick man into a special stretcher. They took him off the ship and waited to be picked up by the helicopter at sea.

The lifeboat crew of the *Falmouth Bay* were very shaken after this and took some considerable time to hoist their boat back on board. We later learned that the sick man was operated on in Honolulu and made a successful recovery before being flown home. Unfortunately, he did not think to express his gratitude to the brave souls who had saved his life.

Eddie Matthews

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From the Church Newsletter (not ours, naturally!)

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person(s) you want remembered.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

22 members were present at the church meeting held at the home of Mrs. Marsha Crutchfield last evening. Mrs. Crutchfield and Mrs. Rankin sang a duet, The Lord Knows Why.

The choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.

QUIZ ANSWERS

From p. 36

Round 1.

1. Cocker spaniel 2. Nectar 3. A Buddhist temple 4. B (for 'black' in snooker) 5. The Singing Nun 6. Turo

Round 2.

1. Frank Skinner 2. The Hairy Bikers 3. Weeping Willow 4. Pope Francis 5. The Flying Scotsman 6. The Beatles

Round 3.

1. Cranberry 2. Julienne 3. Baklava 4. Dom Perignon 5. Choc Ice 6. Loire

Round 4.

1. Anchovy 2. Kathleen 3. The Boat Race 4. Mary 5. Stanley Baldwin 6. Paul (he is James Paul McCartney)

Round 5.

1. True 2. True 3. False (it's only 12%) 4. True (he was originally planned to be Chaplain Dan Dare of the Interplanetary Patrol) 5. True 6. True

If you scored 15 or more, you'd do well with the Quizicals! See how to join them, or any of the other local groups organised by the Kings Norton University of the Third Age at www.usasites.org.uk/kingsnorton.

CONTACTS

If you cannot find what you are looking for here, you will probably find it on the parish website (www.kingsnorton.org.uk). Alternatively, please ask questions at the Parish Office, which remains open between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm.

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THE MINISTRY TEAM

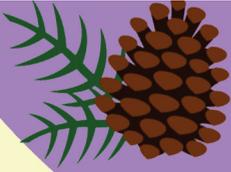
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Parish Lay Minister	Pauline Weaver
Curate (Pioneer)	The Revd Catherine Matlock
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Methodist Minister	The Revd Nick Jones
Readers	David Ash, Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman, Parisa Pordelkhaki Steve Wright
Lay Preacher	Sylvia Fox
Music Ministry	Chris Gadd
Pastoral Care Team Coordinator	

THE CHURCH WARDENS

St. Nicolas' Church	Peter Hay & Julie Hill
Hawkesley Church	Jim Clarke 0121 550 3455 or 07 939 838 086
Immanuel Church	Sue Hartley

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Before and after school club



Holiday club for over 5s during school holidays



Fresh and healthy food cooked on site



Qualified, dedicated and experienced staff



Large garden and playground



0121 458 2308



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