

KINGS NORTON

An aerial photograph of Kings Norton church and its surroundings. The church is a large, historic stone building with a prominent, tall, spire. It is surrounded by a green lawn with several gravestones. In the background, there are residential houses with red roofs and a parking lot with several cars. The overall scene is lush and green, suggesting a summer setting.

Parish Magazine

Faith & Power

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Sir Richard & Dame Anne Grevis

The story behind St Nicolas' most impressive tomb

Penny for the Guy

Where Bonfire Night traditions come from



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The Editor would like to thank local drone photographer Steven Hewlett for his permission to use the photograph on the front cover.

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Welcome

EDITORIAL

As I sit down to write this, Liz Truss has just resigned as Prime Minister. Though we try not to wander into the minefield of politics in the Parish Magazine, today's events add weight and urgency to Larry Wright's assertion on p.6 that our country urgently needs "a renewed covenant between people, their politicians and their policies which aspires to the highest good for the greatest number".

English political turmoil is nothing new, of course. On p.18, Thelma reminds us that the roots of one of our best-loved autumn traditions, "Guy Fawkes Night", lie in a violent disagreement in 1605 between political and religious factions. On p.14, Professor Jean Seaton, the official historian of the BBC, explains how the "Beeb" was formed 100 years ago as a reaction to the despair and frustration engendered by the First World War. The fact that the world's best known broadcaster was "forged in the fire of political conflict" reminds us that, in the long term, crises can be creative. Chaos, such as that we are witnessing in Iran (p.7) or Ukraine, can be a crucible in which new possibilities are forged.

Sir Richard Grevis and his wife Anne were no strangers to turmoil. Contemporaries of Shakespeare, they would have known the plague of 1603, the Gunpowder Plot and the troubled reign of King James I. Anne lived long enough to see the start of the English Civil War. Their tomb is one of St Nicolas' Church's most remarkable monuments. This month, Michael Kennedy tells their story with the help of the recently-discovered script of a BBC radio play from the 1930s (p.24).



Everything connects.

David Ash

Faith & Power

Larry Wright argues for a new covenant between the people and their politicians

As someone who has studied political theories and the interaction between faith and politics, I try to keep an intelligent interest in politics and current affairs while preferring to stay detached from the practice of party politics. Politics is about the exercise of power. In a healthy democracy, the people lend power to their politicians for a period through the electoral system. It is a social contract between the governed and their government and, at best, ensures limits on the use or abuse of power by those in power.

While I am not involved in party politics, I am interested in politicians as people. Most of those I've met have been interesting, well informed, convinced of their calling, usually good listeners and able to ask searching questions. What motivates them? What keeps them going? What

beliefs and values underpin their lives?

From a Christian perspective it's possible to gauge the role faith plays among our politicians because those who are committed Christians declare it and become part of the Christians in Parliament group. Additionally, each of the three main political parties has an affiliated Christian organisation. The Conservative Party has The Conservative Christian Fellowship (CCF), The Labour Party has Christians on the Left (CoL) and the Liberal Democrats have The Liberal Democrat Christian Forum (LDCF). Research shows no such affiliated groups within the SNP or The Green Party. The main Northern Ireland parties, the DUP and Sinn Féin are, by history and character, Protestant and Roman Catholic.

Whatever the way in which politicians choose to speak about their role in society, they are people with power. If they achieve high office, their power increases accordingly and, as



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



PHOTO BY LUKE STACKPOOL

we know from history, power corrupts. The Bible has much to say about the exercise of power. It frequently advises that, if powerful people do not follow God's will but their own selfish interests, their future is at risk and the people they govern suffer the consequences.

St Paul, in his letter to the first Christians in Rome (Romans

13:1-7), urges them to respect all who are in government, obey the laws, avoid being rebellious, pay their taxes and show respect to all who deserve it. In the letter to Timothy, which may have been written by Paul or by one of his associates, the Christians under Timothy's care are given this injunction:

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all people; for rulers, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all people to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

The advice to the Roman church has been regarded as being too compliant to authority for the sake of peaceful lives. It's quite clear that Paul himself challenged those with religious and political power on many occasions for the sake of the Gospel. Paul did have faith in the rule of law practised in the empire to provide a measure of justice. It did indeed save him at times from certain death because he claimed his right, as a Roman citizen, to appeal to the higher courts when accused of sedition. Sadly, it was while in Rome awaiting trial that he was killed, probably during an anti-Christian purge.

The advice in 1 Timothy begins with a straightforward plea to pray for all rulers, touches on the benefits of the peaceable life enjoyed by those who do, and then links this behaviour to God's approval and a pathway to salvation for all,

which presumably includes those who rule as well as the ruled.

How do we apply these Biblical insights to our current political powers? At a recent meeting of Christian charities, politicians and church representatives, I made the following observations.

Running through the Old and New Testament is the concept of Covenant. It's a godly (or God-inspired) agreement which alters relationships at the deepest possible levels and inaugurates a new worldview and mindset.

We need a renewed covenant between people, their politicians and their policies which aspires to the highest good for the greatest number. We need to emphasise the need for humility and unselfishness (unpopular though this may be) in our lifestyle, our public discourse and our attitude towards those we disagree with. Finally, we need to be people of, and advocates for, a resilient Christian hope.

Ultimately, Christians believe that real power comes from God. Worldly power, though alluring, financially rewarding and status enhancing, is nothing compared to knowing and living out of the love of God in our lives.

Hair



PHOTO BY GODISABLE JACOB

I want to talk about hair. We all have it or have had it. It may be long or short, straight or curly. We may be a little thin on top or have a thick mop. We may cut it, style it, dye it or just run a comb through it now and then.

Those of you who know me will know that I have purple hair of differing shades depending on how long it has been since I last dyed it. No, its not natural. Yes, I have been asked if it is real! Over the years I have been various colours from white-blonde as a child, through natural brown to green, red, pink and purple. My hair has been various lengths and styles from permed curls to long and straight. It was even very short when I decided to cut my own hair the day before a family wedding. I was four and my mother was not impressed. A large straw hat was purchased to hide the damage.

Not everyone will decide to have purple hair and that's fine. Purple is my choice. Some women will choose to cover their hair. That is their choice. I respect that and defend their right to choose to do so. But other women are not so fortunate. In some countries, sadly,

women do not have the freedom to wear their hair as they wish. In Iran today, women are forced to cover their hair and to cover it “correctly”. This is not a choice. It became an international issue when 22-year-old Mahsa Amini died after being arrested by the Iranian morality police for allegedly wearing her hijab improperly. This could be anything from a strand of hair showing to the hijab not being tight enough on the head.

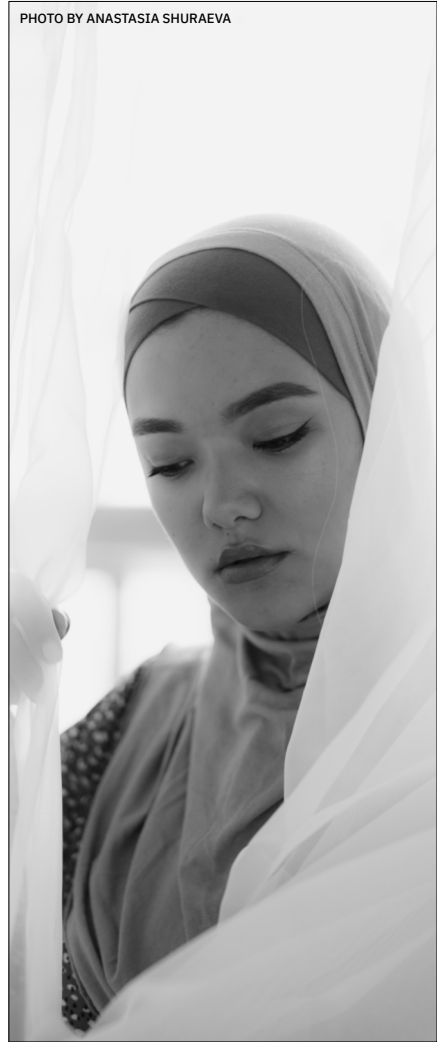
Since her death, there have followed four weeks of protests across Iran during which women have removed their hijabs in public and have cut their hair in open defiance. These protests have been met with violence. People have been imprisoned, beaten and shot. It is estimated that at least 200 have been killed. The real figure is probably higher.

Here in the UK, our Iranian friends are distressed at the situation and by the stories coming from Iran. They fear for their families and friends. The government has shut down the internet so getting information and making contact with families is incredibly difficult.

I ask you all to stand with the people of Iran and to do all that we can to support those who are asking for the basic human right of freedom of choice. Please pray for them. Please follow the stories on the news, share them with your friends and family. Sign the petitions, write to your MP, talk to our Iranian friends about what is happening and about their families. Be grateful that you are fortunate to be able to choose how to style your hair. I will continue to be purple. I will continue to stand with the people of Iran.

Woman. Life. Freedom.

PHOTO BY ANASTASIA SHURAEVA



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

Adam the Gardener ...and recycling

I do hope you came through the drought without too much damage to your plants. I lost half of the bush roses I planted last autumn and some bedding plants gave up the ghost despite efforts to keep them going with the watering can. Pot marigolds planted out this year after a good start faded back terribly and now after some rain have bounced back and are blooming cheerfully. I have, in the past, been able to keep them flowering through the winter ready to show perennial flowering in the spring but you will need a mild winter.

It would be rather easy to sit back in November and think "That's it until Spring"; but there are jobs to be done in the garden and I could not do better than to advise consulting the website of the Royal Horticultural Society at rhs.org.uk. Their "Gardening in November" is well worth a read, as is the "What to do in the garden in November" page at thompson-morgan.com. I know that this advice assumes ownership of a computer but public libraries have them and a modest laptop with a broadband connection, unlike most things, is not as expensive as it used to be.

Has your local recycling provision changed recently? Ours has and here in Kenilworth we now have two wheelie bins, one for real rubbish and the other for anything recyclable. There is available a green bin which is emptied regularly on payment of an annual fee, as happens in Birmingham. I have taken a slightly different approach by buying a Dalek-like plastic composting bin from the local authority at a very modest price and I do know that vegetable waste rots down to give a good soil improver.

Keep a small lidded bin under the sink for kitchen vegetable waste and feed it to the Dalek at intervals (no egg shells or bones please, they attract rats). Subscribers to The Church Times have the advantage of a monthly bin liner in the shape of the plastic covering which is now fully compostable. Hooray! Some of the articles therein can be rather good as well. It's quite good fun to scan the appointments section to see what the current record for the number of parishes the new incumbent will be responsible for has reached.



HOLLY

You could be forgiven for thinking that November is a good month for sitting by the fire and reading seed catalogues or the latest book on gardening by one of those people you see on the telly with a potful of quality compost and a splendid shrub which probably cost a king's ransom.

November is, in fact, the month for looking ahead and consulting the long-range weather forecast. Sadly this will not be much more enlightening. November will be when the La Niña phenomenon will be at its height and for the third year running! Usually, this Pacific ocean current flips back to El Niño every two years but a three-year persistence is a rare

event indeed. What difference will this make to this island of ours? We don't know. It may mean a colder Winter but it might not. Winds could be stronger but on the other hand gentle breezes could take over. Long-range forecasting is a very unreliable. Only the most general predictions can be made. Here is my forecast for winter 2022-2023. The weather will be colder, wetter and windier than autumn.

A holly hedge to the north-east is a very good idea. The sheltering effect is better than any fence and the birds will love you for the berries and a superb nesting site. Any kestrel will think twice before diving in to the prickly twigs. There are several gardens nearby where I can rely on hearing

sparrows in the holly and, in the summer, the small Holly Blue butterfly will flutter by. I do notice that the most popular hedges are not over-tidy. Get your plants from a specialist hedging nursery. The cultivars will be suited to the hedging life and the quantity prices will be verging on the reasonable. Look out next month for some info on the Holly as a tree, as it will be our Tree of the Month.

Get any new plants planted before the frosts harden the ground and plant them a little deeper than is often recommended. Hardy fuchsias will particularly benefit from deep planting as a whiff of frost will kill top growth. Cut this back and in the late spring new growth will shoot through to flower in the late summer. You can cut back Buddleias in the autumn too and you will be staggered by the long wand-like stems growing up to be covered by purple flowers providing energy to the bees and butterflies. Incidentally, this year I have seen plenty of cabbage whites about but very few of the coloured varieties. I wonder why.



Now is the time to lift Begonia tubers and Gladioli corms. Allow them a couple of days to dry out and store them in a cool, frost-free place wrapped loosely in newspaper. Dahlia tubers can be treated in the same way or be left in the ground, perhaps with a layer of leaf litter to ward off any frosts.



Lastly, if you have a greenhouse or polytunnel now is the time to have a good clean-out and tidy-up. Rubbish makes a very good place for pests to hide over the winter.

More winter tips next month. In the meantime, wrap up well and embrace the winter season!



Parish Book Group



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

We started off well with "The Dictionary of Lost Words" and "West with Giraffes" Both books stimulated interesting discussions. As well as our six regular members we now have an additional two ladies who read the books and send in their comments before the meeting.

I was having difficulty choosing the next book so asked the group to decide. Big mistake. Three opted for one and three for the other, but I should have expected that. As a compromise, at our next meeting in November we will each bring a book that we have really enjoyed and be prepared to talk about it. I am sure that will be an interesting assortment if I can only decide which book I will take.

At the following meeting at the end of November, members will have the option to read one or both of the following books.

"The Beekeeper's Promise" by Fiona Valpy. Set in modern-day and in 1938 France, it charts, on the one hand, the life of a brave girl, Eliane, who keeps bees and joins the French Resistance and, on the other, Abi in present-day France, who is trying to unravel Eliane's story.

The alternative book is "The Island of Missing Trees" by Elif Shafak. It is set in Cyprus in 1974 when two teenagers meet. One is Greek and Christian, the other Turkish and Muslim. The fig tree in the centre of the local tavern bears witness to their meetings but then war breaks out.

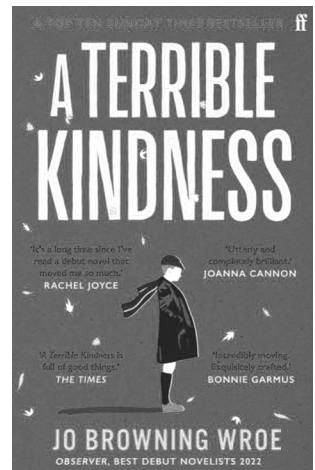
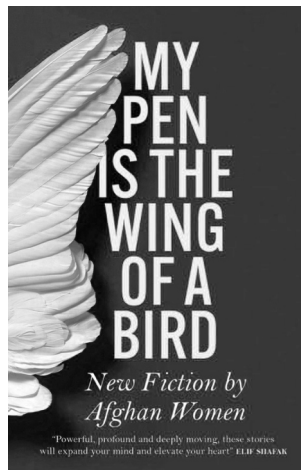
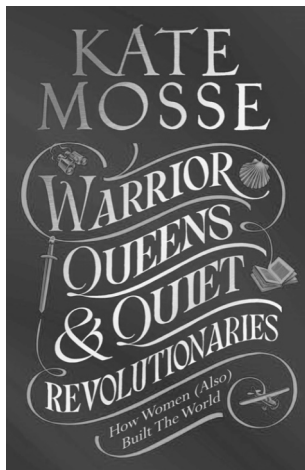
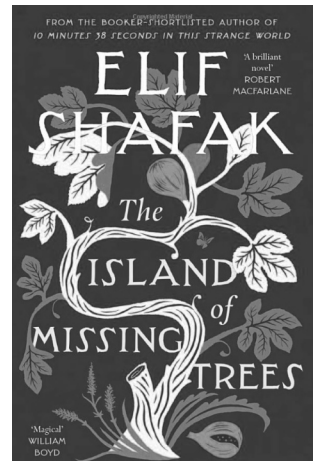
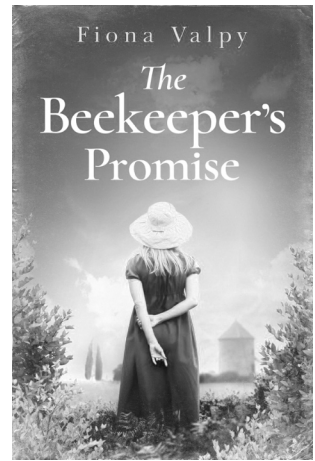
It is difficult to choose books when there are so many to choose from and so many brilliant new writers.

During the weekend of 7th-9th of October, I spent time at the Birmingham Literature Festival at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. There were so many renowned and new authors to listen to, but in greater comfort and probably for less money than at the big book festivals.

John and I went to hear Adrian Chiles talk about being a “Good Drinker”. Kathryn Mannix, a palliative care consultant, discussed "The Words we Cannot Say, How to Mourn and Listen", far more uplifting than it sounds. Jo Browning Wroe’s "A Terrible Kindness" was a new take on the Aberfan Disaster; and I also purchased "My Pen is the Wing of a Bird", stories from Afghan Women. I went with a friend to listen to Kate Mosse talking about "Warrior Queens and Quiet Revolutionaries" but I’m waiting for that to come out in paperback.

I apologise for not publicising this event earlier but promise to do better next year!

If you want to know any more about the book group, please talk to me on a Sunday or send a message via the Parish Office



The BBC

At 100

The BBC as it is known in Britain, as a breathing part of our political and social life, the soundtrack to our private lives, our thinking as citizens and our voice to the world, was born out of conflict.

It was a reaction to the nihilistic slaughter of the first world war, created by a tiny band of young visionaries in 1922, who rejected the grinding propaganda of the war. Theirs was a vision for a new public space, using the technological boundlessness of broadcasting – that was in itself ignorant of hierarchies and conventional barriers – for good purposes.

One of those pioneers, George Barnes, defined a quality that



JEAN IS PROFESSOR OF MEDIA HISTORY AT THE UNIV. OF WESTMINSTER AND THE OFFICIAL HISTORIAN OF THE BBC

would become the essence of the BBC – it would be an instrument to "radiate amusement and instruction". John Reith, the first director and later first director general of the corporation, wanted it to be "the expression of a new and better relationship between man and man". Equal access to all for information would enable individuals to "be in a position to make up their own minds on many matters of vital moment".

It was to make everyone's lives richer, their choices more intelligent, and to make society function more equally and indeed efficiently. In doing so it would help people think of the world as coherent whole, not

"merely atomised particles". The pioneers believed in the capacity of ideas to transform lives and societies.

But the corporation as an institution, a guardian of proprieties, was also forged in the fire of political conflict – the shattering divisiveness, four years after its founding, of the general strike. While 11,000,000 miners fought against a decrease in their pay, the government sought to break the strike and Winston Churchill campaigned to take over the BBC for government influence to crush the miners.

A mirror to its audiences: over the years, the BBC has attracted

criticism from all sides of politics.

It was at this most precarious moment that the BBC emerged as a "public service". The BBC told a divided nation what was happening during an acute crisis. And, while later criticised for being too much on the side of the government, it did manage to put representatives of both sides of the case on air.

Most importantly, people came to trust it to tell them as accurately as it could what was happening and, in that sense, to be completely on their side. Impartiality – never perfect and always improvable – was embedded in the project. The BBC would tether everyone to



reality (as well as daftness and beauty). The BBC had gone on an expedition whose outcome was unknown to try and hold power to account and be on the side of the public.

The history of the BBC is littered with explosive conflicts with the government of the day. It is a sorry (yet glorious) tale of attacks on the BBC for bias, unfairness and being a pest.

At the beginning of the second world war, BBC mandarins negotiated an inevitably close relationship with the government, but fought hard to maintain editorial independence within an overall sense of national effort. The BBC made the best of Britain's shattering defeats of 1940-42 – but never tried to deny them.

After the war, the relationship saw many tests. Famously, during the 1956 Suez invasion the BBC reported the failure of the UK and French expedition and was punished by an irate government with a licence fee cut.

There was fury over the BBC's reporting of the Iranian revolution in 1979 and more than 30 years of anguished debate between the government and the BBC over Northern Ireland that culminated in direct censorship, outlawing the direct broadcasting of the voices of "terrorists".

Governments struggled with something close to civil war in Northern Ireland as it escalated, and the BBC battled locally, nationally and

internationally to describe the origins and impetus of the conflict and explain what was happening into a divided community.

Coverage of apartheid in South Africa and the Falklands War further placed the BBC in the government's firing line. During the Iraq war, BBC claims that Tony Blair's government had deliberately used misinformation to exaggerate the case for conflict (brought down a director general and chairman) after the allegations were rejected by a judicial inquiry. A few years later, BBC reporter David Loyn was condemned as a "traitor" in parliament because he was embedded with the Taliban.

But the BBC handled the threats in a way that kept its independence, assessing and evaluating them but not mostly being cowed. "Without fear or favour" is a dangerous place in the contemporary world – but it keeps us safe.

Even now, 91% of UK adults see or hear something on the BBC every week. And contrary to what many believe, 80% of people under 35 young people still consume BBC content. Globally, the BBC attracts 468 million people per week and is the most trusted provider of news by some distance.

As Britain faces a cost of living crisis and a wildly unpopular government, the case for a universal BBC, holding power to account as it has done for so long, and informing while amusing and distracting, has never been stronger. In an age of deliberate misinformation and malcontent, you



might expect government to want a trusted, reliable institution such as the BBC to anchor people in reality. However, the political attacks have only intensified in recent years.

Even Margaret Thatcher, who had fierce arguments with the BBC, understood its value at home while projecting soft power to the world. Yet the current ruling Conservative party has slashed the BBC's funds by 30% over the past 10 years with a licence fee settlement agreed before inflation kicked in. These politicians have arguably put the future of the corporation in danger, cheered on by a print media that has set itself in direct competition with a cult-like ideological fervour.

Alarming, there appear to be people in the heart of government who really do not believe that they should not be asked difficult questions. Boris Johnson's government for a while tried the trick often favoured by authoritarians of avoiding scrutiny and refusing to appear on BBC programmes.

Johnson even reneged on a promise to join other party leaders in being interviewed by Andrew Neill in the run-up to the 2019 election. More recently, business secretary Jacob Rees-Mogg suggested that his interviewer's line of questioning broke the BBC's impartiality rules.

The British public trusts broadcast news more than other news media, because the BBC and other public service broadcasters make programmes about Britain – imbued with British mores and humour. It also makes programmes that become worldwide successes. The UK is the world's second-biggest exporter of TV content, thanks mainly to the BBC.

The government should consider that focusing its energy on endangering the corporation risks betraying the trust that the British public – and so many people around the world – vest in their public broadcaster. A century on, those values that drove the corporation's founders still resonate.

Happy Birthday BBC.

Penny for the Guy



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

*Remember, remember the 5th of November
Gunpowder, treason and plot.*

*I see no reason why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.*

These are the opening lines of a nursery rhyme written in Latin as "In Quintem Novembris" by John Milton in 1626 at Cambridge University.

"Penny for the guy, missus, penny for the guy." This is an abiding image from my childhood, of grubby kids, usually boys, chanting for pennies, though sometimes dragging a small girl in tow to melt the hearts of the passers-by. There'd be a jumper stuffed with hay and dressed in old, torn trousers, a bit of stuffed sacking for a head to represent the "guy". This would be sitting in the battered remains of an ancient pram or push chair. The children probably had little idea of the historic events behind Bonfire Night. It was a good way of raising a few pence to buy some bangers to fling around!

At our house after school on the 31st October, my parents would let my brother and me invite a couple of friends round for duck apple and bob apple and games of Oranges and Lemons (said the bells of St. Clements), with jam sandwiches and homemade toffee apples to eat and to rot your teeth. (I make no claim for them as health food treats!) I don't remember celebrating the day particularly as Hallowe'en. There was no "trick or treat" nonsense, just some fun on a dark autumn evening. Of course, we had no idea of the origins of these games.

The origins of bob apple and duck apple seem to go way back to Roman times. The Roman army often blended their customs and celebrations with those of the native Celtic

festivals and traditions. For apple ducking or bobbing, small apples were thrown into a tub of water on the floor. The participants then tried to catch one with their teeth. The use of the arms was banned and they were sometimes tied behind the back to prevent cheating. A variation consisted of apples tied on strings just out of reach. The contestants had to jump to catch one with their teeth. Again, no arms or hands allowed. An added jeopardy might be to spin the apples before they started. The winner was the one who ate their entire apple first.

From the time of the Romans and Celts, bob apple seems to have been aimed at unmarried young women. The first one to take a bite from the stringed or floating apple would be the next one to marry. The apple was thought of as a symbol of fertility and abundance. A young woman who placed the apple which she had "bobbed" under her pillow was said to dream of her future sweetheart. Nowadays, she'd just check out a relevant website.

I have read other accounts relating to some events of the Reformation, in which the bob apples have burning candles in them to represent the burning of so-called heretics. The words and actions of the song "Oranges and Lemons" makes an obvious reference to public executions. None of this seemed to trouble us as we played gleefully as children.

And so into early November, which always seemed to be damp, cold and very foggy, the air full of soot which

you could taste, before the Clean Air Act of 1956 was implemented. This Act of Parliament regulated industrial premises and furnaces; another in 1968 was applied to domestic premises as well. They have been updated from time to time, most recently this year.

Standing around the bonfire on November 5th, we would watch in awe the ephemeral beauty of the fireworks exploding heavenwards in riots of colour against the black sky. It was always a treat. The Roman candle would fail to light and the Catherine wheel always got stuck on the post or whizzed off! It was all part of the fun. The Catherine wheel is another symbol of martyrdom. St. Catherine of Alexandria was martyred on a burning wheel in the fourth century. Often, we would be standing in the persistent rain which dripped down necks and wellies, munching on spicy, sticky, oaty parkin (no fancy-schmancy toasted marshmallows for us) caught up in the wonder.

We did not think too much about the origins of this day. In 1605, a group of Catholics, organised by Thomas Catesby, placed 36 barrels of explosives under the House of Lords in an attempt to dethrone the Protestant King James I and his Parliament. The purpose was to expedite an end to the persecution of Catholics in England. The plot was foiled. Guy Fawkes, the most well-known name of the group, was one of the thirteen. He just happened to be guarding the barrels when they were discovered. It resulted in a swift, public and bloody demise for the conspirators.

King James I created an annual celebration in 1606 with a Thanksgiving Act to mark the failure of the plot. Church services, bell ringing and bonfires were included. By 1670, only the bonfires, with burning effigies of the Pope as a reminder of the original plot, survived as festivities. Guy Fawkes did not become the symbol of the event until the eighteenth century. The Thanksgiving Act was repealed in 1859 but the celebrations continued, encouraged by the commercial production of fireworks. It is still a wonderful night to celebrate with family and friends at the beginning of the darkest, longest nights of winter although, sadly, many safer public displays have been cancelled this year because of a shortage of funding.

When I was writing the article for last month's edition of the Parish Magazine, I said that the final bank holiday before Christmas was approaching at the end of August. Since then, we have said goodbye to one prime minister, seen another appointed [*only to be ousted within two months as we went to press - Editor*], closely followed by the expected yet sudden death of the Queen, at the age of 96 and after 70 years on the throne, and an additional bank holiday. Thousands upon thousands of people from across the world made the pilgrimage to file past her coffin. Many queued for up to 24 hours at its height. Endurance, hardship, testing, are all a part of pilgrimage but so are the friendships made, the shared laughter and tears and the support for each other. It was actually poignant to watch.

I was particularly affected by the funeral at Westminster Abbey and the committal at St. George's Chapel. Both services were magnificent, appropriate in every way, the music sublime, reflecting the late Queen's deep personal faith. It was the Church of England at its very best. Even the more republican-leaning press were impressed! The funeral was shown across the world to millions of viewers. What a wonderful Christian witness, apart from any other considerations. The Christian church is here to prepare us for our own deaths, its message offering hope and eternal life. During the Queen's funeral, this branch of it did so with immense effect. I did not intend to watch all day, but I was so caught up in the majesty and dignity, as well as by the sheer logistical arrangements which went without a hitch, that I stayed with it throughout.

Her death has left us with a profound sense of loss. Most of us never met her, yet monarchists and republicans, believers and non-believers, rich and poor, great and small, have all been affected. She represented a constancy through all the changing scenes in our lives. It was a tribute to her genuine devotion to duty which she performed faithfully, with humour and good grace. Perhaps this is her greatest legacy for us all, that whatever we do, whatever situation we find ourselves in, we are reliable, faithful and do everything with good grace.

I close with a moving poem written by Malcolm Guite, Anglican priest and poet.

Holding and Letting Go

We have a call to live, and oh
A common call to die.
I watched you and my father go
To bid a friend goodbye.
I watched you hold my father's hand,
How could it not be so?
The gentleness of holding on
Helps in the letting go.



For when we feel our frailty
How can we not respond?
And reach to hold another's hand
And feel the common bond?
For then we touch the heights above
And every depth below,
We touch the very quick of love;
Holding and letting go.

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.

**81 The Green, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B38 8RU • parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk
0121 458 3289 • www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam**

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

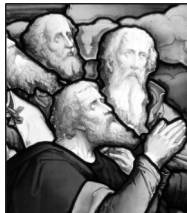
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St. Nicolas' Church..... Peter Hay & Julie Hill
Hawkesley Church Jim Clarke
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Acting Finance Officer Simon Hill
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Regular Giving The Revd Jayne Crooks
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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

Voices from the Past

At home with

Sir Richard & Dame Anne Grevis

Ours is an exceptional parish church, full of grace, charm and history. When I first visited it many years ago, one of the elements that struck me most strongly was that, in the space under the tower, there are two prominent tombs, one of which is dramatically surmounted by two alabaster figures of its occupants.

They are Sir Richard Grevis (pronounced Greaves) and his wife Dame Anne. Both lived in the Tudor and Stuart period some 400 years ago. As they lie there, they seem remote and perhaps rather forbidding. But now, through a discovery that can perhaps be described as miraculous, we can see that they are in many ways just like any other married couple.

Though little is recorded about their lives, the very fact that the couple have such a tomb is evidence that they were very important people, not just locally but nationally. Sir Richard, who was born in or around Moseley, brought wealth and power into the family after centuries when they had just been local farmers. He became a significant landowner, so much so that his wealth brought him to the highest attention at a national level. He actually became a friend and confidant of King



MICHAEL
WRITES
REGULARLY
ON LOCAL
HISTORY

James I, who came to the throne after Elizabeth I in 1603.

Helped by this relationship, Sir Richard achieved great honours. The King knighted him in 1604 and he became Sheriff of Worcestershire and Deputy Lieutenant of Wales. To reflect his status, he built the first Moseley Hall, the forerunner of the one that is now a hospital. He was a friend of another major landowner, Thomas Holte of Aston, whose name lives on through the Holte End at Villa Park. He and Anne, the daughter of a Shropshire farmer, had eight children.

Their figures overlook the tomb in St Nicolas' Church. For several decades after Richard's death in 1632 (Anne followed in 1654), his family continued to be of major significance, but over the succeeding 150 years, its fortunes declined so far that, by 1780, it was penniless, with all its buildings and land sold off.

More about the recent "miracle". Among the thousands of documents that are stored in our Parish Office, one that came to light recently was a letter from 2010 requesting a picture of the Grevis tomb. With it was

▼THE
ALABASTER
TOMB OF SIR
RICHARD AND
DAME ANNE
GREVIS IN ST
NICOLAS'
CHURCH



something remarkable: the script of a BBC radio play "The House of Grevis: The Rise and Fall of a Birmingham Dynasty." The play, first broadcast in October 1938, brings the family to life.

For example, here are Sir Richard and Dame Anne talking about typical family matters, shortly after he was knighted.

Sir Richard: My dear, I'm afraid not

Dame Anne: But it's so long that I had the last one

Sir R: Long?

Dame A: Months and months and months. That's a long life for a dress

Sir R: Well, I know little of these things

Dame A: But Richard, think you that the wife of a Knight should want for a dress costing but a few poor guineas?

Sir R: a few poor guineas? We must be careful of money... it's in my mind to buy a new farm. There must be other dresses.

Dame A: Not that will bear me like this one. Russet silk edged with velvet and lined with russet taffeta. Seven Wonders? Oh, Richard if you

saw me in it you would swear I was the eighth!

Sir R: Well, well, I'll see.

Just like an ordinary couple!

The radio play was written by a local schoolmaster and historian, Neville Brandon Watts. He wrote a further play, also broadcast by the BBC, about the life of John Baskerville, the famous Birmingham print designer.

After its first appearance in 1938, the Grevis play did not appear again until November 1952, in a revised version (the script discovered recently). It was broadcast on the Midlands Division of the Home Service, now Radio Four, at 7.30 pm and lasted for fifty minutes. The billing in that week's Radio Times showed that the play was followed by a full-length broadcast of Mozart's operetta "The Impresarios" featuring the Midlands Light Orchestra.

The cast for the Grevis play was full of Midlands-based radio actors, some of whom were already becoming famous in leading parts in "The Archers", which was born in the Midlands and is now the longest-running radio serial and, probably, the most famous programme in the history of global broadcasting. They included



PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

Arnold Peters (the original Jack Woolley), Chris Gittins (Walter Gabriel) and Jack May (Walter's son Nelson).

The 1953 version of the play was recorded either at the original BBC Midlands headquarters in Carpenter Road in Edgbaston or at rented studios in Gosta Green in Aston. This was some twenty years before the advent of the world-famous and now much-lamented Pebble Mill Studios, which became the base for some of the country's best loved TV and radio programmes. It

closed in 2004 and was then cruelly demolished.

The play also includes a discussion between Sir Richard and Sir Thomas Holte, in which they show their status by talking about Kings James I as "Jamie". The drama then traces the evolution of the Grevis family during the 1600 and 1700s, including the achievements of Sir Richard and Dame Anne's son, also named Richard. He was a Colonel on the Parliamentarian (Roundhead) side in the English Civil War. However, the playwright Neville Brandon Watts, either deliberately or in ignorance, omitted the fact that Richard the soldier may well have

▲ SIR RICHARD GREVIS OF MOSELEY HALL

fought in the Battle of Kings Norton Green, just outside the church where his father lay!

The story moves through five generations of the Grevis family and its gradual decline into abject poverty, including the enforced sale of Moseley Hall to another local landowner, the successful industrialist John Taylor, who, amazingly, is also buried at St Nicolas' in a family vault just outside the chancel.

Why were major notables such as Sir Richard and John Taylor buried at St Nicolas', when neither actually lived here? The reason is that St Nicolas' was then an even more significant church than it is now. For hundreds of years, it was effectively the parish church for a very large area, including Kings Norton itself, Moseley and Yardley, when these were all part of Worcestershire.

St Nicolas' was the only church in the area where weddings, baptisms, burials and other major ceremonies could be carried out. Even as late as the 17th century, Moseley only had what was called a chapel of ease, a relatively humble wooden building, which provided local people with the chance to worship without having to make the ten-mile round trip, by foot or on horseback,

through the mud to and from St Nicolas'.

The drama ends in 1788 with the last direct male descendant of Sir Richard, Henshaw Greaves, reduced to penury, old and ill and desperately trying to find enough money to ensure that he could be buried in the same location as his forebears Sir Richard and Dame Anne. As recorded in the play, he achieved that ambition, but lies in an unmarked paupers' grave somewhere in the churchyard.

The end of the family was indeed ignominious. Even the verger failed to understand. As the play concludes, let the Verger of St. Nicolas' have the last word: *"Ah that dratted register, I'd almost forgotten it. Let's see, August 27 1788 Ancheaw Grevis, pauper."* (He actually did spell the name wrongly!).

Next time you visit the church, take a look at where Richard and Anne lie under the tower and wonder whether he ever bought her that dress!

THE HUNGRY GARDENER

An Avalanche of Apples

There's been an amazing bumper crop on fruit trees this autumn, truly wonderful. Our apple trees have all produced fantastically despite being young. The quince tree branches are dripping in fruit in beautiful arches. Charles' grandmother has an orchard. I was obliged to take a few shopping bags of apples home and, wonderfully, a friend gave me a box of apples and pears. Have you come by some free apples or has your tree produced lots of apples? If you haven't been offered any free fruit, maybe the farmers' market will have good prices due to the glut this year. The last hour might be the best time to visit the market. You could come by some apples by placing a "wanted" post on the Olio App. Olio is a mobile app for free food-sharing, aiming to reduce food waste. It works by linking users with others within short distances. In the nature reserve, I've spotted a few crab apple trees. A hook-handled umbrella helps to pull

down the branches. Bring a tall friend with you. My husband doesn't know I will be borrowing his umbrella ... yet!

If you want to make sure that your fruit trees have a bumper crop next year, you can prune the branches in the period between the first frosts through to the end of February. To do this, trim their branches with secateurs or a small saw and take off about a third. If you see an outward bud, cut just after this. Look for the crossing branches and remove the one that will have its light blocked when the leaves grow next spring. I aim for a wine glass shape of branches. In our garden we have two apple trees and a quince tree. On our allotment we have a medlar and another apple tree. We are so lucky to have the allotment and I planted the trees a few years ago both there and at home. As the Greek proverb has it:



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

"A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit."

Replace "old men" with the mother of a six-year-old, for I have planted five trees locally over the past few years. This year, I have planted 300 for free through TreeApp.

Our trees are all young trees. They were planted when Charles was about a month old so we have a good crop this year but we aren't quite at the stage of forcing fruit onto friends and neighbours!

So what to do with a bumper harvest of apples, pears or quinces?

The easiest option is to dehydrate. Slice thinly and, if you have a dehydrator, lay them on the trays at a highish heat or lay them on a tray on a silicon sheet or greaseproof paper and use the lowest setting in the oven. Check them periodically until they feel like they have no more moisture in them and put them in a jar. If you have an off-peak tariff, consider using a smart plug or timer.

You can use them to make jam, a single apple goes in most of my jams to help them set. I use them in blackberry, strawberry, raspberry but not damson jam as it already has its own pectin.

Apple crumble is an easy and a very popular option in our house. Peel, core and cut the apples and place in a dish. Sprinkle with a little sugar and pre-cook the apples for 10 minutes on a low heat. The crumble breadcrumbs are made with flour, sugar and butter. I don't know the measurements: I do mine by taste. I use about half a bag of flour, sugar (about half the amount of flour) and butter. Mix it all together with your fingers to make breadcrumbs. Keep tasting to see if you like it. If you prefer it sweeter, add a bit more sugar. If you prefer it with a bit more butter, add a bit more. When they look like breadcrumbs and taste the way you want, sprinkle over your fruit and then place your dish in the oven at 180 degrees C. It is ready when the crumble has slightly browned and the fruit is bubbling a little around the edges.

Apple, pears and quince make beautiful jellies. Mum puts a little mint in her apple jelly to flavour it. To make jelly, rough-chop your fruit and weigh it (no need to core). Put it in your biggest pan with a bit of water and cook it until it looks soft and pulpy. Then put it into a jelly bag. I use an old muslin square from Charles' baby days. An old pillowcase would work equally well. Hang your jelly bag over a large pan. I have a hook from

a shelf to hang mine but you can turn a chair upside down and use the chair as a frame from which to hang your jelly bag. Let it drip overnight. Don't be tempted to squeeze or your jelly won't look clear. Add sugar, matching the weight of your fruit in sugar, and sweeten the fluid you have collected after straining. Before you start to simmer the fluid, sterilise your jars. Use either a hot wash in the dishwasher or pour boiling water over clean jars in the sink. Simmer your fruit and sugar mixture in your biggest pan until the bubbles start to change. When this starts to happen, test your jelly on a plate and push the fluid with a spoon. If it wrinkles, it's ready to pour into recycled sterilised jars.

Save your peels and cores. You can turn them into apple cider vinegar. I have yet to try making my own vinegar, so I have saved a bag of perfect peels and cores (no bruised or damaged bits) and stored them in the freezer. If it's a hit, I will share it in a future article. My husband is always asking what is new in the garage freezer. We are replacing our kitchen fridge-freezer with one half its size. This will give us more kitchen space and also reduce energy costs. A chest freezer is better insulated than a typical kitchen fridge freezer and far more energy efficient.

This year, I am storing apples for the first time in an old 1950s bread bin. It's quite big and it has a heavy lid. Our loo-roll is pre-packed in greaseproof paper, so I am recycling the paper to wrap around the apples coupled with some of those silicon water absorbers we saved from the

Covid test packs. Be careful where you use these as if you have small children they are poisonous if eaten. The apples are stored in the metal chicken feed storage bin as it is vermin proof, although the rats or mice would probably have some difficulty in getting the bread bin lid off!

A wonderful thing about apples is that they are a fruit which Charles really enjoys, so having enough apples to keep him in fruit is fantastic. He can see them on the trees and really understands where his food comes from. Apples are also a wonderful flavouring for the water kefir, the fizzy, probiotic drink that is an ongoing hit in our household.

These are just a few ideas of what to do with a bumper apple harvest. There are loads more ideas available if you do an Ecosia online search. Maybe you have some family apple recipes to try? Whatever you do, make sure you make the most of the bumper harvest this year.



Social media

How to protect your mental health

The recent inquest into the death of British teenager Molly Russell in 2017 has concluded that the 14-year-old “died from an act of self harm while suffering from depression and the negative effects of online content”. For some people, this ruling will be confirmation of what they have long suspected or indeed experienced: that being on social media can be detrimental to your mental health.

Of course it isn't always. Over 50 million people in the UK are active on at least one platform. That's over 80% of the population, a clear indication of quite how integral to our daily lives social media has become.

Young adults are more likely than older adults to have a social media profile and to have more of them, on more sites and more apps. Young people are also experiencing more mental health problems than any other age group. Between 2017 and 2021, 52.5% of 17-to-23-year-olds in England experienced a deterioration in their mental health.

If the anecdotal and self-reported evidence linking these two things exists, the research actually proving that link is limited. Studies tend only to measure a correlation between social media use and mental health at one time point, rather than looking at the effects over time that can help us to understand whether social media causes mental health problems.

The findings are also mixed. Some studies highlight the increased exposure, for example, to harm, anxiety, depression and cyber-bullying that being online can bring.

Others, meanwhile, suggest that it can in fact be of benefit. It can help people to connect with others and access social support and information.

In our recent workshop with young adults, researchers and clinicians, we explored how social media can be used to provide support for mental health and reach a wide range of young people.



RUTH IS A RESEARCH FELLOW IN PRIMARY CARE AND POPULATION HEALTH AT UCL.

We are currently exploring how to improve support for young adults seeking help for mental health issues that might be related to social media use. The effects social media have on our mental health may depend on how we use them. Here are four tips to help you stay in control.

Be mindful

Social media platforms and accounts are often trying to sell you things.

The first thing to do is to think about how, why and how much you are using social media. Do you need it for work? For socialising? For activism? Inspiration? Do you need it to stay in touch with family or for other social support? Do you turn to it for advice?

Social media platforms and many people on them have their own agendas and they are often trying to sell you things. So, be mindful of how much time and energy you give to sellers and users and think about what they want from you when engaging.

To gauge which uses are positive and productive and which are detrimental, ask yourself simply, when does using social media make me feel good or bad, and why? Do I need to use it all of the time?

Research shows that mindfulness helps us notice what is

happening in the present moment and creates space between us and our thoughts. Being mindful about your social media use can help you to gain insight and acceptance into how they make you feel and act accordingly.

Be active, not passive

Research shows that passive use of social media, such as browsing news feeds and doomscrolling, is associated with negative outcomes. These include social comparison, envy and feelings of anxiety and depression.

Active use, by contrast, such as messaging and interacting with posts, is associated with better outcomes. These include increased social support and greater feelings of social connectedness.

Follow, share and interact with accounts and people that provide positive content that you enjoy. Join online communities to find like-minded people and make new connections. Be mindful of your own following on social media and use your settings to make sure only positive people are following you.

Take a break

Accounts abound of people taking time off from posting or giving up entirely.

While the long-term effects of

giving up social media are unknown, recent research has found that taking a one-week break leads to significant improvements in wellbeing, depression and anxiety, particularly for people who are heavy or passive users of the platform in question.

If you're worried about your social media use, remember that you can step away from it. That could mean switching off for a few hours every day, one day a week or even a whole week. Start off small and then reassess how it makes you feel. Apps like Hold and Offtime can also help you manage how much time you spend on your phone and on social media.

Take control

Research has found that quitting social media for a while is particularly beneficial for those whose use results in feelings of envy towards others on the platform. It is important to remember that you can take control. The app or platform is a tool. You are in charge.

Mute, unfollow, block or delete anything or anyone that upsets you. Report anything that is abusive or upsetting to the social media platform.

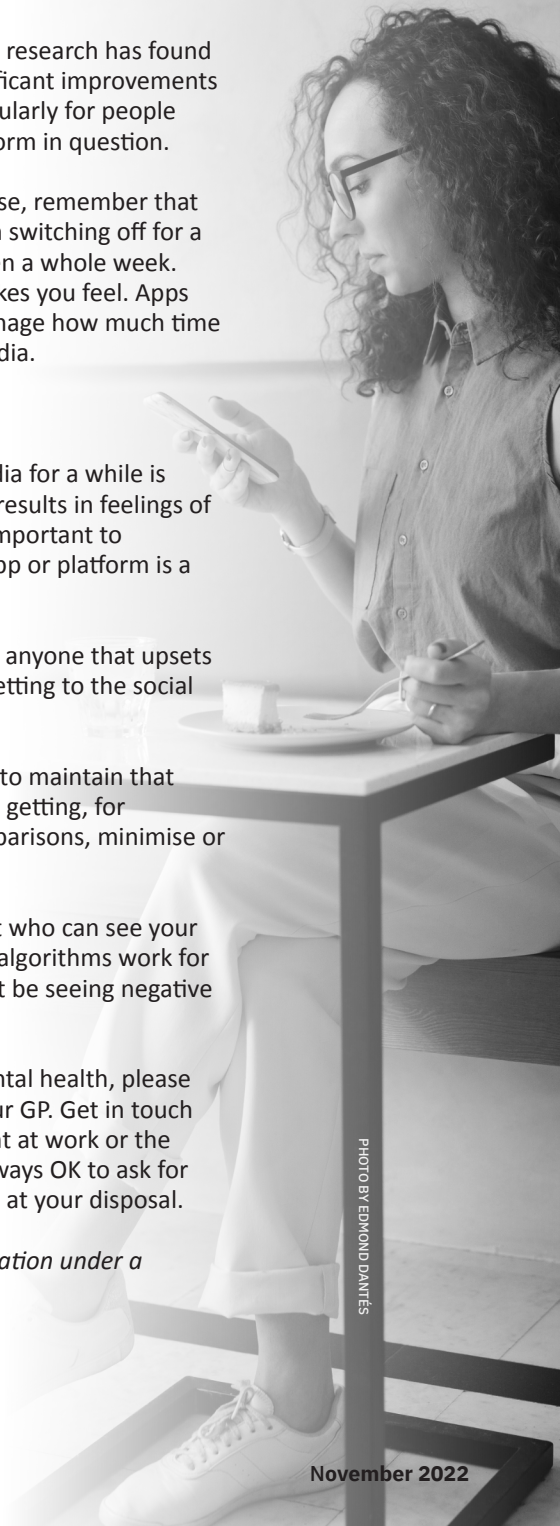
On a more granular level, use your settings to maintain that control. If seeing how many likes others are getting, for instance, leads to corrosively negative comparisons, minimise or turn off likes or restrict what you see.

Understand your privacy settings and select who can see your content and contact you. Learn about how algorithms work for different apps to understand why you might be seeing negative content.

Crucially, if you are worried about your mental health, please seek help. Make an appointment to see your GP. Get in touch with a charity. Speak to your HR department at work or the student welfare officer at university. It is always OK to ask for support. It is, in fact, the best tool you have at your disposal.

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PHOTO BY EDMOND DANTE'S




Funerals Aug & Sept 2022

3rd August	Jayne Marshall	64	In.CY
3rd August	Edna May Saunders	99	In.CY
8th August	Violet Kirrage	92	SN.KN
16th August	Gerraye Kim Cheryl Dent	53	In.CY
16th August	Thomas John Brown	96	In.LH
17th August	Sylvia May Galloway	87	In.CY
24th August	Jeanette Ann Adams	78	In.CY
24th August	John Michael Reader	77	Cr.RH
26th August	Ethel Reeves	95	SN.LH
31st August	Mary Alice Hockell	83	In.CY
2nd September	Deborah Lorraine Murphy	66	In.CY
7th September	Clive Bishop	78	In.CY
9th September	Jean Veronica Price	81	In.CY
20th September	Thomas Daly	77	In.CY
21st September	Jeffrey William Wem	61	SN.Bu.KN
23rd September	Gordon McDonald Culross	70	Bu.CY

Bu : Burial, Cr : Cremation, CY : Churchyard, In : Interment of Ashes,
 SN : Service at St Nicolas' Church
 Cemeteries & Crematoria
 KN : Kings Norton, LH : Lodge Hill, RH : Robin Hood

Baptisms Aug & Sept 2022

27th August	Emily Louise Leah Currall
4th September	Roman James Christopher Roberts
4th September	Ophelia-Rose Elizabeth Roberts
4th September	Minnie Elizabeth Burgess



Kings Norton's tributes to The Queen

Hundreds of people visited St Nicolas' Church to pay tribute to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Most of them said prayers and gave thanks. Some lit candles and many others left their thoughts in the Book of Condolence that was placed on the altar in the Lady Chapel. Here is a selection from those warm and heartfelt tributes.

A truly amazing, compassionate and dignified lady. We are blessed to have had you in our lives.

I never met you but I felt I knew you, loved you and respected you: a beautiful soul.

Thank you Ma'am for your loyalty and devotion. You were our GREAT in Great Britain.

You served our nation so well and you served our Heavenly Father exceptionally. You led with cheerfulness, grace and so much wisdom.

I will forever remember the wonderful life I have lived with you as my Queen.

May God look after you as you have looked after us.

Reassuring, dazzling, unifying and constant: we are forever in your debt.

Your smile blessed millions:
your joy shows us how to live
God's gift to the full.

They say that there are seven
wonders of the world, but we
now know there are eight. I was
at your Coronation in 1953 and
am privileged to have lived in
your reign.

You have been a shining beacon
for this country all of my life.

A bright light in the darkness,
always giving us hope and faith.

Your Majesty, you always strove
to do your best; now you have
gone to take your rest.

You were the example we all
needed and will be for decades
to come.

Thank you for giving your whole
life to the UK, the
Commonwealth and the world.

A great Queen and a lovely
mother to the whole world.

An unprecedented woman, a
dedicated Queen and a radiant
sovereign. Thank you so much.

The world has been a better
place for your presence. Let us
hope that it always will be.

Goodbye, Your Majesty, and
thank you. I shall miss your
sparkling eyes and lovely smile.



Australia

During my time at sea, which lasted some 30 years, I would often think of the countries I had visited and enjoyed. I also gave thought to which one(s) I might choose to emigrate to. Australia came to mind on several occasions.

My good friends John and Sarah had a sumptuous house in the Sydney suburb of Richmond. I would sometimes spend the night with them. We would drive to various locations and restaurants. On these trips, I used to take note of the house prices. They were very reasonable compared to those in the UK and the cost of living was affordable too. This was back in the late seventies. Things have changed and it is now a very different story. House prices in Sydney are now almost comparable to ours. The Australian dollar is strong against the pound. Food prices have gone up and some utilities have become quite expensive.

The days when it was easy to enter Australia have gone too. There are now strict visa laws. A person wanting to enter the country to live and work has to be able to offer suitable skills or to belong to a particular profession. In short, it is not easy to enter the country at all.

In the past, Australia was desperate to encourage immigration. I can remember, in the early 1960s, that the population was quite low. Society there was strongly religious, especially in Melbourne and the State of Victoria. It could be seen in the attitude to drinking: pubs, for example, had to close at 6.00 pm. Locals used



Eddie ponders childhood memories and preserving food

to talk about dashing out for a "five o'clock swill" after work!

At the time, it was not unusual for a few members of a ship's crew to jump ship in Australia. After about three weeks on shore, it was quite easy for them to become official residents. In fact, a few would join a ship with exactly this purpose, signing on to wash plates in the galley or to work as a utility steward. Once they reached an Australian port, they would desert.

During this period, the £10-per-person emigration programme was in full swing. For £10 a head, ships such as the Canberra would ferry almost a thousand men, women and children at a time from Britain to start a new life on the other side of the world. They used to refer to Australia as the "land of milk and honey". Since then, Australian society has become much more cosmopolitan.

Did I emigrate? Well, as most of the readers of this magazine know, I am still in Kings Norton! My links with this place have always been strong. Perhaps the seeds were sown in my youth when I was a choir boy at St Nicolas'. Anyway, it's now "Amen" or "So be it". No Australia for me!



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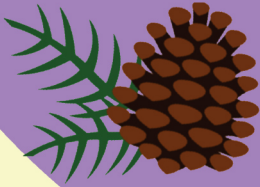
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