

# KINGS NORTON

Parish Magazine

## Wartime Industry & Transport

Kings Norton's central role in World War 2

## A Doorkeeper in the House of the Lord

The Reverend Christine McAteer says goodbye

## Catholic with a Small 'C'

Is the Church of England Catholic or Protestant?



**Michael Kennedy 4**

**Kings Norton's Central Role in...**  
*...Wartime Industry & Transport*

**Claire Lindow 9**

**Growing Allotment Pumpkins**  
*And fighting off the slugs!*

**Christine McAteer 10**

**A Doorkeeper...**  
*...in the House of the Lord*

**David Ash 14**

**Catholic With a Small 'C'**  
*Are Anglicans really Catholics?*

**Finlayson & Stubbs 17**

**Ultra-Processed Foods**  
*Are they the villains?*

**Thelma Mitchell 22**

**Happy Days in Derbyshire**  
*From Hardwick Hall to Calke Abbey*

**Alf Rogers 26**

**Looking Back 6**  
*Bells Lane & The Maypole*

**M.G.M. 30**

**Is This Truly the End of...**  
*...Downton Abbey?*

**Jayne Crooks 32**

**Pilgrimage to Lichfield**  
*with B45 Churches Together*

**Pauline Weaver 34**

**A Taste of What is to Come**  
*Autumn & Winter Events*

**Adam the Gardener 36**

**Drought-Resistant Flowers**  
*A list of recommendations*

**Barbara Wilkinson 38**

**'Moving'**  
*A poem*

**Editor & Advertising Manager**

David Ash

editor@kingsnorton.org.uk

**Subscriptions**

Alison Blumer

subs@kingsnorton.org.uk

**Registered Address**

Kings Norton Parish Office

Saint Nicolas' Place

81 The Green, Kings Norton

Birmingham B38 8RU

0121 458 3289

**Copy for Publication**

copy@kingsnorton.org.uk

Text & images for publication should be emailed as file attachments or entrusted to the Parish Office, sealed and marked for the attention of the Editor.

**Submission Deadlines**

Items for inclusion in the Nov-Dec 2025 edition must reach the Editor by midnight on **Friday 2nd Oct.**

Items for inclusion in the Jan-Feb 2026 edition must reach the Editor by midnight on **Friday 5th Dec.**

# Welcome

**EDITORIAL**

Christine McAteer's farewell article on p.10 began life as a sermon. Its title is a quotation from Psalm 84, which opens with the line, 'How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord God of Hosts!' This Psalm is a poem about the blessings of cultivating trust in God and contains the words: 'Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.'

Whether or not Christine feels that moving to Kings Norton in 2023 meant leaving behind the tents of the wicked, those who have come to know her here would surely agree that her contribution to Kings Norton Parish has far exceeded the role of a humble doorkeeper. With sadness but above all gratitude, we say goodbye to her this month, confident that, as her ministry continues elsewhere, it will remain a blessing to many.

Psalm 84 also reminds us that those 'whose hearts are set on pilgrimage' are blessed. Spiritually, it is vital not to stand still for too long.

So, on p.32, Jayne Crooks recounts a recent pilgrimage to the cathedral in our neighbouring diocese, Lichfield; on p.22, Thelma Mitchell undertakes a pilgrimage of sorts into Derbyshire; on p.34, Pauline Weaver outlines some of the landmarks on the voyage ahead as we navigate a period without a Rector; Barbara Wilkinson reflects poetically on p.38 about the journey that brought her back to Kings Norton after many years; and on p.14, you will find an explanation of the long and winding road that has led the



Anglican church to where it is today, a journey still very much unfolding.

*David Ash*



# Kings Norton's Central Role in *Wartime Industry & Transport*

As many readers may know, Kings Norton station is about to take on an important additional role by the end of this year. It will become the southern end of the new passenger service that will, at long last, see the reopening of stations serving Kings Heath and Moseley (and the Stirchley area, at a station formerly called Hazelwell but now to be called Pineapple Road).

It will most probably mean an increased flow of trains through our station. At this stage, though, apparently not enough trains to justify the refurbishment and reopening of the distressingly decayed central reservation. The new service complements the current train route to Birmingham New Street which runs through Bournville, University and Five Ways.

You may not know that the unfortunate residents of Moseley and Kings Heath have, in fact, waited nearly 85 years for a passenger train service. They had one for many

decades. It was called the Camp Hill line; but because of wartime restrictions, the line, which went to Moor Street station, was closed to passenger traffic in 1941. Residents were led to expect a resumption of the service soon after the war ended, but it's been a rather longer wait than that.

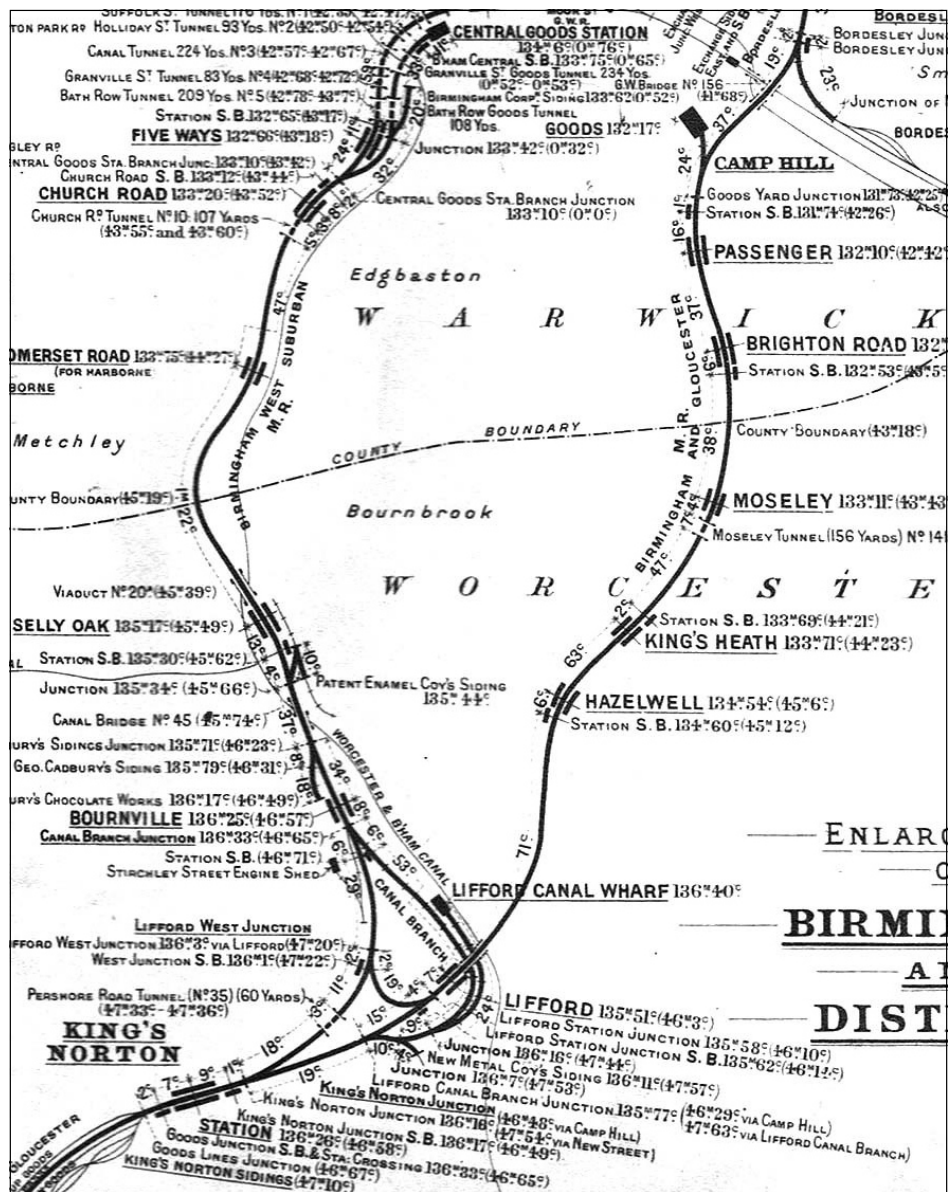
That closure in 1941 in fact did some good. It enhanced the significance of Kings Norton station, which retained its status as a passenger station, increasing the number of trains stopping there. But there's another reason why it did some good: without it, we may never have been able to claim that Thomas the Tank Engine came to life in Kings Norton!

The charming way in which Thomas was invented is known to many Kings Norton people. The Reverend Wilbert Awdry was a young priest based in the South of England who, for various reasons, needed to find a position elsewhere. The Diocese of Birmingham offered



MICHAEL  
WRITES  
ABOUT  
LOCAL  
HISTORY



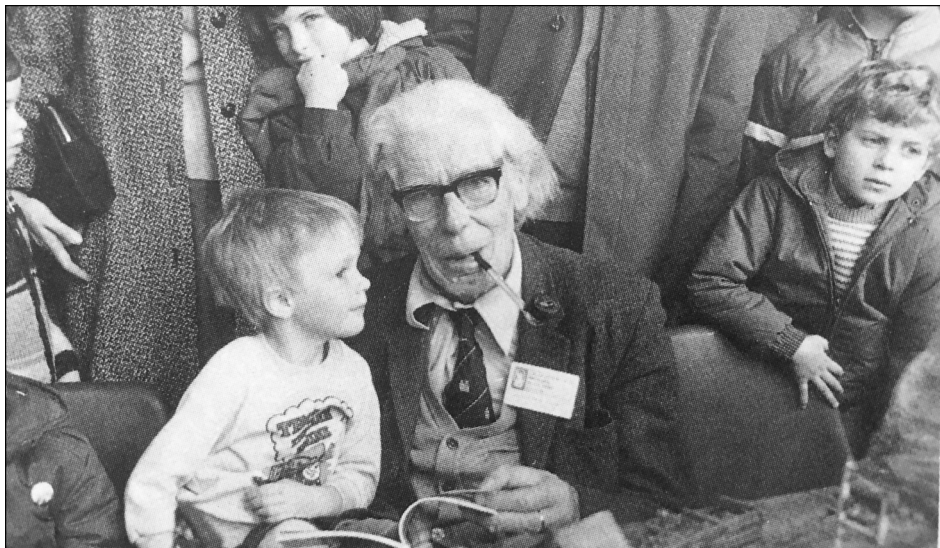


him the role of curate at St Nicolas' Church in 1942, which he and his young family accepted gratefully. They were allocated a church house at the lower end of Westhill Road,

#### ↑ A 1913 map of the local rail network

about as close as a house could be to the railway line.

Had Kings Norton station also been closed to passenger traffic, Wilbert and his young



↑ Wilbert  
Awdry with  
young fans

son might never have heard the clanking and grinding of trains stopping and starting a few hundred yards from their residence. It was that noise that apparently prompted Wilbert's young son Christopher, then aged only two, to ask his dad to tell him some stories about the trains he could hear. Wilbert, a railway enthusiast, willingly responded, and the rest is history. Though Wilbert himself never intended them for public consumption, his wife believed passionately in his stories and urged him to seek a publisher. Reluctantly, he did so, so that by 1945 the publishers Edmund Ward had accepted a first selection and turned them into a book. It was the start of a process that created a worldwide phenomenon.

In fact, the railway noise that evoked such an enthusiastic response from Wilbert and Christopher would have been almost incessant. Although passenger services through the station would probably have been limited to daylight hours during the war, there was very much more activity at and around the station, because of the immense network of sidings that developed in the area south of the main line. It was a massive and complex area for the loading, marshalling and shunting of freight trucks and wagons, made essential because Kings Norton was a very important centre for the making of commodities and components that were vital to the war effort.

Most visible was the importance of the product

produced by Triplex Safety Glass for motor vehicles and other applications such as goggles for drivers of freight vehicles and pilots of aeroplanes, material produced in vast amounts for use in the war effort at home and abroad. Triplex, founded in 1912, created a factory in Kings Norton in the 1920s which was literally next door to the railway marshalling yard.

But there was also a great deal of other crucial industry in the local area. Burman's, established as one of the country's leading producers of vehicle steering gear, were again just down the road from the factory off Wychall Lane. The Birmingham Metal Company, which once famously made coins for The Royal Mint, had established an important role in during the First World war as a manufacturer of ammunition, particularly cartridge cases which were made on its advanced metal rolling mill. That role continued during the Second World War, so that there would have been a continuing flow of lorries taking ammunition from the Metal Company site, located in what is now the Kings Norton Business estate, the the station good yards.

In addition, the chemical company which had been established by the Sturge family in the early 1900s in Lifford (there's still a chemical

plant there now) would have been producing a wide range of products to support wartime industry across the country, as well as products to help optimise the nation's enhanced agricultural activity, the critical production of crops and food generally. The Sherborne Paper Mill, just by the Birmingham to Worcester canal, made gun wadding for artillery.

These were the main companies that would have shipped goods out of Kings Norton railway sidings, but there were also a number of smaller ones, including one called GNA (it's not clear where they were located) which made vehicle spark plugs.

So, Wilbert and his son would have probably been thrilled by the continuous noise of railway activity day and night. Their neighbours may have been less enthusiastic, although of course during the Awdry family's first year or so in the area, there would also have been the dreaded noise of German aircraft seeking to bomb the Longbridge vehicle factory that was producing a wide range of military vehicles and warplanes, complete and in kit form, together with aeroplane components and ammunition.

It goes without saying that the local railway station also supported another major contribution that Kings Norton





PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC ENGLAND

made to the war effort. Daily trains from Birmingham New Street to the station at Longbridge would have ferried the thousands of local people who worked at the factory during the war and would have stopped to pick up and drop off the Kings Norton contingent. Remarkably, while before the war started, the Longbridge workforce totalled not much more than 2,000, at its height during the war it reached a total of more than 15,000.

All that industry has gone now though, rather strangely, much of the network of railway sidings that would have seen such continuous activity during

↑ **The Triplex Glass Factory and Kings Norton sidings in the 1940s. Wilbert Awdry's house is visible in the top left-hand corner**

the war is still in place, unused for decades. If you travel by train from Kings Norton to Northfield, imagine the large car park as a rail centre full of trucks and wagons, and further on you'll actually see acres of railway track, just waiting to serve Triplex, Burmans and all those other industries that are no longer there!



# Growing Allotment Pumpkins

I wonder how your garden has been growing this summer? For me, so many plants have done well with the hot weather as I've managed to keep up with watering when we had the drought in mid-summer. My pumpkins are looking particularly healthy this year.

I always find they are easier to grow at home than on the allotment. In fact, there are many challenges involved in growing on the allotment. Most are caused by the slimy things that like to eat our food, aka slugs. Even in this relatively dry year, my plants either dried out from the hot weather or had some slug munches making it difficult for them to thrive. This is despite using copper rings to deter the slimy foes.

In the garden, I've been experimenting with growing pumpkins and cucumbers up structures. It is kind of a vertical gardening idea to get more veg in a small space as pumpkins and cucurbits take up a lot of space. However, an idea I've been nurturing for next year is to employ this method in an effort to lift the plants up and away from the ground, making them more

difficult for the slugs to reach them.

It won't be fool proof. I'm sure there will still be slug damage; but I really think it could work. It will mean I can mulch the bed and improve the soil-keeping moisture locked in and protecting the soil surface, something I have been afraid to do this year as I've been worried this could attract the slugs. I don't want to make a lovely habitat for them so close to the pumpkins!

So, next year, I will be building structures on the allotment for the pumpkins. It's all in the experimenting and reflecting as we go. Watch this space!

I do love growing pumpkins, they are such gutsy plants. They grow at a phenomenal rate and produce amazing, large fruits that keep through the winter in your home until you are ready to eat them. My son Charles loves them too and he's growing a traditional carving pumpkin. He's planning on carving it into a cat face for Halloween and I will cook the parts that he doesn't need. Everyone will be happy!

# A Doorkeeper in the House of the Lord

*Which door, real or imaginary, would you like to go through?  
The Hobbit's door? The one from 'Monster's Inc.'? Baker Street?  
The Tardis...?*

Before I became a priest, one of my many jobs was being a receptionist at No.1 Colmore Row in the city centre. This was where the Birmingham Church of England Diocese used to rent a few floors for its headquarters.

Standing at the doorway and welcoming people in is great preparation for church ministry. The church has saints who wait at the door to welcome people. Which saint does this in heaven? St. Peter, of course! Another lesser-known saint is St. Alphonsus Rodriguez (1532-1617), a doorkeeper at the Jesuit university in Mallorca. He offered charity to those in poverty and spent hours listening to people who were seeking





spiritual advice. He saw each person who came through his door as Jesus himself.

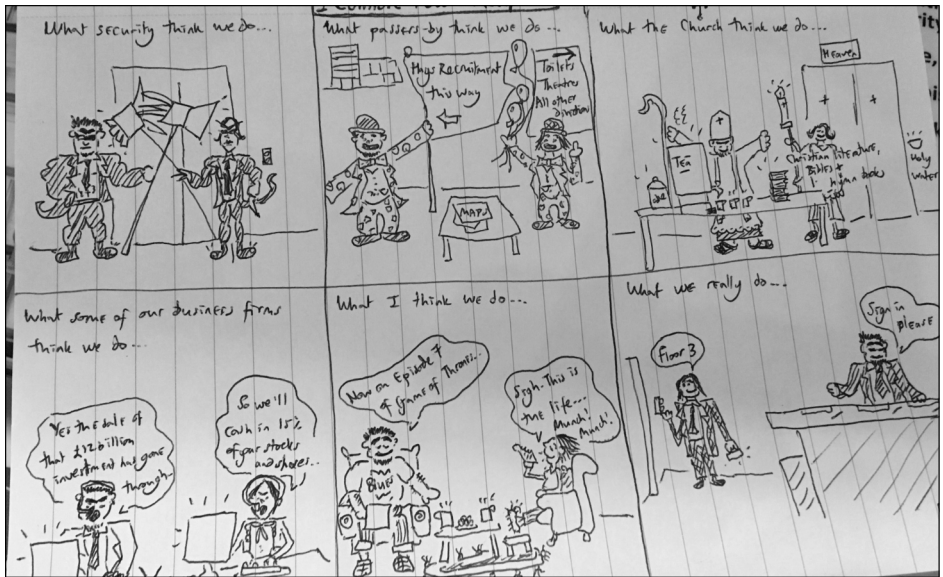
I used to see and hear all sorts of things whilst standing at the door of 1 Colmore Row. I learnt how to be discreet. 'See everything, say nothing' became my mantra. But I will give away a few secrets.

There were other organisations which rented floors in the office block. One of these was '2 Sisters Food Group' who owned UK Poultry and Fox's Biscuits. Occasionally, I had to work weekends if there was maintenance in the building. The engineers needed my eyes to let them into the 2 Sisters offices because the doors were opened by a retina scanner, which had been programmed into the system. Floor 5, where their reception was situated, was like a mixture between The Shire in 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Star Trek'. The corridors were round like Hobbit holes but futuristic like the inside of a spaceship. The tables on Floor 4 were designed like Party Ring biscuits and, of course, there were boxes of biscuits everywhere.

Sometimes, I had to do a night shift when the windows were being cleaned. This was because the building is positioned too close to the power cables which feed Birmingham's trams. The window cleaners had to wait until after midnight, when the electricity was switched off, before they could abseil down; and I had to keep watch until they finished, just before 6.00 am, because I was the only person who could let them back into the building to start another drop from the roof. I wrote my first sermons at night during those shifts.

What is it like to stay alert, keeping watch at the door? Sometimes, there were busy periods, especially first thing in the morning. I enjoyed being busy. Other times it was extremely boring, especially in the middle of the afternoon, when most people who were visiting had arrived and things were quiet. To pass the time, I took free Open University courses about the Universe and the Solar System, but I still needed to stay watchful, because sometimes unexpected things happened.

On one occasion, my colleague Lee heard a loud crack. He asked me, very quietly, to get out of my chair and move towards the door because he had heard a movement in the false ceiling above our heads. He realised that something was



seriously wrong with the ceiling, and we quickly moved the computers, CCTV screens and our files from behind the desk. Twenty minutes later, the whole ceiling collapsed. It was a mass of solid concrete and steel cables. If we had been beneath it, I reckon we would have been killed. We cordoned off the area to stop passers by going near the danger area and called for help to clean up the mess. The strange thing is that a lot of people came and went past the remains of the reception desk without even noticing the mess of rubble and smashed glass. It really is amazing what people do not observe when passing through a place.

Thresholds can be dangerous places and they need wise guardians to watch them. There's a cartoon I like which features medieval soldiers in chain mail outside a castle. One officer says to the captain, 'They have no army, my Lord. No one has ever made it past their receptionist.' A stern-looking, bespectacled lady sits at an imposing desk to see off the invaders.

Like St. Alphonsus, we found opportunities to do works of charity whilst keeping watch. We often advertised fundraising events not just for the church, but for the other companies. Being alert, keeping watch is a great way to engage with the local community and to bring people together. We

doorkeepers didn't just sit observing all the action from the sidelines; we also got involved. I worked part-time for Mothers' Union and advertised campaigns like collecting sanitary products to raise awareness of period poverty and new toys for Christmas presents for prisoners' families. All the different companies got involved and gave generously to help people in need, whom we do not often hear about. Lee did a sleep-out with the staff from the diocese to raise money for St. Basil's, the homelessness charity.

Long though the wait may seem, the day which ends the days of keeping watch does eventually arrive. When it does, it is unexpected, like a thief in the night. I was told that my services were no longer required just before Christmas of 2018, out of the blue, just shy of two years of working on a zero-hours contract, which meant no redundancy package.

When the Day of Reckoning arrives, though, I believe God will be faithful. On the same day that I was given my notice, I took the lift up to Floor 7, where the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (the church's vocations advisor) told me that the time had now come to prepare for a national selection panel to test my call to ordination.

I came to Kings Norton in November 2023 after a door closed on my first curacy<sup>1</sup> because I refused to move into completely inappropriate housing. I began to help out here the following Easter and was officially licensed in September 2024.

I arrived in this parish rather bruised from what had happened. Your welcome and acceptance of my ministry has been hugely encouraging. It has been a great privilege to minister among you. No longer confined to doorways I have enjoyed most of all being out and about on the estates, going through doors to visit different homes, the church school and the countryside.

Now that the parish is in interregnum (vacancy), I need to move on to complete my training with supervision. This will be in the parish of St. Mary and St. Anne in Moseley, formerly a daughter parish of Kings Norton. You will remain in my prayers at this time. Remember to keep watch. When one door closes the Lord opens a window.

---

<sup>1</sup> Period of training as a curate



# Catholic With A Small ‘C’

Alister McGrath is a former Marxist with a PhD in biophysics who is Emeritus Professor of Science & Religion at the University of Oxford, a respected Christian theologian and an Anglican priest. He is best known for *‘The Dawkins Delusion’*, regarded as one of the best rebuttals of the so-called New Atheism, which is now being called into question by so many.

In a recent book entitled *‘Why We Believe’*, McGrath writes this. ‘If the Christian faith can be compared to a landscape, then its best guides are those who live there, having internalised its contours.’ Extending the geographical metaphor, he goes on to explore the relationship between personal experience and the statements of belief which we recite in church. ‘The Creeds,’ he writes, ‘map the landscape of faith’ and show us where the important landmarks are to be found. It is then up to believers to relate the map to the terrain: ‘The primary witnesses to the vitality of faith are ordinary Christians, who can connect the landmarks of faith with their personal journeys of discovery.’

In this short series of articles, I am exploring some of the more challenging words which we encounter in church but use less often outside it. You could see each of them as a landmark. In recent editions, I’ve written about the words ‘begotten’ and ‘remission’. This time, I’d like to take on two landmarks at once: **catholic** and **apostolic**.

Newcomers to Anglican worship, particularly those with a Protestant or evangelical background, are sometimes puzzled when invited to declare their belief in ‘one catholic and apostolic church’, words which are found at the end of the Nicene Creed. ‘But I thought this was the Church of England,’ they say. ‘We’re not Catholics, are we?’

While it is tempting simply to answer, ‘It’s complicated’, it is possible to give a clear response, and I’d like to try.

It is true that Anglican Christians are not Roman Catholics. Most students of English history know the reasons why. I only have to say ‘Henry VIII’, or ‘the English Reformation’ for you to know what I’m talking about: Henry VIII’s break with Rome, driven by



DAVID IS A  
LAY READER  
AT ST  
NICOLAS’  
CHURCH

political and personal motives, especially the desire for an annulment of his marriage, which the Pope refused.

Politically, the Church of England has been independent of papal authority since 1534, following Henry VIII's drastic action. Meanwhile, Martin Luther's nailing of his 95 Theses to the door of Wittenberg cathedral in 1517 ignited the Protestant Reformation, a movement whose transformative impact has continued to reverberate through history. It has introduced profound shifts in understanding and, it has to be said, unprecedented division into the worldwide church. It is estimated that there are now almost 50,000 Protestant denominations worldwide.

The Church of England has been profoundly shaped by the ideas and the events of the Reformation, as the Protestant revolution is usually called. But - and it is an important 'but' - it remains a **catholic** church. Not Catholic (capital 'C') in the sense of owing allegiance to Rome, but in its deeper, original sense of '**universal**' (Greek: *katholikos*).

What do Anglicans mean when they say that their church is 'catholic'? Simply that it is part of the whole Christian church as it has existed throughout history, across cultures and denominations. Why do they

see themselves as part of this universal church? Because they uphold the Bible, the creeds and the *historic episcopate*, the unbroken line of bishops dating back to the Apostles.

Anglicans claim a faith and a structure descended from the Apostles themselves, that is, Jesus' disciples and St Paul. Anglican bishops (Greek: *episkopoi* = *overseers*) are ordained in a line believed to stretch back to the earliest Christian leaders. The faith which they guard is based on Scripture and the teachings handed down from the Apostles. That *apostolic succession* is important, because it has to do with the transmission of spiritual authority.

An apostolic church is one in which the authority and ministry given by Jesus to the Apostles have been passed down *in an unbroken line* through the laying on of hands from one bishop to another, continuing from the first Apostles to the present day. Anglicans believe that they stand in that tradition. As a former Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey (1961-1974) put it, 'grace is transmitted from the Apostles by each generation of bishops through the imposition of hands.'

What of the claim that the chain of authority was broken during the Reformation? The facts say otherwise. The Church of England intentionally retained episcopal succession through bishops ordained prior to the break with Rome. While many continental Protestant churches abandoned the office of bishop, the English Reformation preserved it, together with the historic continuity. Even bishops who broke off relations with Rome continued to ordain using the ancient rituals and understood themselves to be in the line of succession stretching back to the Apostles.

What's more, the first Anglican bishops after the separation from Rome were themselves ordained Roman Catholic bishops. According to Roman Catholic theology, because ordination imprints an indelible character, a bishop remains a bishop even if he separates from Rome.

It is true that, when the ordination rites in the Anglican Church were changed, Rome argued that Anglican orders had been rendered ‘absolutely null and utterly void’ (from *Apostolicae Curae*: a formal papal statement which declared Anglican orders invalid in 1896). It is also, sadly, true that this remains the position of the Vatican. However, Anglicans have always asserted that their intention was to continue catholic order and practice, and that the succession has not been interrupted.

Anglicans would also argue that succession is both historical and theological. In other words, it is not just an unbroken chain of ordinations, but a continuity in faith, teaching, and practice. Anglican priests and bishops are ordained in a manner intended to continue this tradition, connecting back to the Apostles through centuries of the church’s life.

So, the Anglican church is **catholic** and **apostolic**. It maintains the historic creeds, sacraments, the ministry handed down by the Apostles, and the patterns of worship inherited from the ancient and undivided church. It also claims continuity with the broader, universal tradition of Christianity.

But the Anglican church is also **reformed**. It was decisively shaped by the Reformation. The *Thirty-Nine Articles* and the *Book of Common Prayer*, its two most important core documents, express an understanding of Christian faith reformed by Scripture and the rediscovery of the Gospel of Grace, especially the doctrine of *justification by faith* (the belief that we are saved, not by anything we do, nor by performing religious rituals or going to church, but simply by placing our faith in Christ).

Under the influence of continental Protestant thinkers like Cranmer, Luther, and Calvin, the Church of England reformed medieval Catholicism. However, it took a conservative, English approach rather than a wholesale abandonment of tradition.

So, Anglicanism is best understood as **Reformed Catholicism**, neither fully Protestant nor Roman,

but a living synthesis of both historic expressions. The Church of England holds to catholic tradition while embracing the renewal and scriptural emphasis of the Reformation.

When trying to understand the Church of England, it is helpful to try to think in terms not of *either/or* but of *both/and*, with what is sometimes called a ‘non-dualistic mind’. To such a mind, it is possible for two apparently contradictory things to be true at the same time.

It is the ‘both-and-ness’ of Anglicanism which makes it the varied, broad church that it has become. These days, there is room within it for a wide diversity of styles of worship, from Anglo-Catholic ritual rich in ceremony, incense, and ancient symbolism, to more simple, evangelical services emphasising Scripture, modern songs and preaching, and much else in between. This diversity is not a problem, but a strength, reflecting Anglicanism’s commitment to hold together tradition and reform, mysticism and reason, sacrament and word.

Rather than forcing uniformity, the Church of England embraces a spectrum of expressions, allowing Christians to find a spiritual home that resonates with their own faith while remaining under the common umbrella of historic Christianity.



# Ultra-Processed Foods

## Are they the villains they're made out to be?

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) have become public enemy number one in nutrition debates. From dementia to obesity and an epidemic of 'food addiction', these factory-made products, including crisps, ready meals, fizzy drinks and packaged snacks, are blamed for a wide range of modern health problems. Some experts argue that they're 'specifically formulated and aggressively marketed to maximise consumption and corporate profits', hijacking our brain's reward systems to make us eat beyond our needs.

Policymakers have proposed bold interventions: warning labels, marketing restrictions, taxes, even outright bans near schools. But how much of this urgency is based on solid evidence?

My colleagues and I wanted to step back and ask: what actually makes people like a food? And what drives them to overeat – not just enjoy it, but

keep eating after hunger has passed? We studied more than 3,000 UK adults and their responses to over 400 everyday foods. What we found challenges the simplistic UPF narrative and offers a more nuanced way forward.

Two ideas often get blurred in nutrition discourse: liking a food and hedonic overeating (eating for pleasure rather than hunger). Liking is about taste. Hedonic overeating is about continuing to eat because the food feels good. They're related, but not identical. Many people like porridge but rarely binge on it. Chocolate, biscuits and ice cream, on the other hand, top both lists.

We conducted three large online studies where participants rated photos of unbranded food portions for how much they liked them and how likely they were to overeat them. The foods were recognisable items from a typical UK shopping basket: jacket potatoes, apples, noodles, cottage pie, custard creams, more than 400 in total.

We then compared these responses with three things: the foods' nutritional content (fat, sugar, fibre, energy density), their classification as ultra-processed by the widely used Nova system – a food classification method that groups foods by the extent and purpose of their processing – and how people perceived them (sweet, fatty, processed, healthy and so on).

## Perception power

Some findings were expected: people liked foods they ate often, and calorie-dense foods were more likely to lead to overeating.

But the more surprising insight came from the role of beliefs and perceptions. Nutrient content mattered: people rated high-fat, high-carb foods as more enjoyable, and low-fibre, high-calorie foods as more 'bingeable'. But what people believed about the food also mattered, a lot.

Perceiving a food as sweet, fatty or highly processed increased the likelihood of overeating, regardless of its actual nutritional content. Foods believed to be bitter or high in fibre had the opposite effect.

In one survey, we could predict 78% of the variation in people's likelihood of overeating by combining nutrient data (41%) with beliefs about the food and its sensory qualities (another 38%). In short: how we think about food affects how we eat it, just as much as what's actually in it.

This brings us to ultra-processed foods. Despite the intense scrutiny, classifying a food as 'ultra-processed' added very little to our predictive models. Once we accounted for nutrient content and food perceptions, the Nova classification explained less than 2% of the variation in liking and just 4% in overeating.

That's not to say all UPFs are harmless. Many are high in calories, low in fibre and easy to



overconsume. But the UPF label is a blunt instrument. It lumps together sugary soft drinks with fortified cereals, protein bars with vegan meat alternatives.

Some of these products may be less healthy, but others can be helpful, especially for older adults with low appetites, people on restricted diets or those seeking convenient nutrition.

The message that all UPFs are bad oversimplifies the issue. People don't eat based on food labels alone. They eat based on how a food tastes, how it makes them feel and how it fits with their health, social or emotional goals.

Relying on UPF labels to shape policy could backfire. Warning labels might steer people away from foods that are actually beneficial, like wholegrain cereals, or create confusion about what's genuinely unhealthy.

Instead, we recommend a more informed, personalised approach:

Boost food literacy: help people understand what makes food satisfying, what drives cravings, and how to recognise their personal cues for overeating.

Reformulate with intention: design food products that are enjoyable and filling, rather than relying on bland 'diet' options or



**Graham Finlayson is Professor and Chair in Psychobiology at the University of Leeds**



**James Stubbs is Professor in Appetite & Energy Balance at the University of Leeds**

ultra-palatable snacks.

Address eating motivations: people eat for many reasons beyond hunger: for comfort, connection and pleasure. Supporting alternative habits while maximising enjoyment could reduce dependence on low-quality foods.

It's not just about processing

Some UPFs do deserve concern. They're calorie dense, aggressively marketed and often sold in oversized portions. But they're not a smoking gun.

Labelling entire categories of food as bad based purely on their processing misses the complexity of eating behaviour. What drives us to eat and overeat is complicated but not beyond understanding. We now have the data and models to unpack those motivations and support people in building healthier, more satisfying diets.

Ultimately, the nutritional and sensory characteristics of food – and how we perceive them – matter more than whether something came out of a packet. If we want to encourage better eating habits, it's time to stop demonising food groups and start focusing on the psychology behind our choices.

*This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license.*



## **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 2.00 pm, Monday to Thursday.

**81 The Green, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B38 8RU • [parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk](mailto:parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk)  
0121 458 3289 • [www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam](http://www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam)**

## **THE MINISTRY TEAM**

Parish Lay\* Minister .....Pauline Weaver  
Honorary Assistant Priest ..... The Revd Jayne Crooks  
Lay\* Readers (Licensed Lay Ministers) ..... David Ash, Cate Bennett, Fay Fearon,  
..... Ruth Howman, Parisa Pordelkhaki  
Lay\* Preacher ..... Steve Wright  
Music Minister..... Sylvia Fox  
Pastoral Care Team Coordinator ..... The Revd Jayne Crooks  
Pastoral Care Advisor ..... Susan Farrell

## **THE CHURCH WARDENS**

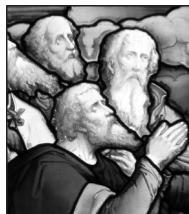
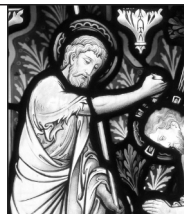
St. Nicolas' Church..... Annette Dickers, Mark Sandilands  
Hawkesley Church .....Jim Clarke

## **OTHER CONTACTS**

Parish Administrator..... Cate Bennett  
Treasurer ..... David Badger  
Finance Officer .....*To Be Confirmed*  
Verger and Groundskeeper ..... Shane Williams  
Safeguarding Coordinator ..... Annette Dickers  
Regular Giving ..... The Revd Jayne Crooks  
Flower Arranging (0121 486 2837)..... Alison Blumer

(\*Lay = not ordained as a priest)

We 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

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month	
9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) - Said
10.30 am	Holy Communion with Choir
6.00 pm	Taizé Prayer

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

3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Month	
9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) - Said
10.30 am	Holy Communion with Choir
6.00 pm	Compline

4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Month	
9.00 am	Sung Matins (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Morning Praise for All Ages
6.00 pm	Holy Communion

5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Month	
9.00 am	Morning Prayer (Book of Common Prayer) - Said
10.30 am	Holy Communion with Hawkesley Church & Choir
6.00 pm	Celtic Worship

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)

# Happy Days in Derbyshire

As I write this, it is a rather autumnal August day. It is not quite so difficult to look ahead to September and October, whilst reflecting on pleasant summer days dipping into some of the delights of Derbyshire.

Our first visit was to Hardwick Hall near Chesterfield. Glowering skies and threatening rain greeted us on a mixed day of weather early in the season. As we journeyed northeast, we were greeted by swathes of cow parsley and ox-eye daisies which covered the grass verges. The horse chestnut candles were just beginning to appear, very pale pink and swaying in the breeze which had sprung up. The rain did not materialise, the sun shone, though it was cool out of it, and everywhere the abundance of trees in full leaf was majestic. The views became vast across the hilly landscape as we neared the Hall, with incredibly wide, lush farmland all around us.

Hardwick Hall is not as accessible for people with disabilities as some National Trust properties, because of its age and situation. The staff were so helpful, however, and it did not spoil the visit. The welcome when we arrived was as warm as the day. We toured part of the house and grounds, enjoyed a lovely lunch in the café and out on the extensive lawns.

Bess of Hardwick, aka Elizabeth Cavendish and later Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, was another formidable woman (see the article in the Parish Magazine for July), who survived the ruthless intrigues of the Tudor court. She was born in 1527 to a Derbyshire farming family. Her father, John Harwick, was a 'gentleman-yeoman' – minor gentry - with an estate of a few hundred acres. Her first husband was only fourteen when they married, an heir to a neighbouring estate, and died a year later. Her marital claims were denied by her husband's family. She contested their decision and won with compensation some years later.



**THELMA MITCHELL  
WAS FORMERLY LEAD  
CHAPLAIN AT  
BOURNVILLE  
COLLEGE.**



▲ HARDWICK  
HALL NEAR  
CHESTERFIELD

Bess made shrewd choices in her later marriages and also in investments. Her second marriage was to William Cavendish, already twice widowed and Treasurer of the King's chamber. He was twice her age and had made his fortune following the dissolution of the monasteries. There were six surviving children when he died, and Bess claimed the sum of his property, the land to be settled on his heirs. Her third husband was the ailing Sir William St. Loe who owned large west country estates. His death left Bess one of the wealthiest women in the country, as well as a Lady of the Royal Bedchamber with daily access to Queen Elizabeth I. Bess was still young, a fine-looking woman by all accounts; but she remained a widow until she married George Talbot and became Countess of Shrewsbury. There were problems in the marriage and they were separated by the time he died. She still inherited his wealth though!

She had invested wisely throughout her marriages, persuading her second husband to buy Chatsworth Manor, where she later built the magnificent Chatsworth House. Her annual income was said to be the equivalent of about £24 million in today's money. She had Hardwick New Hall commissioned on the site of her childhood home, the old Hall.



Designed by architect Robert Smythson, with huge windows, it was described locally as 'Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall', glass being a very expensive and luxurious commodity at the time.

She died in 1608, in her mid-eighties, one of Elizabethan England's most powerful women, and is buried in Derby Cathedral. Quite a story and a marvellous place to visit.

Our second dip into Derbyshire was to Calke Abbey, during the hottest June since records began at 32 degrees the day before we set out. Mercifully, there was a break in the heat on a beautiful day, not too hot though humid. At 24 degrees it felt almost jumper weather (I jest!).

Away into the Leicestershire countryside and on to Derby, cloudy skies full of mares' tails and the promise, or maybe a threat, of thunder, opened up before us. Again, like Hardwick Hall, Calke Abbey is not very accessible, but the staff are so very helpful and friendly. In the house where the stairs are near impossible if you are not fleet of foot or knee, the volunteer guides provided an extensive virtual tour which covered all areas and aspects of the Abbey. And we had organised a mobility scooter each. This enabled us to scoot around and up the steep areas of the grounds and to travel much further distances than we could have managed otherwise.

Calke Abbey describes itself as the 'unstateley home'! It began as a twelfth century Augustinian monastic house associated with Repton Priory under the Diocese of Lichfield. At the dissolution of the monasteries it was leased to John Preste, a Master Grocer of London, who converted it into a Tudor Manor House. In 1622 it was bought by Sir Henry Harpur who added more rooms. The estate stayed in the family until being taken on by the National Trust in 1985.

Some of the rooms were in a serious state of deterioration. The Trust decided to halt the decay with repairs but made the decision to leave the rooms as they found them. These rooms often contain unique objects which have been left exactly as they were found.

There was time for a leisurely lunch in the lovely café and a stroll round the plant stalls, shop, bookshop and more of the grounds before it was time to leave for home ahead of the

expected storm. We did have thunder later.

And I finish with a look at another saint for September, St. Ceolfrith. He is the saint of study, strength in the face of tragedy and of those who care for others. Born in the seventh century, he was ordained in Ripon and became abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow. He was well travelled and studied monastic and ecclesiastical practices, but his monks particularly loved the fact that he was a great cook and baker!

At the Abbey at Jarrow, in 682, a plague struck and only Abbot Ceolfrith and the young Bede survived. All of the monks who could read or sing died in the outbreak. Ceolfrith and Bede could have left the empty house, but they stayed on, secure in the conviction that it was where God wanted them to be. The monastery began to prosper again, and he became abbot of Wearmouth as well.

Ceolfrith was abbot to over 600 monks and the library doubled in size during his time there. His biggest legacy was that he commissioned three complete Bibles in single volumes, written in rounded, unjoined letters. (This is known as uncial script, used between the fourth and eighth century in Europe, and is the forerunner of capital letters.) One of these survives in the Bibliotheca in Florence and is the oldest complete Bible in Latin in one volume. Quite a saint! His feast day is on 25th September.

Meanwhile, as we embrace Autumn and look forward to Advent, I close with some words of St. Paul, from Romans chapter 12, verse 12: Let us 'rejoice in the Lord in hope; be patient in tribulation; be constant in prayer.'



▲ ST CEOLFRITH  
IN STAINED  
GLASS AT ST  
PETER'S  
CHURCH MONK-  
WEARMOUTH,  
SUNDERLAND

# Looking Back 6

## *October 1950*



▲ ALF  
ROGERS.  
FROM A  
CHOIR PHOTO  
TAKEN IN  
1944.

*In our April 2025 edition we printed the first in a series of articles entitled 'Looking Back : By An Old Chorister', originally published in these pages in the 1950s.*

*In the sixth of these monthly reminiscences, Alf Rogers continues to sketch out the geography of Kings Norton, populating it with lost farms and houses, and with the names of villagers he remembers from his boyhood.*

Bells Lane has always been noted for the pleasant walk which can be taken through the farm-yard towards the 'Maypole' and returning along the ancient and historical Druids Lane which dates back to the Roman occupation period in our history and has recently become the centre of a modern prefabricated housing estate. Fortunately the opposite side of the lane still retains its beauty as of old especially where the Moundesley Hall estate meets the lane.

At the 'Maypole' end of the lane are several old farms and at the top of the hill, which used to be known as Parton's Hill is an old farm which was occupied for some time by Mr. Boffey Senior, who was churchwarden during Canon Price's ministry here. At the 'Maypole' itself, many changes have been made in recent years, but several old farms still remain, also the old smithy; but the maypole that stood on the little green for many years was taken down during the road-widening scheme which altered the rural aspect of this district, especially when the picture house, public house and modern houses were erected.



Kingswood Farm, opposite these buildings, belongs to Monyhull Hall estate and is occupied by Mr. Mitchell, the farm bailiff, who is an expert in pig and cattle breeding. Very few realise that our eastern parish boundary reaches over to this district. In fact, it stretches from Wythall and runs on the one side of the Alcester Road right to Woodthorpe Road.

Coming to the fourth of the five ways at the top of Parsons Hill, namely Monyhull Hall Road, the first house on the left side is the 'Laurels' which, at present, is used as a convalescent home and is part of Monyhull Hall estate. I can remember it being occupied by Mr. J. B. Yates, who was churchwarden from 1914 to 1917 and was our ringing master from 1924 to 1926. He very kindly presented two new bells in 1926, increasing our peal from eight to ten bells and a tablet recording this event was placed in the tower.



◀MONYHULL  
HALL, REBUILT IN  
THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY



When Mr. Yates left this house and moved to Barnt Green. Mrs. Hallam, another well-known church worker lived here afterwards. 'Trostrey' on the opposite side of the road belonged to William Baldwin for many years but this house was eventually added to Monyhull Hall and used for the training of the higher-grade women patients as domestics.

Today there are modern houses opposite 'Trostrey' but I can remember the fields and drive down to Lindsworth Farm at this point. This farm was owned by Mr. Cheshire, a noted cattle dealer, and was occupied at the beginning of this century by the Smith family (who afterwards came to reside in Baldwin Road) and I understand that Reg was born at the farm. The Perrett family lived here for many years before the farm was taken down to make way for the Lindsworth estate.

At the spot where the buses stop for Lindsworth Approach stood 'Lindsworth Cottage' and the only visible reminder left of this house is the fir trees standing by the bus stop, which used to stand with others at the side of the house. The 'Approach' was actually cut through the garden and tennis lawn. I can remember four families here, namely Palethorpe, Shakespear, Griffiths and Litherland. The Shakespears were well-known churchwardens and of course, Mrs. Griffiths is still a member of our church and a resident of Kings Norton.

'The Briars' was built by the Barnes family, and the sole survivor, Mr. Frank Barnes, still resides there. Adjoining this house is 'Monyhull Cottage', where Dr. Earl, medical superintendent of Monyhull Hall resides. When I was a boy, I used to deliver groceries here from my father's shop to the Aherne family who occupied it at that period. There were three children, two boys and one girl in the family, and I believe that they were all born at this house. The boys later became actors and Brian Aherne eventually became a famous film star.

## **Editor's Notes**

### **1. The Monyhull Estate**

*Around 1900, the Monyhull Estate near Kings Norton was notable for its main building, Monyhull Hall, which dates from the 16th century but had been rebuilt in the 18th century in a neo-classical style. The estate had a long history, originally known from records in 1237 and had belonged to*

various owners over the centuries, including the Sparry family and later the Millward and Cocks families.

By 1905, Monyhull Hall and its estate were sold to the Guardians of the Poor for Birmingham, Kings Norton, and Aston to become a mental hospital known as Monyhull Colony.

The plan was to create a self-sufficient community where patients worked on the farmland. During World War I, the estate buildings were repurposed as a military hospital. Later, in 1920, a residential school for 'epileptic and mentally defective' children was established on the site, called St Francis' Residential School, which still exists as Lindsworth School.

In the mid-20th century, much of the estate land was developed for housing, with about 2,000 houses built in the 1960s on part of the former estate land. The hall itself was converted into apartments, and the hospital facilities mostly closed by 1998. The estate's grounds and buildings have seen considerable change since the early 1900s but remain a significant part of Kings Norton's local history.

Monyhull's name probably derives from Old English or possibly Celtic roots meaning 'Hill' and the hall is a Grade II

Listed building reflecting its architectural and historic importance.

## 2. The Maypole

Historically, the Maypole was a significant crossroads on higher ground between river valleys, connecting routes from Alcester to Birmingham and from Kings Norton to Solihull.

The name 'Maypole' probably comes from a tall guiding pole that once stood there to direct travellers. It may also have been called a maypole because it was later used for maypole dancing, though originally it functioned more as a signpost. The area developed from a farming crossroads into a local shopping centre with shops and housing over time.

Nearby was Maypole Farm, whose origins stretch back to at least the 18th century and whose land was enclosed in the late 1700s. The farm and surrounding fields were gradually developed into housing estates from the 1930s onward, with changes continuing into the 20th century.



# Is This Truly the End of Downton Abbey?

September 2025 could go down as a month of movie lamentation. September sees the release of *'Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale'*, a film so grand it practically arrives with its own butler to escort you to your cinema seat.

Yes, darlings, it has finally happened. The Crawleys have hung up their tiaras, polished the last silver spoon, and bid farewell to the estate. Directed by Simon Curtis and penned by Julian Fellowes (who clearly has a lifetime supply of quill pens and nostalgia), this final chapter is a love letter to fans, embroidered with scandal, sentiment, and just a dash of improvisation. Yes, you heard that right.

Set in the early 1930s, the film opens with Lady Mary embroiled in a divorce scandal so juicy it could curdle the clotted cream. The Crawley family faces financial ruin (again), and the staff downstairs are grappling with modernity,

which apparently includes electric kettles and feelings. The plot is less *Downton* and more *'Downton: The Soap Opera Years'*, but who's complaining?

The cast returns in full Edwardian glory. Hugh Bonneville broods, Michelle Dockery glides, and Jim Carter polishes everything in sight with the solemnity of a man who has seen too many forks.

Newcomers like Joely Richardson and Paul Giamatti add a splash of theatrical spice, though one suspects Giamatti wandered in from a different film entirely and was too polite to leave.

Now, let's address the elephant in the drawing room: the absence of Dame Maggie Smith. Violet Crawley's wit was sharper than a sabre at a garden party, and her death in 2024 casts a long shadow. But fear not, her spirit 'permeates everything', according to Elizabeth McGovern, who plays Cora and who also broke the sacred



**"MGM" writes  
on cinema,  
theatre and  
the arts.**

Downton rule by improvising a line or two. Somewhere, Julian Fellowes is clutching his pearls.

Visually, the film is a mixed bag of opulence and oops. The promotional posters were so heavily Photoshopped they looked like Madame Tussaud's after a power outage.

But let's be honest: this film isn't about plot coherence or historical accuracy. It's about closure. It's about watching Carson tear up over a misplaced napkin. It's about Edith finally

getting a storyline that doesn't involve being emotionally trampled. It's about Lady Mary realizing that scandal is just another word for Tuesday.

In the end, 'Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale' is like a farewell party thrown by your eccentric aunt: over-the-top, slightly chaotic and deeply sentimental. It may not be perfect, but it's perfectly Downton. And as the credits roll and the violins swell, you'll find yourself whispering, 'What is a weekend?' one last time.





# Pilgrimage to Lichfield

On 5th August, six members of St Nicolas' Church congregations joined a pilgrimage organised by *B45 Churches Together*.

We travelled by train to Lichfield and walked to the cathedral in time to hear a wonderful concert by The Operettes, a trio of young women. Their programme was very mixed, ranging from a 'Laudamus Te' by Vivaldi to the very light-hearted songs by Brahms entitled 'Vier Duette'.

We followed this by joining in the daily Eucharist, before having an hour to eat lunch and return to the cathedral for a 75-minute tour. The guide was informative and the whole tour was greatly appreciated by all.

A particular highlight was 'A Table for the Nation'. This is an absolutely beautiful table made from just one British Black Oak tree that is thought to be around 5,000 years old. It is thirteen metres long and its story can be found at [thefenlandblackoakproject.co.uk](http://thefenlandblackoakproject.co.uk)

The table will remain in Lichfield Cathedral and can be used for functions grand or not so grand. So far, it has hosted both a prestigious dinner party and a fish and chip supper.

We are hoping to arrange further pilgrimages or visits to other local cathedrals and abbeys, so watch out for more information.

Can you spot the camel trying to get through the Eye of the Needle in the carving around the cathedral doorway (photo on the opposite page)?



**DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD**  
The Church of England in Staffordshire,  
northern Shropshire and the Black Country

Lichfield Diocese per see cities  
Revision 9 Jan 2025 A4



**Deaneries**

# A Taste of What Is To Come

*What do a barn dance, whisky tasting, and a musical have in common? They are all some of the events we are planning to hold over the coming months. Some are to raise funds for our church, and in particular the tower and bells of St Nicolas' Church. Others are to raise funds for other organisations and some are free.*

***So here is a little taste of what is to come.***

**20 September:** a barn dance in church with supper thrown in.

**11 October:** *'It All Started Here'*, activities linked to the Reverend Wilbert Awdry and the first book he wrote 80 years ago starring a certain tank engine named Thomas.

**15 November:** a quiz with a fish and chip supper at Hawkesley Church raising money for Tearfund,

**29 November:** a Christmas wreath-making workshop with Barn Flower Design, who decorated the Lych Gate at Easter.

**30 November:** coffee morning at Colanzo on The Green to mark the beginning of Advent.

**10 January:** Stargazers, an opportunity to rehearse and perform a musical in a day.

**Whisky tasting:** date to be confirmed but a fascinating evening hosted by a very knowledgeable whisky-mad vicar!



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



Our local church used to run a beetle drive, which was very noisy and competitive. As a Brownie, I remember jumble sales and collecting sacks full of clothes from people who lived on my road. Many of you will remember our Kings Norton Festival with its maypole dancers, penny slot machines and the fabulous bottle tombola.

Then there have been balls with posh frocks and games of heads or tails, 'Irish' bingo and raffles galore. I even won sometimes! The best one was where you were guaranteed a prize, even if it was a cuddly chimpanzee.

Perhaps you can remember an event that was a success or just really fun. Do tell us about it and perhaps we can add it into our plans for 2026.

On top of all these, there will be many other activities and services including lots of Christmas events. Do come along and join in. If you are able, please volunteer to help. If you can make a cuppa or bake a cake, move tables, act, play an instrument or sell tickets we could do with your help.

When I was thinking about all these different events, I was trying to remember what the best fund raiser I've been to was. Living by the seaside as a child, I remember the carnival every summer with the parade of brightly coloured floats. I remember looking out for people we knew and throwing pennies onto the lorries. There was always a beer dig and a pram race, which was very funny to watch.



## Christmas in St Nicolas Church

<b>Toy Service</b>	<b>7 December 10.30am</b>
<i>Gifts of new toys welcomed for Toys4Birmingham</i>	
<b>To Bethlehem</b>	<b>13 December 10am-1pm</b>
<i>A nativity journey for all ages</i>	
<b>Carols by Candlelight</b>	<b>14 December 4pm</b>
<b>Bells for Christmas</b>	<b>15 December 2pm</b>
<i>Carols &amp; Christmas music with Kings Norton Handbells</i>	
<b>Come &amp; Join in Nativity</b>	<b>20 December 2pm</b>
<i>Nativity, games and more! (small charge)</i>	
<b>Blue Christmas</b>	<b>21 December 4pm</b>
<i>A quiet and contemplative service</i>	
<b>Crib Service</b>	<b>Christmas Eve 5pm</b>
<b>Midnight Communion</b>	<b>Christmas Eve 11.30pm</b>
<b>Christmas Communion</b>	<b>Christmas Day 10am</b>
<b>Stargazers</b>	<b>10 January 2026</b>
<i>A musical in a day</i>	

Parish office: 81 The Green, Kings Norton B38 8RU  
 0121 458 3289 [www.kingsnorton.org.uk](http://www.kingsnorton.org.uk)  
 Charity Number 1134799

*Please note all events are subject to change  
 Details correct at time of going to press*



# Drought-Resistant Flowers

I did promise to write about drought conditions in the garden. However, I was pipped to the post by Dr. Alistair Culham and his excellent article in the July magazine. I can recommend, though, a list of drought-resistant flowering plants:

- Coreopsis
- Cheddar Pink
- Eryngium
- Yarrow
- Agastache
- Russian Sage
- Beebalm
- Delosperma
- Echinopsis Ritro
- Perennial Gaillardia
- Pineleaf Penstemmon
- Sedum
- Meadow Sage
- Hemerocallis
- Echinacea Purpurea

From personal experience, I can also recommend the Rock Rose family, including *Helianthemum* and *Cistus*, which are both incredibly tough.

Back in the nineteen sixties, those folks who had front



gardens treasured them, and many were maintained for the pleasure of the passerby. One of our neighbours would plant out his lawn with hundreds of small, colourful plants in a pattern reminiscent of a Persian carpet! The half-hardy border remained supreme.

Then came the family car. Eventually it was realised that the garage was the worst place to keep a car. Out in the fresh air was better. Increasing parking restrictions meant that the front garden would be block-paved and, sadly, especially for the environment, the lawns and flower beds largely disappeared. The only option for the keen gardener was container gardening.

Here are some tips for success without the need for a Persian carpet effect:

Containers. Terracotta is beautiful but is very expensive and it dries out very quickly. Try good quality plastic pots, about 12 – 15cms across the top. Check for drainage holes and buy a saucer to match. Plants hate having their feet wet!

For planting, buy peat-free compost. Avoid the very cheapest. Fluff it up as you take it out of the bag and put it into the pot then plant up. There are sufficient nutrients in the compost to begin with. After six weeks of keeping the compost moist, but not soggy, you will need to start feeding it. I recommend a multi-purpose liquid with added micro-nutrients. ‘Doff’ make a good one.

Repeat this process later in the season. Alternatively, sprinkle a teaspoon of long-acting granules on the surface of your compost. Rake in gently and this will suffice for the whole summer. Watering must be regular. In the height of summer, it may need to be done daily. Hanging baskets and small pots may need watering twice daily.

It is preferable to go for the short-stemmed varieties of plants. This also applies to tulips planted in the autumn. You can underplant with some winter flowering pansies or Bellis daisies to avoid the bare soil look. Your garden need not look dead in the autumn!

There will be more hot tips in the next edition of the Parish Magazine in November.



# Funerals July 2025

14 July	Margaret Wright	93	Cr.LH
17 July	Olive Rose Thornton	100	SN.Bu.BE
21 July	Iris Margaret Brown	83	SN.Bu.KN
26 July	Pamela Anne Chadney	87	In.CY
29 July	Ronald Michael Harrison	90	In.CY

SN : Service at St Nicolas’ Church, Bu : Burial, In : Interment of Ashes  
BE : Brandwood End, KN : Kings Norton Cemetery, CY : St Nicolas’ Churchyard,  
LH : Lodge Hill

Living in the same house for over fifty years  
It was very clear to see  
That going up and down the stairs  
Was much too much for me.

It was certainly a hard decision,  
But I finally made up my mind.  
With a large house and larger garden,  
I would leave Great Barr behind.

It didn't take long to find a place  
Which suited me just fine.  
After many long delays  
The Kings Norton flat was mine.

I moved from north to south of Brum,  
Where I grew up years ago.  
Now I've settled in my ground-floor flat,  
I've no lawns to weed and mow.

I do have just a few regrets  
And memories too many to recall  
Of wonderful times and friendship.  
How I shall miss them all!

So now I'm looking forward  
to a happy, brand new start;  
But my old house and acquaintances  
Will always be in my heart.



*Barbara Wilkinson lives at Grosvenor Court on The Green. She has been writing poems all her life. Some of them have won competitions.*

*We will be featuring an article about Barbara and her memories of growing up in Kings Norton in a future edition.*

*She is pictured here at the recent V J Day party (see back cover).*

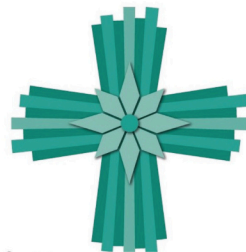
## COPYRIGHT NOTICE

The contents of this magazine are copyright © Kings Norton Parish 2025 and may not be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the Editor. The views, opinions and comments expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the editorial team of the Kings Norton Parish Magazine, the Kings Norton Parish Ministry Team or its staff. Material submitted for publication must be accompanied by the name and contact details of the provider including an email address if available. When possible, submissions will be produced in full, but the Editor reserves the right to make changes. If content submitted for publication contains quotations from other sources, the written permission of the copyright holder to reprint it must be supplied.

# Kings Norton Parish

## Autumn Events

### St Nicolas Church 2025



**Saturday 13 September    10-2    Heritage Week Open Day -  
Church & Old Grammar School**

**Saturday 20 September    10-2    Heritage Week Open Day -  
Church & Old Grammar School**

**Saturday 20 September    5-7.30    Barn dance in Church\***

**Wednesday 24 & Saturday**

**27 September                    10-12    Love your church  
help clean & repair our church**

**Saturday 11 October            7.30pm    Unfinished Business  
concert by Eroica Chamber  
Orchestra  
*No tickets, pay what you can***

**Tuesday 14 October            7pm    Baby Loss service**

**Saturday 18 October            10-2    It all started here  
80 years of Rev Awdry books**

**Saturday 15 November        5-7pm    Tearfund Quiz with fish & chip  
supper at Hawkesley Church\***

**Saturday 29 November        2pm    Christmas Wreath Making\***

**\*fundraising events**

Parish office: 81 The Green, Kings Norton B38 8RU  
0121 458 3289                    [www.kingsnorton.org.uk](http://www.kingsnorton.org.uk)

Charity Number 1134799

*Please note all events are subject to change  
Details correct at time of going to press*





## The V J Day Party at Grosvenor Court, Kings Norton, on 15 August 2025

