

KINGS NORTON

Parish Magazine



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Welcome

EDITORIAL

If you read it thoroughly, and perhaps all at one sitting, this month's magazine could make your head spin.

Hot on the heels of Larry's invitation to turn our lives around (p.4) comes Pauline's injunction to throw our heads back to view the dizzying work of a team of men seemingly immune to vertigo (p.10) and the weathervane which will soon resume its spinning at the highest point of Kings Norton (p.12). Following its gyrations, we find ourselves looking backwards to Kings Norton's celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee 45 years ago (p.18) and simultaneously forwards to the morning of Sunday 5th June, when we will mark her 70th year on the throne.

We pause with Pauline to regain our balance and a sense of calm (p.24); but not for long, for there remains much to explore, including the impressive refurbishment of *The Navigation Inn* (p.32). Michael Kennedy is our guide through what he aptly names "a remarkable tribute to Kings Norton", a pub with a well-informed sense of the past.

Leaving us barely enough time to digest our local history lesson and finish our pint, Christine whisks us away to those realms of the imagination accessible only through the pages of a good book (p.40) before we land, breathless, at the feet of the Potentate of Time Himself and strap ourselves in with Thelma for a whirlwind tour of the origins of Ascension Day (p.42).

Thank goodness that Eddie returns this month with a chance to recuperate in the familiar First Class lounge of the S.S.Canberra!



David Ash

Turning Lives Around

*Larry Wright on conversion,
believing and belonging.*

How willing are we to change our mind on important matters? How readily do we learn new things from the world around us? Are we able to change our attitudes and opinions, even our lifestyles, in response to new knowledge or insights?

I ponder these questions in response to so much that is changing in our world while also wishing to be faithful to the values and wisdom which my upbringing and beliefs provide.

The Book of Proverbs reminds us that “there is nothing new under the sun.” This is interpreted as a statement of continuity in the face of change. All generations face periods of struggle and catastrophe, peace and plenty in the ongoing story of human

development. Our responses to major changes and challenges are what defines our age.

There are many stories of individuals who dramatically and radically alter their lives in response to events and circumstances. They reach a point of decision and there is no going back. Their lives are transformed and they may appear unrecognisable as the person they once were.

A radical change of mind and heart is often expressed as a conversion experience; a profound alteration of life which leaves the former self behind as a new self emerges. In the Christian and other faith traditions, conversion is the dramatic transformation of an individual in response to an encounter with God.

St Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus, from being a persecutor of Christians to a follower of Christ, is one of



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



PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

the best-known Biblical conversion accounts. We still hear the phrase “I’ve had a road to Damascus experience” used by people to explain a sudden and radical change in their lives. Such transformative experiences are regularly reported in the Holy Scriptures and in the history of faiths. They also happen today.

Stories abound of the conversion of what’s sometimes called “celebrity sinners”, people whose lives were a series of serious wrongdoings often ending in a criminal conviction and imprisonment. One such person is the former MP

↑ In Christian tradition, baptism is a moment of public witness to a life turned around

Jonathan Aitkin. Imprisoned for perjury in 1999 he became a committed Christian while serving his sentence. On his release from prison, he studied for the priesthood and he now serves as a chaplain at Pentonville prison. In my own ministry, I’ve met former members of violent gangs and drug dealers who speak passionately about their conversion experience and a turning around of their lives towards God.

For most people of faith, following the teachings of their religion is something they do, not because of a dramatic conversion experience, but though a

combination of upbringing, education and friendships with people of faith. Conversion in these circumstances is usually a steady, incremental deepening of one's commitment to God and the church until a point is reached when it is unimaginable not to believe and belong.

Believing and belonging are central to a faith commitment. Without belief, belonging to a faith community feels awkward. Without a sense of belonging, one's beliefs becomes a solitary experience. Many people are on a spectrum of belief and belonging and this is why churches do their best to be open and welcoming to people at different stages of faith. Whether our experience is of a dramatic change or a gradual process of commitment, we are all subject to times of adversity that will test our faith and our values.

Conversion is also associated with those who change from one religion to another. It's been my privilege to help a number of people who wished to convert to Christianity. It is a major decision. They leave behind so much that is familiar and the step often causes separation from their family. They become refugees from their old religion while seeking a new relationship

with the God whom Christians worship. Choosing a new religion also requires learning: new teachings, new forms of worship, new ethical values and a new language of faith. Those who persist are to be commended for their perseverance, their resilience and their trust.

As we move into the summer months of 2022, we are acutely aware of the challenges in the world around us. The war in Europe, inflation at home and the ongoing fears associated with the pandemic all conspire to raise our anxiety levels and fears for the future. They are also an opportunity to reflect upon our life's priorities.

We have so much to be thankful for yet, as we see happening in Ukraine, catastrophe can come upon us without warning and sweep away all our certainties. Nurturing resilience, perseverance and hope within ourselves and for others is a vital means of passing through these challenging times. Our core beliefs and values are being tested. Let's pray they pass the test.



PHOTOS BY DAVID ASH



The 10.30 am service at St Nicolas' Church, Kings Norton, on Sunday 15th May 2022.

The Revd Larry Wright rededicates the restored Nicodemus window (top).

The Revd David Booker joins the Ministry Team for the first time as Curate (left).

The Reverends Jayne Crooks, David Booker, Larry Wright, Phelim O'Hare (Area Dean) and Eliakim Ikechukwu celebrate Holy Communion (below).





PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

still work to be done on the tower and the spire but we are now in a much safer position, so this is a big step forward.

We are continuing to *explore and to develop the Living Stones Project*, which was first announced in the April 2022 edition of this magazine, and to fine tune some of the details. We are explaining it to our colleagues in the diocese and to others who will play a part in helping us to move it forward until it becomes a reality.

Many people have asked about what is happening to the Old Grammar School. The plan is that we will board up the damaged panels so

that work to repair them can take place at a later stage. However, we have encountered a complex situation regarding the required permissions to undertake the work. We are well on the way to resolving the situation and work will get underway shortly to protect the building. The repair work will form part of the Living Stones project. It hasn't been forgotten.

One of the other issues we are facing at the moment is that we have church mice! We recently caught one in the vestry. We have put traps down (a sad necessity) but we do need to be vigilant and careful about how we store foodstuffs. If you are eating in St Nicolas', please try not to create crumbs and do ensure that any wrappers, leftovers or waste are put in the bin. Cute as they are, mice are a pest and we do need to deter them.

PHOTO TOP: THE WEATHERVANE IS UNWRAPPED AT ST NICOLAS' CHURCH ON 24TH APRIL 2022 BY THE REVD ELIAKIM IKECHUKWU, THE REVD LARRY WRIGHT, PAULINE WEAVER & THE REVD DAVID BOOKER.

A Head for Heights



PHOTOS BY S.S.H.C.



Before



After

Steeplejacks from Sally Strachey Historic Conservation at work on the 550-year-old spire of St Nicolas' Church in April 2022. While little can be done to address centuries of erosion, cracks clearly visible in the masonry have been repointed to make the structure safer.



Restoring the Weathervane



The cockerel which has sat at the pinnacle of the steeple for as long as anyone can remember has been repaired by Peter Meehan of the Historic Metalwork Conservation Company. When first taken down (**above**), it was found to be badly corroded. Several coats of paint later, it is ready to return to its perch. **Below**: a light-blue undercoat dries in the sun. **Top right**: as good as new after a final layer of gold leaf. **Bottom right**: the sphere on which Kings Norton's most visible bird perches.

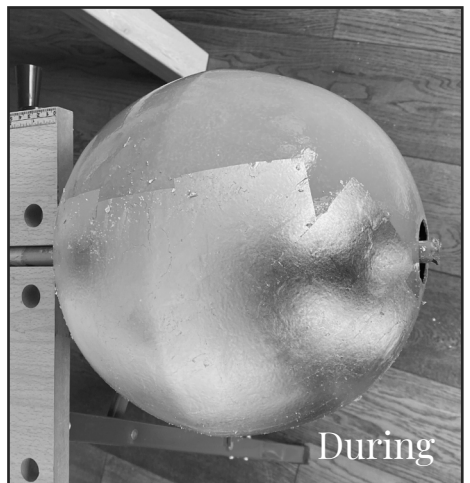




After



Before



During

Adam the Gardener is a bit seedy

Yes, in a way, I have had a mixed experience of germination this year. Good old *Coleus* for the conservatory have been springing up in quantity as usual, but some herbaceous perennials have been very reluctant to show their heads. Did I start too early? Possibly. The compost was a bit cheap so I might try a branded one next year. As far as seed quality goes, perhaps ordering online might be a good idea as the seed is stored at special temperature until needed. Using a trusted seed brand might help. Oh and, by the way, I have messed up my seedlings in the past by letting them get too hot. Avoid direct sunlight.

We have had a very dry April this year but, undaunted, our **Clematis montana** has had masses of pale pink, four-petalled flowers with a golden centre. Flowering for about five weeks around April-time this by-word for reliability will happily cover a chain-link fence and can transform an old decrepit garden shed into a thing of great beauty. Pruning is minimal. Let the *montana* do its own thing and it will easily achieve a height of ten metres! Clematis are best bought in a container and as you will be probably be buying out of the flowering season the suppliers usually

show a colourful label allowing you to choose any colour between white and pink.

Eve and I have inherited a border of mixed shrubs in poor soil facing south. Having been neglected for some time, after some cutting back, they are doing very well. Some of them are a bit boring, though, and I am contemplating replacements with attractive flowers on show for most of the summer. In true Adam fashion, I am requiring these gems to be hardy and (wait for it) capable of being grown from seed. Now, indeed, is the time to start off hardy perennials and the shrubby ones can be quite long-lived.

You may have seen large scarlet flowers behind the ear of dusky maidens from Hawaii in travelogues. These would have been *Hibiscus* flowers and not a lot of use to us as they are not hardy in the UK. We need a plant made of sterner stuff and **Hibiscus syriacus** is really hardy. Plant it in free-draining soil in full sun. Wait patiently for the leaves to appear in May to be followed by masses of flowers in many shades from red to white until the first hard frost. You can raise *syriacus* from seed starting with a bit of warmth



HIBISCUS SYRIACUS

under glass and then transplant it ready for putting out in the autumn. At this stage you must be wary of losing sight of your plants with their thin grey stems, so I recommend poking in one of those plastic plant labels. You could even go the whole hog and write *Hibiscus* and the name of the seed supplier on it. Very professional!

Planting your *Hibiscus* alongside other flowering shrubs with early foliage is a good idea and then your sunny flower bed will not appear too "gappy" in the early part of the year.

Two factoids for you are that the *Hibiscus* is the National Flower of South Korea where it appears in all sorts of places like flags and ceramics; and the dried petals can be

combined with dried spiced apple to produce an infusion with seemingly miraculous properties. There are said to be eight health benefits, but each one is preceded by "may" or "could". Probably best to treat it as a tea with an interesting flavour of berries.

I will be providing you with an ideal companion for your *Hibiscus syriacus* next month, so watch this space and remember there are many other hardy perennials to plant outside at this time of the year, so look around. The adventurous can try raising some of them from seed. Even more adventurous, and cheaper!

Don't forget that, if you want to look at prospective plants for your garden, the National Collections of so many garden subjects are held by nurseries



CLEMATIS MONTANA

and gardens all over the country. Remember also to check visiting times at the collections and not to check out daffodil varieties in the Autumn!

Have a look at www.plantheritage.org.uk for over 690 plant collections including four for the blue *Meconopsis* poppies, one of my favourites.

I wish you a good gardening summer and may all the pests be easily persuaded to move on in an eco-friendly sort of way. Already this year I have had a black fly infestation in my purple elder and wood ants in a large pot with one my

favourite over-wintered pelargoniums. The former was dealt with by applications of a soapy eco-spray and, as to the latter, I haven't thought of anything yet. Anybody know of a wood ant charmer?



Plant Heritage



THE
Downfall of May-Games:

WHEREIN
Is set forth the rudeness, prophaneness,
stealing, drinking, fighting, dancing, whoring,
mis-rule, mis-spence of precious time, contempt of
God, and godly Magistrates, Ministers and People, which
oppose the Rascality and rout, in this their open
prophaneness, and Heathenish Customs,

Occasioned by the generall complaint of the rudeness of
people in this kinde, in this Interval of Settlement.

Here you have Twenty Arguments against these pro-
phane Sports, and all the Cavills made by the *Belialists* of the
Time, refelled and Answered.

Together with an Addition of some Verses in the close,
for the delight of the ingenious Reader.

By *THO. HALL*, B. D. and Pastor of *Kings-norton*.

*Ye shall keep mine Ordinances, that ye commit not any of those abo-
minable Customs, which were committed before you, and that ye
defile not your selves therein; I am the Lord, Levit. 18. 30.*

The Customs of the people are vain, Jer. 10. 3.

*Populi plaudunt non consultoribus utilitatum suarum, sed largito-
ribus Voluptatum, Aug. de Civit. Dei l. 2. c. 20.*

*Bona conscientia proclire vult & conspici, ipsas nequitia tenebras
timet, Seneca Epist. 98.*

LONDON, Printed for *Henry Mortlock* at the Phoenix in St.
Pauls Church-yard, near the Little North-door. 1660.

In 1660, a former incumbent of St Nicolas' Church, Thomas Hall, was less than impressed with the revelling and the "heathenish customs" of his parishioners. Here is the title page of his publication "The Downfall of May Games", referred to by the Town Crier in the account of the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations on the next page.

Silver Jubilee 1977

On Sunday 5th June 2022, at the 10.30 a.m. service, we will mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. The service will be held in St Nicolas' churchyard and will be followed by a "Bring Your Own" picnic, to which all are invited.

Forty-five years ago, Kings Norton celebrated the 25th anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne, the Silver Jubilee, in some considerable style. This report from the Parish Magazine of 1977 paints a vivid picture of the events of the day.

In 1977, the Town Crier announced,

"Hearken unto me, ye citizens of Kings Norton. Since it hath pleased Her Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth to grant unto her subjects a day's holiday wherein they may rejoice with her on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Her Accession to the throne of England. And since her loyal subjects in this most ancient parish of Kings Norton have decided, in their greater wisdom, to mark this occasion in their own way and on their own day. So, we gather for our great rejoicing on this historic Green.

A Queen slept here at this Ancient House. Our ancestors had no part in the foul deed later

done to her husband, King Charles the Martyr. A King, James the First, first monarch of both England and Scotland, granted two fairs and a market to Kings Norton. And another King, the sixth Edward, endowed the ancient grammar school.

A puritan Divine, Incumbent of this Parish, was the author of a book, "The Downfall of May Games" But today, dancing shall again proceed round the maypole, and all manner of Pleasures and Interests have been prepared for your delight and interest: Yea and for your edification, through the energies of your Rector and Churchwardens and of many energetic and loyal citizens who have laboured mightily to enable



PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

you to celebrate this great occasion in a manner worthy of its importance.

So let the Bells Ring! Let the Dancers and the Mummers and the Singers, the gymnasts and the children play their parts in making this a truly memorable day. Let the proceedings begin. God Save the Queen!"

This was our lovely day

On that glorious last Saturday in May, the villagers of Kings Norton – Oh yes! We were all villagers that day – stopped the world and got off. No-one was quite sure what century we stopped in, but we certainly took a step back in time and

celebrated the Queen's Jubilee in royal fashion.

From the moment the stentorian tones of the Town Crier rang out, bidding us, the loyal citizenry, to celebrate the great occasion, we never looked back. As his proclamation ended amidst cheers and clapping St Nicolas' bells crashed out a joyous peal. The church jackdaws rose, startled, to join the golden cockerel glinting in the sun atop the spire. The blossom bloomed, the bunting blew! We all laughed at one another in wonder and delight. A great bubble of happiness seemed to float above the village green, growing larger every hour. So

much to see, so much to do, to taste, to hear, to enjoy. From medieval merriment to bitter sweet nostalgia, we fairly wallowed in it all.

So, what will you remember? Will it be the Mummers' troupe in their motley, skipping with pipe and drum past the mellow walls of the Saracen's Head? Or the vigorous rustic dancing of the Morris Men? Will it be the gales of laughter ebbing and flowing from the crowds of happy children watching Punch and Judy? Could it be the fearful prowess of the young judo experts or the lissom lassies on the trampoline?

Did you join in the serious business of wine tasting? What about that elderberry wine, then? Maybe you discovered unexpected gifts as an Art Critic at Kings Norton Art Club's own "Private View Day" under the May blossom. Earnest discussions went on all day between people who normally only meet on Saturdays in Hiron's bread queue. Even the local police were asked for their informed opinion!

Perhaps you were too busy trying your strength with the local muscle man, "having a go" at the sideshows or, like so many, becoming fulfilled in some curious way just standing lazily sipping a beer whilst watching fascinated some poor soul having buckets of tipped

over his head again and again and yes again!

Some, however, just sat outside the Saracen's Head like some village worthies, basking in the heat, with their shoes kicked off, while seemingly endless cups of tea and conversation flowed from that ancient hostelry like a never-ending stream.

Perhaps, like me, you were drawn to the lovely church. There it stood, warm stone against a deep blue sky. Every door stood wide and from its cool flower-decked interior issued the hauntingly ethereal sound of an old spinet beautifully played. Several times during the day could be found pews packed with people, silent, spellbound, listening to the church choir or experiencing for the first time the curiously evocative quality of hand-bell ringing in that peaceful setting. All this provided true spiritual refreshment, in sharp contrast to the roistering carnival atmosphere outside.


Meanwhile a beautiful photographic display delighted many in the Old Grammar School, while upstairs, queues formed to see the "Old Kings Norton Exhibition", as people pored over old maps, photos and records. "Do you remember?" type conversations abounded.

Tiny snapshots tucked away in the memory keep flashing through the mind's eye. People shouting "Coo-ee!" from the battlements to friends below in the churchyard. Two small boys sitting under the bell tower quietly knocking back a large bottle of Pomagne, won at a sideshow! The two-year-old perched happily on a venerable tomb sucking a huge cornet, her face smothered to the ears in ice cream. The person who thought the Mummers' Actor dressed up as Lord Nelson was our Lord Kings Norton. The delight of several octogenarians who came and really told us how it used to be. The groups of people who toured the old church with trained guides to learn of their heritage. The excited faces in the fancy dress parade, the solemn faces of the judges at their awesome task.

From the smallest cub scout diligently filling his black plastic bag with our litter to the perspiring girl guides selling postcards, one and all played their part with sheer enthusiasm.

Once, I sat next to an American tourist at the Edinburgh Tattoo. The massed pipe bands thundered towards us in a blaze of colour and pageantry. It was all too much for him. He turned to the crowd, threw up his arms and cried in anguished envy, "Gee! Don't it make you want to belong?"

We felt no such anguished envy on our village green on our wonderful day. We belonged alright. We knew it, we loved it and we thanked God for every magic moment of it!

<p>St Nicolas' Church Kings Norton</p>	 <p>THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE 2022</p>	<p>Outdoor Service and Picnic</p>
<p>Bring your food, a chair, a blanket.</p>		<p>Tea and coffee will be available</p>
<p>10.30 am Sunday 5 June</p>		<p>Celebrate in the churchyard</p>

Part Of Nature Not Apart From It

I recently had a serious travel delay, and had many hours in which to explore the content of my reading bag. I was heartily glad that I had it with me.

Several of the publications were linked in some way to the natural world, and there was a recurring theme in a number of them. They all spoke of our need to realise that we are part of nature and not somehow set apart from it or above all other species; that any intervention we make must be holistic. This means being aware of the whole system and not just one or two critical species.

Take a river or wetland as an example: everything is linked to everything else, both literally and metaphorically. Actions in upper catchment or source areas have direct implications for species and systems downstream. Massive investment in a nature reserve can have little or no effect if the water flowing into it is polluted in some way, or if the drainage away from the reserve is inadequate or over-efficient.

There is one group of people to whom all of this is known from childhood: the indigenous peoples of the world. An emerging trend of recent COPs (Conferences of the Parties) such as last autumn's COP26 in Glasgow, is to start to align scientific insights with indigenous wisdom. Words such as "sustainability" and "reciprocity" simply mean not taking more than can be replenished and giving back to nature as we take from it. Both are ingrained wisdom amongst indigenous people and those of other national groups who have taken to time to learn about the world around them and to become part of it.



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

Finally, at the 11th hour, governments and global businesses seem to be getting the message that humanity is part of nature, not necessarily its controller, and that nature-based solutions are often the most successful. The flood plains which are left to work as intended; the salt-marshes which are retained or restored so that they can become fantastic carbon sinks, storing much more, per acre, than even woodland, and the acres of industrial rooftops which can be used as solar farms (right) instead of using up prime agricultural land or bio-diverse habitat. These are just three of the solutions which are now becoming routine rather than dreams. The concerns and potential solutions previously cherished by specific interest groups are finally becoming mainstream thinking.

Combining the indigenous wisdom of those living close to nature with the skills and equipment of the modern technological world has meant that research and solutions can be produced faster and with much less invasion or disruption than would have been possible even just a few years ago. One such advance is applying the forensics of DNA testing to the environment. Environmental DNA (eDNA) testing means that, by simply collecting and sampling water, one can detect if a species is present. Setting up



PHOTO BY KINDEL MEDIA

such work is expensive to start with, but the water sampling can be much quicker and much less expensive than having to try to catch or observe a specific organism.

This is only one example of the sorts of modern technologies being used in nature-based solutions to ecological problems. There will be more and more crossover between branches of science (forensics, medicine, agriculture, horticulture, and so on) and more innovative solutions. Some will need a grass-roots level of funding, others will need finance from major investors and governments. Those of us living in so-called democracies can vote for leaders who are looking to support such ways of working with nature.

Mental Health

As I write this we are coming to the end of Mental Health Awareness Week. Sadly, such a week is still much needed as mental health is still misunderstood and is not discussed enough. When we talk about mental health we actually mean mental ill health and what we can do to keep our mental health well.

People are often reluctant to talk about their mental ill health. It's personal, it makes us feel (more) vulnerable and sometimes we are judged or marginalised because of it. But it affects us all.

People who enjoy good mental health often have strategies in place to help them, maybe without even realising it. Strong family and friendships, an openness to

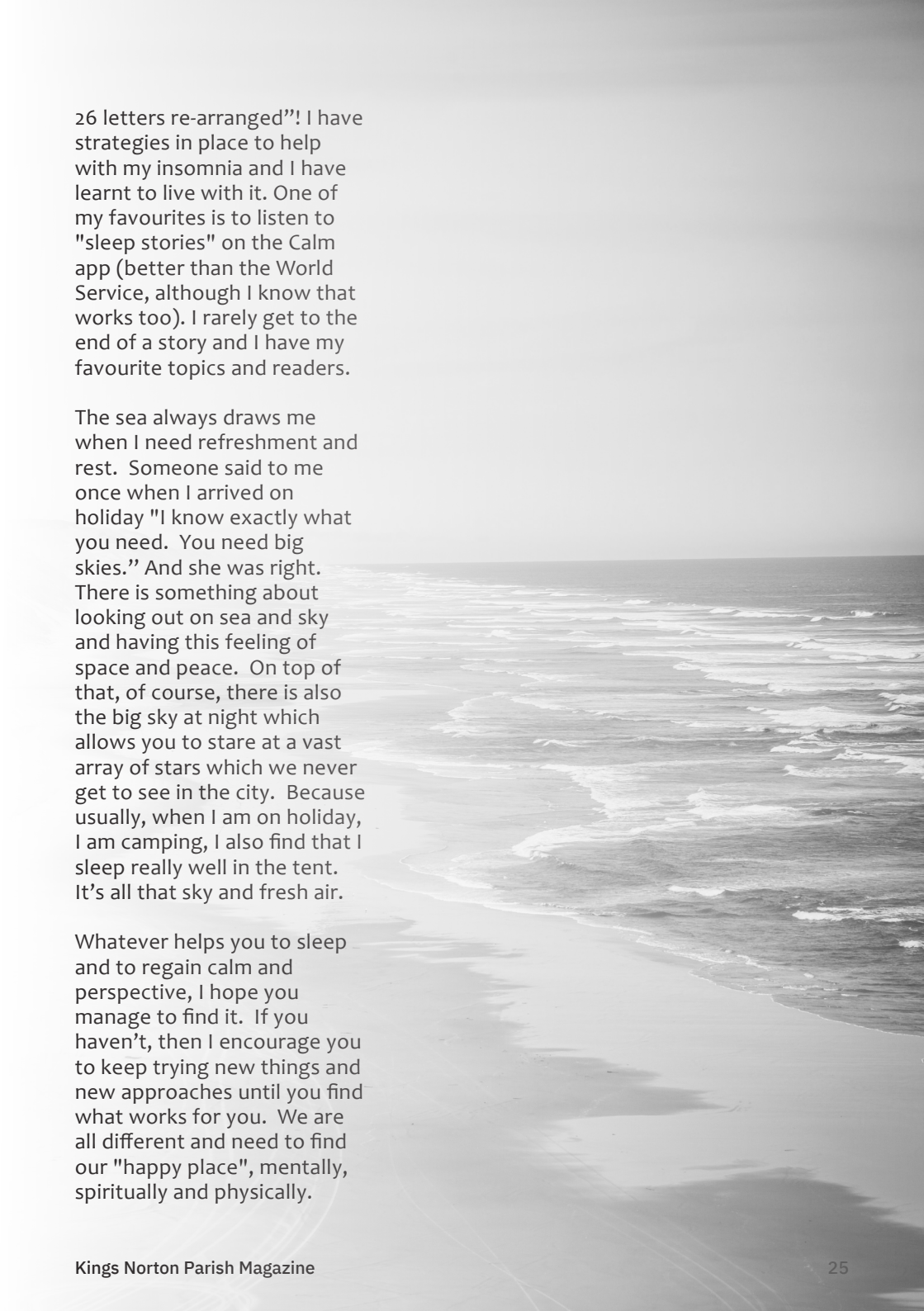
talk about how they feel, hobbies and interests, things to look forward to, holidays and trips out.

Two things that make a difference for me are sleep and the sea. I have suffered from insomnia for a long time. It comes and goes, but that feeling of tiredness and exhaustion can be really detrimental. Ask any new parent with a baby waking in the night or, worse still, a baby that doesn't sleep.

Two in the morning seems to be a time when my brain seems to decide to recall something someone said in 1977, to focus on a random comment or to worry about a fathomless fact, such as "Every book you have ever read is made up of the same



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



26 letters re-arranged"! I have strategies in place to help with my insomnia and I have learnt to live with it. One of my favourites is to listen to "sleep stories" on the Calm app (better than the World Service, although I know that works too). I rarely get to the end of a story and I have my favourite topics and readers.

The sea always draws me when I need refreshment and rest. Someone said to me once when I arrived on holiday "I know exactly what you need. You need big skies." And she was right. There is something about looking out on sea and sky and having this feeling of space and peace. On top of that, of course, there is also the big sky at night which allows you to stare at a vast array of stars which we never get to see in the city. Because usually, when I am on holiday, I am camping, I also find that I sleep really well in the tent. It's all that sky and fresh air.

Whatever helps you to sleep and to regain calm and perspective, I hope you manage to find it. If you haven't, then I encourage you to keep trying new things and new approaches until you find what works for you. We are all different and need to find our "happy place", mentally, spiritually and physically.

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). Alternatively, please ask questions at the Parish Office, which is open between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

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THE MINISTRY TEAM

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

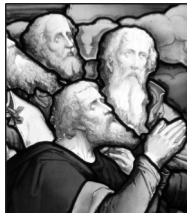
THE CHURCH WARDENS

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Hawkesley Church	Jim Clarke
Immanuel Church	Sue Hartley

OTHER CONTACTS

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

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

1st Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Holy Communion (Children's activity : Muddy Church)
12.30 pm	Baptisms
6.00 pm	Taizé Prayer

2nd Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Sung Matins (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Morning Praise for All Ages (Child-friendly)
6.00 pm	Holy Communion with Anointing & Prayer for Healing

3rd Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Holy Communion (Children's activity : Godly Play)
12.30 pm	Baptisms
6.00 pm	Evening Worship

4th Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Holy Communion with Choir (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Outdoor Service in St Nicolas' Churchyard (Child-friendly)
6.00 pm	Compline (Night Prayer)

5th Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	United Service

All services are held at St Nicolas' Church. For further details, see the weekly newsletter on the Parish Website at www.kingsnorton.org.uk

MEMORY CLUTTER

Why it gets harder to remember things as we get older.

Memories are a crucial part of what makes us who we are. Yet we all know it can become more difficult to remember things as we get older. From forgetting why you came into a room, to not being able to recall details of a special family event, to forgetting familiar names. Forgetting things can even be a way of defining old age. Many people will cry something along the lines of “Oh my goodness, I’m getting old!” when they can’t remember something that had previously been easy to recall.

This forgetfulness as we get older is easy to demonstrate but harder to explain. An obvious explanation might be that remembering things becomes difficult because something changes in the brain that makes it more difficult to store information.

But a paper published recently in the journal *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* has presented an alternative explanation for this phenomenon: that our memories remain good, but they get cluttered as we age.

First, it’s important to understand that memory isn’t an accurate recording of life as it happens. Imagine if you remembered every single detail of every minute of every hour of every day. It would be overwhelming, and most of the



ALEXANDER EASTON IS THE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AT DURHAM UNIVERSITY



PHOTO BY ANDREA PIACQUADIO

content, the less chance there is to confuse one event for another, or mix up what happened in those different events. For example, it's easy to remember what happened when you took the dog for a walk and what happened when you went swimming separately. They're highly unlikely to be confused because they share so little in common.

So, if older people are less focused when they put things into their memories, then their memories will be "cluttered" with information that doesn't matter. This clutter means there will be more chance for information from one memory to overlap with information from another. This in turn means there will be more chance for memories to be confused with one another, making it harder to remember what happened.

A previous study, which was included in the review, shows this theory in action. An older and a younger group were shown two types of objects (faces and scenes) and told which type of object they would be tested on. The older adults exhibited higher levels of brain activity when they were shown the irrelevant objects later on. Further, the more brain activity they demonstrated in response to these irrelevant objects, the poorer their memory for the objects they were trying to remember.

The review found that not only do older adults add clutter to their memory by taking in too much information from the environment, but they also accumulate

information from knowledge gained over many years. This means older people have more material to navigate when trying to access a memory, which can compound the errors we make in memory as we age.

But the news isn't all bad

According to the researchers, evidence suggests that older people demonstrate preserved, and at times enhanced, creativity as a result of their "enriched memories".

When we are faced with a novel problem, sometimes we need to come up with a creative solution. This can involve bringing together bits of knowledge we have that may not be obviously connected, or remembering similar (though not identical) previous experiences which might be relevant.

The "clutter" in an older person's memory might be a strength in this process. Being able to make connections between apparently unrelated memories could allow them to find creative solutions to problems by drawing on a much bigger range of experience.

So perhaps we can stop seeing ageing and the inevitable memory decline that comes with it as only a bad thing.

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Drinking in Our History

The New Navigation

A remarkable tribute to Kings Norton

To learn about the history of Kings Norton, you can visit the local and central libraries where there are several books on the subject. There are also lectures and talks at local history groups. But one place where you don't expect to find out much is the local pub!

That's no longer the case. *The Navigation Inn*, recently reopened on Wharf Road, is a veritable goldmine of information about our village, going back several hundred years. Everywhere you turn there's a reminder of someone notable who was born or lived here, a significant event in local history, or the parish's evolution



MICHAEL
WRITES
REGULARLY
ON LOCAL
HISTORY

from a rural community into a thriving suburb of the city. It's not simply a remarkable range of sepia-tinted photographs, of which there are many: there are paintings, including some originals, and other evocative artefacts, such as original tapestries and even a historic brick wall!

I never knew much about J.D.Wetherspoon, the brewery chain that took over the pub when it was threatened with conversion into yet another supermarket, apart from the fact that it is increasingly dominant and successful in its market. I did know that it has done so by adding

comprehensive dining options to the licensed drinking trade: its pubs are now even open for breakfast

But I never knew that a key element of its success has been to create distinct and attractive local identities for each of its pubs, so that every single one of its properties is in effect unique in terms of its décor. But that is indeed the case: Wetherspoons has a central department whose responsibility, whenever a property is acquired, is to carry out comprehensive research into the history of its community to help develop that identity.

For *The Navigation*, representatives of Wetherspoons had detailed discussions with Kings Norton Library, the Kings Norton History Society, the Birmingham, Worcester and Droitwich Canal Society, the Birmingham Museums Trust and numerous individuals, in establishing information and locating items for use in the £2.59 million redevelopment. The results are there for all to see, providing a stimulating and attractive environment for every visitor.

It goes far further than you might think. For example, each Wetherspoon property has a distinctive and unique carpet designed to reflect its locality, woven by Axminster. The



carpet in *The Navigation* picks up on the derivation of the pub's name, which of course relates to the creation of the Birmingham and Worcester canal by teams of workmen in and around the 1830s, when the original pub was founded with its own malthouse and stables. Canal and railway workers were officially referred to as "navigators", giving rise to the enduring term "navvies". The carpet features recurring images of the nationally significant 'guillotine' canal lock which is located near the canal junction just across the fields from the pub. A canal-related image has also been chosen for the pub sign that hangs outside



PHOTO BY MICHAEL KENNEDY

the building, a dramatic three-dimensional model of a barge entering the portal of what can only be the famous West Hills Tunnel.

The Navigation, which opened just before Christmas last year, is an exceptionally spacious location which deftly combines the modern and the traditional, with two illuminated outside seating areas and a large open plan interior, called The Orangery. There are none of the usual small rooms such as snugs and parlours, that were the hallmark of traditional pubs. Although there is an area

▲ "THE WATCHERS"
BY LOCAL ARTIST
PAULA WOOF,
COMMISSIONED BY
WEATHERSPOON'S
FOR THE
NAVIGATION INN,
FEATURING KINGS
NORTON'S
GUILLOTINE LOCK

specifically for diners, in fact food can be eaten anywhere in the main interior space: there is no separation into public bar and lounge.

The decor is so varied and vibrant that it's hard to summarise in a few words. Walk around the perimeter walls and you'll find numerous dedicated displays to notable people with local connections including (of course) the Revd Wilbert Awdry and his creation *Thomas the Tank Engine*; Queen Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles I who stayed at the Saracen's Head (now Saint Nicolas' Place)

during the English Civil War, together with the story of the Battle of Kings Norton. There's a tribute to local man Charles Hall, who became one of the "Great Escapers" from Stalag Luft III during the Second World War, including a film poster and a photo-montage of all those who died as a result of the escape. There's a display about local man Reg Bunn, who illustrated "serious" post-war children's comics such as *Lion*. There's a display of works by the noted artist Bernard Sleight, a local woodworker who focused on the Pre-Raphaelite style. Almost all the evocative displays of pictures are accompanied by explanatory and very informative commentaries.

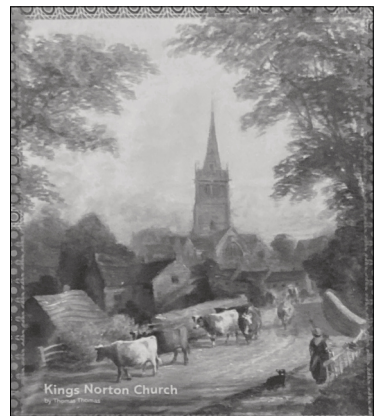
Speaking of artists, I was astonished to see that the pub has at least two original works of art, both commissioned by Wetherspoons specifically for *The Navigation*. Both are by noted local artist Paula Woof, and included a spectacular work called "*The Watchers*" (photo opposite), which provides a unique take on the guillotine lock mentioned earlier. There are also other examples of Paula's work, including a preparatory sketch for "*The Watchers*".

Equally unexpected, hanging from the vaulted ceiling are two specially created tapestries with views of the village in Victorian times. As you climb the stairs to

visit the men's and ladies' rest rooms, adorning one of the walls is another woven work, a view of St Nicolas' Church and the Old Grammar School. Immediately adjacent is an old crumbling brick wall, suitably reinforced one assumes, reminding visitors of the near 200-year history of the building. (The ladies' facilities are described in one report as "sparkling", though I couldn't politely verify this).

As I said, everywhere you look are sepia tinted photographs of old Kings Norton, many of which I hadn't seen in any of the collection of pictures in books about local history. They include the old wheelwright's shop in Wharf Road (circa 1900), a poster and picture of the Kings Norton Brickworks; Hurst Mill, once a dominant building on Camp Lane; the livestock market that used to take place in the area now occupied by the adjacent car park; The Green in the 1900s; and pictures and

► ONE OF THE TAPESTRIES SHOWING KINGS NORTON IN THE 19TH CENTURY



► THE PANEL WHICH EXPLAINS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN KINGS NORTON AND THE REVD WILBERT AWDRY,, CREATOR OF "THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE".



stories about major local industries such as the Kings Norton Metal Company and Nettlefolds.

As for Kings Norton people, there's also a feature on another local man, Allan Nunn May, a notorious post Second World war spy, born locally, who was accused of selling secrets to the Russians. Next to him is the only aspect of this wonderful series of historical Kings Norton stories on which I disagree with the Wetherspoons researchers; a display about former Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. This display is based on the premise that Mr Chamberlain and his wife lived in Kings Norton "for several years". This is a claim made in a number

of publications; but my own research indicated that it's not true. They never lived here.

Even if you're not a frequenter of public houses, a visit to *The Navigation*, perhaps for a cup of coffee or tea or something to eat, is an entertaining and fulfilling experience. I have no doubt than any reader of this magazine will emerge feeling even prouder of our heritage.

But be careful in your timing. Wetherspoon's bold investment has been fully justified. The place is remarkably popular! In my experience, it became very crowded around lunchtime and from 4.00 pm onwards, so the best times for a quiet visit are in the morning (the pub is open from 8.00 am for breakfast) until noon, and then mid-afternoon. There is plenty of free parking in less crowded periods, though you must remember to register your car as you enter the building.

What's This?

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



The Navigation



'The Governor' approaching West Hill Tunnel on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, 1950's

THE HUNGRY GARDENER

The Delights of Children's Gardening



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

At the beginning of this month it's the school half term, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations and National Children's Gardening Week. All three really important events to our family.

If you have been engaged, or rather not engaged in "No Mow May" and have been counting all the wonderful wild flowers, bugs and pollinators in your garden you will have already been enjoying outside space. The younger ones may have got hooked on discovering things in the garden, park or riverside so this may be the perfect time to get them hooked on putting things in the soil too, whether that soil be in window planters, gardens or whatever space you have.

If you need ideas to help your kids get growing, here are a

few. This is just a hint to get them inspired.

Sow vegetable seeds. June is the perfect time to sow seeds for autumn and winter vegetables like mustards, winter radish, rocket, coriander, Savoy cabbage, romanesco cauliflower (and the other cauliflowers too), spring cabbage, carrots, beetroot, turnips, kohlrabi. This is not an exhaustive list as anything can be sown now providing there is enough time before winter for the fruit or vegetable to develop.

Sow wild flowers. If you've got some bare earth, you could sow some wild flowers. Pennard Plants do a wild flower mix for clay soil and there are many more suppliers. Just make sure they are open, pollinated varieties not F1 so they can self seed for next year.

Plant plug plants. If you left it too late to sow the seeds, there's plenty of time to plant some plug plants instead. Rocket Gardens offer a variety of edible plants and I've provided a list of peat-free nurseries to the right of this article. I often buy perennials, herbs and fruit as plants. There's a whole host of varieties available and you can even start off a full edible garden this way.

Go on a garden bug hunt. Where do they think the bugs will make their homes in the garden? If it's a warm day, there might be an ants' nest in the sand pit!

Get a forage book from the library and see how many free edibles are growing in your back garden or nearby nature reserve.

Make a snug home for bugs. There are loads of ideas. Even a pile of branches will make a nice habitat for bugs. You could even put some twigs in bundles into toilet rolls. Put an old plant pot on its side, fill it with moss or dried leaves. Make up a pile of stones, as long as there are little holes, minibeasts will make a home in them.

If you are anything like us, you will have seedlings to plant. June is the first month in which we will plant out the tender

plants like pumpkins, tomatoes, sunflowers and runner beans to name a few. You may be thinking that you've tried to get your children interested but it's the last thing they want to do. Sometimes Charles just plays in the soil next to me with a Paw Patrol digger or his Jurassic Park toys. When I'm not around, he wows people with his seed-sowing knowledge; so you'd be surprised what they learn and what they will remember as they grow up. Show them what you are doing and be happy if all they want to do is to play in the garden.

When I was a child, I would chat away next to my father who would be sowing vegetable seeds or preparing the ground. I didn't really pay too much attention to what he was actually doing. I did however enjoy eating the peas straight from the pod, sitting in the strawberry patch and relieving all the plants of their juicy fruit. Rarely could my mother find chives to cook with because every time I walked past the herb bed, I snatched a handful of chives as a snack. As an adult, I'm completely hooked on growing things. I absorbed so much knowledge just by chatting away next to my father and grazing in the veg patch. It built memories that I still enjoy today.



Rocket Gardens

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



Peat-Free Nurseries

www.rocketgardens.co.uk
dogwooddays.net/category/peat-free-nurseries-list/

Book Group, Anyone?



CHRISTINE ADAMS IS A RETIRED PHYSIO AND HEALTH SERVICE MANAGER IN MENTAL HEALTH

Some of you may have been members of a book group before and some probably wonder what exactly happens when you go to one.

I first joined a book group about 20 years ago when I was attending Cotteridge Church. I was a slow reader and quite fixated on crime novels. If I remember rightly, Patricia Cornwell featured very heavily. She was famous for the Scarpetta novels about the gruesome role of a pathologist.

When the book group started, I was working in the community. I used to listen to tapes of books as I drove around in the car and just happened to be listening to the book that the book group were due to discuss. Thanks to this tenuous start, I was hooked on books and authors I knew nothing about and discovered a whole new world. I'm ashamed to say that, even at school, I wasn't a great reader and when we were given Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities" to study for O Level, I went to see the film at the cinema and read the York notes. I think you may have to be of a certain age to appreciate that!

Anyway, when the minister moved on from the Cotteridge Church, I volunteered with another lady to carry on with the group and I am still doing it 15 years later. I am very keen to start a similar group at St Nicolas' to encourage people to read different sorts of literature in such a way that they get excited about reading. My husband John says that he can always tell when I am enjoying a book because I carry it around the house with me.

I realise that some people don't have a lot of spare time, but they may still gain a lot from meeting up with other book lovers and discussing what they have read. I'm suggesting that anyone interested lets me know via Judy in the Parish Office. I will contact you by email or phone and arrange a first meeting where we each bring a book to talk about. It can be your favourite book as a child, a recent Booker prize winner, a classic that you enjoyed, or a book you started but couldn't get on with for all sorts of reasons.

Contrary to popular misconceptions this is not a female-only book group. It's open to everyone and all to ages. I really hope we can get it going this time and I look forward to meeting up with you. The venue will depend on how many are interested but may initially be at my house.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Funerals April 2022

1st Apr	Doreen Bosco	93	In.CY
4th Apr	Richard Machin	76	Cr.RD
4th Apr	David George Alfred Grainger	85	In.CY
5th April	Nicolas Yoseft Cooper	58	In.CY
6th April	Isabella-Grace Hudson	37 wks	SN.Bu.KN
7th Apr	Ollie Ritchie Baillie	11	SN.Bu.KN
8th Apr	Deborah Lorraine Murphy	66	SN.Cr.LH
12th Apr	Sonia Mary Keely	60	SN.Cr.LH
19th Apr	Lionel Anthony Buchanan	58	SN.Bu.KN
19th Apr	Iris Ethel Hobbis	92	SN.Bu.CY
20th Apr	Lionel Francis Craddock	91	SN.Bu.CY
21st Apr	Thomas John Brown	96	Cr.LH
26th Apr	Doreen May Jones	90	SN.Bu.WY
27th Apr	Hazel Patricia (Pat) Pickering	83	SN.Cr.LH
29th Apr	James William Tilley	68	Cr.LH

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

Cemeteries & Crematoria

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

The Potentate of Time

*Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne,
Hark, how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own!
Awake my soul and sing of Him who died for thee,
and hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.*



**THELMA MITCHELL IS
LEAD CHAPLAIN AT
BOURNVILLE COLLEGE**

We celebrated Ascension Day this year on Thursday 26th May. When I was a child, there was a service in the local church of my Church of England primary school at 9.00 am, one which we were all expected to attend. We then had the rest of the day off. For some reason, my mother was never overly-excited about having my brother and me at home on a Thursday, her cleaning day.

Ascension Day is always celebrated 40 days after Easter Sunday and nine days before Pentecost. It marks the departure of Jesus into heaven after the Resurrection. Luke's gospel (ch.24 v.50) records this event taking place in front of his disciples in the village of Bethany, near Jerusalem. "While Jesus blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried into heaven."

The ancient custom of Ascension Day may have been marked as early as 68 AD. By the fifth century, St. Augustine refers to it as being of "Apostolic origin", which implies a very early introduction of this Christian festival into the liturgical calendar. There are representations of Ascension Day in art dating from the fourth century. The Easter candle, lit in churches on Easter Sunday, is extinguished on this day. For Roman Catholics, it is a Holy Day of Obligation on which attendance at mass is compulsory.

There are many fine hymns associated with this special day. At my primary school, there was a full assembly on Fridays which included some extended hymn singing. I just loved

"Crown Him with Many Crowns" and still do. It was written by Matthew Bridges in 1851.

Bridges was a British-Canadian author, an Oxford graduate and an Anglican. He was later influenced by the life and works of John Henry Newman, an Anglican priest and theologian, who had notably crossed the floor to Rome. Newman ultimately became a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic church. He died in Edgbaston in 1890 and was buried at the Birmingham Oratory. Bridges was persuaded by Newman's transition and converted to Roman Catholicism himself in 1848. He emigrated to Canada soon afterwards, where he died in Quebec at the age of 94. He wrote other hymns, including the less well-known "My, God, accept my heart today and make it always Thine."

I especially enjoyed the last verse of "Crown Him with Many Crowns".

"Crown him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time, Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime..."

The words roll deliciously off the tongue with such power, although I didn't understand what they meant back then. "Potentate" is being used positively here, describing God as having all dominance and authority over time itself.

Many traditions have sprung up associated with Ascension Day over the years. An old English saying predicts that if it is sunny on Ascension Day, it will be a warm summer; but if it rains it will be a poor harvest and the livestock will suffer from disease.

Customs around the world include one observed in Colombia, where processions with torches and banners, fruit and vegetables are taken to the church to be blessed. In Germany, a custom in rural areas dating back to 18th century sees prizes awarded to fathers after Ascension Day parades. In Sweden, people go to the woods at dawn to hear the birds as the sun rises. It is a good omen if a cuckoo is heard.

There used to be a chapel of the Ascension at a certain shrine in England (I won't name it, as the ceiling has gone now) where the Ascension was represented by two pink plaster

Potentate has been wielding its power in English since the 15th century. It comes from the Late Latin *potentatus*, which in turn was formed from the Latin *potent-*, meaning "powerful." Other descendants of *potent-* in English include *potent* itself, *impotent*, and *omnipotent*, as well as the archaic *armipotent* and very rare *bellipotent* (meaning, respectively, "mighty in battle" and "mighty in war"). Even *power* and *powerful* can be traced back to *potent-*.

feet stuck into the blue plaster ceiling. It would give rise to some less-than-respectful comments!

In Oxford, the ceremony of the Beating of the Bounds on Ascension Day was recorded as far back as the reign of King Alfred the Great in the ninth century. The practice continues to this day in Oxford. It also occurs in other parts of England and Wales and in New England in the USA. A group of young children, accompanied by teachers, priests, parents and students, emerge from church at 11.00 am clutching long wooden sticks. The group processes through shops and colleges to different points in the city to perform the marking of the boundaries of the parishes, a necessity before the ready availability of accurate maps. The parish of the local Anglican church is the area for which that church has responsibility. The mark of the cross is drawn at different points in chalk, with the initials of the church and the year. The children, and often the students, take the wooden canes and hit the marker – and sometimes each other - shouting "Mark! Mark! Mark!" followed by the singing of a hymn. Refreshments are served along the route by some of the colleges and a jolly time is had by all.

"Crown Him the Lord of Peace, whose power a sceptre sways, from pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise."

The Potentate of time, the Lord of Peace. We need to hang on to this image of God in control right now, without a doubt. The conflict in Ukraine is a war that no-one will win. The newly-ordained Archbishop of

Wales, the Most Reverend Andrew John, said at his enthronement, "The bloodshed in Ukraine, sanctioned alarmingly by a part of the church, has reminded us that it is less easy to keep the peace than to start a war. Contending for the truth is costly. Whenever justice is compromised, we become complicit in collaborating with evil." He has called on the Russian Orthodox Church to condemn the invasion of Ukraine. In his sermon he said, "The Christian approach to conflict is different. When we resist evil and injustice, as we must, we also need something which takes us beyond missiles, beyond conflict to a place where there can be reconciliation and a restoration of peace, the power to do things differently."

We are contending with an earthly potentate. Putin is a president who is out of control, unpredictable, bellicose and aggressively belligerent. Rumours fly around that he is seriously unwell and unhinged, which is making him very dangerous. He uses religious language in his rhetoric and enjoys the support of the head of the Moscow Patriarchate, the branch of the Russian Orthodox Church loyal to Moscow, to describe the unbelievable horrors of his invasion of Ukraine as a holy war, a defence of the Russian realm and way of life. By suppressing all opposition, controlling the propaganda, permitting only supportive state media and eliminating anyone who challenges him, of whatever rank, he controls the narrative in Russia. The Russian people live largely in ignorance of the situation in Ukraine. Frankly, he must be stopped.



PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said recently, "We must never normalise the horrors of war, wherever they are visited on people. Let us keep praying, keep giving, keep reaching out to those in need, keep being those who long and work for God's vision of the world based on justice and peace."

I close with the Methodist prayer for Ascension Day.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ, ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill us with all things; mercifully give us faith to perceive that according to His promise He abideth with his church on earth, even unto the end of the world; through the same thy same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"All hail, Redeemer, hail, for Thou hast died for me, thy praise shall never, never fail, throughout eternity."

Dinner Parties

During the maiden voyage of the *S.S. Canberra* in 1961 there were drinks parties at each port we visited in Australia. The functions in Fremantle and Melbourne had been a success and we were berthed in Sydney for nearly four days. "Not another one!" we Public Room Stewards groaned, when the next party was announced. The latest gathering for travel agents and dignitaries was to take the form of pre-lunch drinks and a meal in the restaurant. My chums and I thought it not too bad as we would get a half day off and so we had been talking of going for a swim at Bondi Beach that day.

There were more than a hundred guests in the First Class passenger lounge. Drinks were served and canapés offered. Eventually, lunch was announced and people started to approach the Dining Room below stairs. The Chief Steward, Max Reid, was talking to two guests and, unusually for him, decided he wanted a drink. So he called out "McDonald, some service, please!"



Eddie's back, and not everyone is behaving themselves on board

The steward, known to us by the nickname Flora, approached. Max said, "I want a very a very small whisky and plenty of water." There were a few drinks on Flora's tray and a small, silver water jug. So the Chief Steward picked up a whisky and reached for the jug. At this point, Flora became flustered and said that he would get some fresh water for the jug. "Why? There's plenty of water here!" said Max. Picking up the water jug, he filled his glass to the top, at which point Flora fled!

As the party was almost over, my three chums and I were in the service pantry chatting away about our planned beach trip. Suddenly, Flora burst through the door in a complete panic. Why? Because what the Chief Steward did not know was that we all had a habit of obtaining drinks from the bar at those events and of pouring them into our water jugs for our own little party later!

Suddenly, we heard shouting and coughing coming from the lounge. The Chief Steward had topped up his whisky with neat gin from poor Flora's jug. Of course, we were in hysterics. We decided to retreat as we were needed to serve wines at the luncheon. Meanwhile, Flora was hauled over the coals and threatened with demotion to work in the galley, washing pans! Luckily for him, poor lad, this never happened.

In the past, I have related quite a few tales from my days on the *Canberra*. However, I now want to move on to the time when I was a Petty Officer and Cook on P&O's container ships.

After a pleasant leave spent at home, I joined the *M.V. Encounter Bay*, which was moored at Tilbury Docks in Essex. After a long journey from Birmingham, I found myself, with the Second Cook, preparing the evening meals. I was told that we had some

guests on board for dinner and that we would be feeding a total of 55 people that evening. It was obvious that there was no Galley Boy working that afternoon. Nevertheless, we completed the hatch service for the crew meal at 5.00 pm and then started on the dinner for the officers at 6.00 pm.

When I got the chance, I phoned Chris the Catering Officer and asked "Where is my Galley Boy?". "He's just joined us," he said, "and it's his first time at sea." He had been signed on and shown to his cabin, but where was he? A search was made and he was eventually found in the officers' dining room having dinner with the new deck cadets. He even looked the part, dressed in a blazer, shirt and tie.

Chris whisked him away and ushered him into the galley, where I pointed to the pile of pots and pans in the sinks and said "This is what you do next." He looked crestfallen! "Go and put on a pair of jeans and a t-shirt," I said "and then get scrubbing!" Needless to say, after that he became the butt of much seafarers' humour; but he also became quite a good Galley Boy, learning some cookery and even becoming proficient at preparing vegetables, once my stock of elastoplasts had run low.



Canberra Video



Harry L Marks



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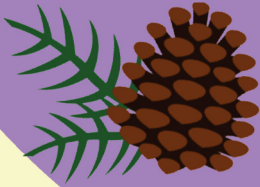
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