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TEAM PARISH

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FOR CHURCH & COMMUNITY

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**Kings Norton's Only
What's On Guide**

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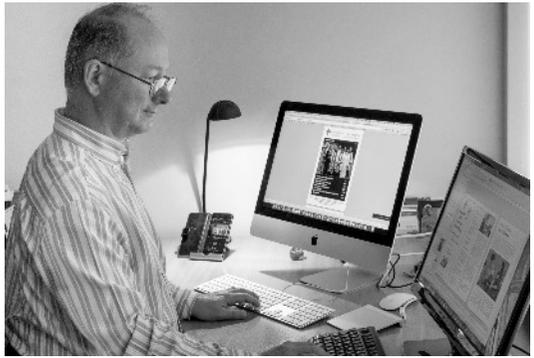
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'Disconnecting in a connected world is nuts' wrote Thomas L. Friedman of the New York Times in an article published last December. Friedman's theme was, of course, Brexit. But whether you lean towards separatism or solidarity, it is hard to argue with his observations. Firstly, in a complex and dangerous world, attempting to stand alone looks suspiciously like insanity. Secondly, we need each other.

That last point was powerfully made during the play referred to on page 11 with the help of an illustration which you have probably heard before. One stick on its own is easily snapped. A bundle of sticks, on the other hand, resists all attempts to bend or break it. Strength through unity, an age-old principle, so easily forgotten in an age obsessed with the individual. An age of dis-integration.

Great things happen when people stand together. Libraries are saved (p.55), community is strengthened (p.52), liars, bullies and exploiters are held to account (p.12), local culture is enriched (pp.42 & 46) and faith is nurtured (pp. 4, 18 & 39).

We need each other at every level, individually, locally, internationally. We need, in particular, those generous souls who have understood that meaning and purpose are found in self-giving; who, in the words of St Ignatius, aspire 'to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that [they] do [God's] will.'

The Editor

FROM THE RECTOR

Easter, Faith & The Unconvinced

In a highly rational and scientific age, the claims of religion are often met with doubt, distrust, scepticism and incredulity. However, doubt is not confined to this present age. 'Doubting Thomas', one of Jesus' friends, is remembered for his unwillingness to believe a man could come back to life without seeing the evidence with his own eyes. His view of life and death was very simple.

Later, in the accounts of Jesus' Resurrection, we read, '...but some doubted.' Doubt is not the same as unbelief. To doubt is a valid response to any claim or assertion of a truth one cannot immediately embrace in good conscience. Doubt is essential to scientific discovery: scientists use theory and experimentation to examine, question, scrutinise and test claims. Any evidence of new scientific advancements must be validated by other experts who repeat experiments and reach the same conclusions. Doubt is a spur to questioning and examination.

Historically, there have been some theories that could not so easily be



disproved in the lecture hall or in a laboratory. They required imagination and even heroic self-sacrifice. Consider the ridicule experienced by the first people who doubted the earth was flat, or those who believed that the sun did not orbit the earth but that the earth orbits the sun?

There were also inventors who tested new drugs and remedies on

themselves, sometimes with fatal consequences. There were explorers who crossed continents to map out the world more accurately. Some never returned. These were people who had imagination and courage enough to question existing theories and truths about the way the world was perceived. They believed in the human capacity to advance human knowledge for the good and were prepared to pay the cost of their convictions.

'Religious belief is not a suitable subject for rigorous scientific scrutiny. Science cannot prove or disprove its claims.'

Religious belief is not a suitable subject for rigorous scientific scrutiny. Science cannot prove or disprove its claims. It is a different category of thought and behaviour entered into by people who are discontent with a view of humanity and creation which sees life as nothing more than a series of random cosmic events without meaning or purpose, driven by our baser animal instincts. Just as the great advances in science required leaps of imagination, so in the spiritual history of humanity, leaps of consciousness were necessary. It is worth noting that the major

religions and philosophies which still shape the modern world to a large extent were all founded within a 500 year period between 800 and 300 BC, a period of history when civilisations had little or no contact with each other.

The central, most important, pivotal event for Christians is the coming of Jesus of Nazareth. It is clear from the Bible's accounts of his life and from other writing of the period that the Western Roman-

Greek world was in a stage of scientific, intellectual, spiritual and religious transformation. The lands around the Mediterranean Sea were the meeting point of many cultures and philosophies. Jesus would have been influenced by Jewish, Roman, Greek and Persian beliefs and ideas.

His uniqueness stems not from his teachings alone (many of these are shared by other religions) but in his belief that God is intimately connected to each one of us and that relationship, once fully realised, is the key to being truly

liberated. Liberated **from** guilt and shame, from the fear of death, from the fear of enemies and from the fear of those who are different from us. Liberated **to be** free to love without reward, to show compassion, justice and mercy to all, to risk all for the sake of others and to know we have a life beyond this life. Jesus not only taught these truths; he lived them. In living them, he demonstrated, to those who believed, that dying is not the end and has no ultimate claim upon us.

Whatever the first disciples saw or experienced, on that first Easter Day they believed they saw the risen Jesus. Their doubt did not turn to unbelief (even Thomas eventually believed) and their belief guided their lives from then on. In the centuries since that first Easter, countless millions have experienced Jesus as a constant presence in their lives. As Jesus himself remarked, a

seed must first fall to the ground and be buried before it can grow into its true form.

In one lifetime, we can all feel, at times, more dead than alive, crushed by cares and misfortune, oppressed and unloved. Yet we can, with the help of our inner faith and the support of loved ones, emerge again into life and all its possibilities. The Easter story is a story of liberation and Christians everywhere will celebrate their freedom in a multitude of ways.

We will also be praying that those as yet unconvinced by the promises of Jesus will join us in this fascinating exploration of what Easter means for all.

Easter Greetings!

Revd Larry Wright

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NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BULL'S HEAD



The Bull's Head, a landmark on The Green and a centre for community life for well over a century, will see a grand re-opening on **Monday 8th April** after a significant new investment project.

The pub was recently taken over by the brewing company Marston's, who are determined to make up for a long period of neglect and minimal investment by the previous owners. Marston's is one of the country's biggest exporters of beer and a major presence in the real ale market.

The man in charge is Paul Murphy. Paul managed The Goose (formerly the Cross Guns) pub in Kings Heath for several years, but when he learned about Marston's plans for the Bulls Head, the challenge was irresistible.

By the time the pub opens after a three-week closure, some £250,000 will have been spent on comprehensively refurbishing its interior. Its familiar exterior is also being brightened up, but in a way which, says Paul "is in keeping with The Green".

Paul's aim is not only to offer customers a fresher, more appealing environment but to make other significant changes. The day-long food service will be to a more consistent quality, with a new kitchen team, and there will be designated eating areas.

Paul, who is very much aware of the long history of The Bull's Head, wants to restore its place as a centre for activities that support the community. One focus for this approach is the first floor function room, a dramatic area with wooden beams which runs the full length of the building. 'We'd like to think that there will be community organisations that can hire the room as a venue for meetings and events', says Paul. To help start the ball rolling, he is planning a major charitable fund-raising event around the end of May.

The Grand Opening event on Monday 8th April includes a live performance by the popular 80s tribute duo *The Fabulous Mr President*.

Dexter & The Smarties

Dexter liked to wander. His most favourite wander was to St Nicolas' Church. They had a HIGH tower there that was even taller than Dexter. He loved to look at it and listen to the clock chimes and watch all the birds flying in and out of the top.

His friend Pauline had told him that the tower was very old, just like the rest of the church, and needed some repair work done. Pauline said it was very expensive and that they would need to look at ways to raise money. This worried Dexter because he didn't have any money and didn't know how to help.



He was standing and looking at the tower when another friend of his named Christine walked by. She thought he looked worried and asked him if he was OK. Dexter told her about the tower and the money and how he didn't know what to do.

Christine smiled and put an arm around the very sad Dexter. 'Every little bit helps you know,' she said. 'Everything has to start somewhere.' She gave Dexter a tube of Smarties and said, 'If you put your mind to it, I just bet you will come up with a solution.' She patted him on the shoulder and walked on.

Dexter looked at the Smarties (his favourite!) and felt better. 'I will think of something to help,' he thought as he wandered back home. 'Every little bit helps.'

A few days later, Dexter had finished his Smarties. He liked to group them into colours and eat them that way. Red one day, blue the next day, and so on. It made them last longer.

Dexter's brain was still busy trying to think of ways to help raise money. He had some loose coins and, as he thought, he popped them into the Smarties tube and shook them as he was walking back and forth in his room.

'Want to help.' (shake shake shake)

'Don't know how.' (shake shake shake)

'Maybe I'm too little.' (shake shake shake)

'But every little bit helps.' (shake shake shake)



Suddenly, Dexter looked at the tube in his hand and his face lit up! He gathered up his coin jar and his piggy bank and sat in his room shake shake shaking. On Sunday, he took his (now heavy) tube of Smarties to church and gave it to Pauline. 'Every little bit helps!' he said proudly.

Pauline laughed and told him he was exactly right and showed the other children what Dexter had done. They all wanted a Smarties tube to fill with coins too! He felt very proud.

As he turned around to go to his seat he saw Christine, who gave him two thumbs up. 'Every little bit helps!' Dexter thought, happily.

Don't throw me away!

Give me away!



Where do your Parish Magazines go when you've read them? Would you consider giving your copy away to a friend, neighbour or stranger instead of recycling it?

If each copy we printed passed through the hands of 3 readers, starting with the person who paid for it, each article and advert would be seen by over 1,300 people. That's 5% of the population of Kings Norton!

If only 2% of those 1,300 people chose to become regular subscribers each month, our cover price and advertising fees could remain stable for the foreseeable future. At the moment, however, despite our best efforts, we are not covering our printing costs. You can help us to do so if you...

...pass it on!

Holy Week Services 2019

Holy Week is the most solemn week in the Christian year. It begins on Palm Sunday (14th April), a week before Easter Day (21 April).

During Holy Week, Christians participate in a sequence of services, sharing Christ's journey from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem to the empty tomb on Easter morning. Maundy Thursday (from the Latin '*mandatum*', which means '*commandment*') contains a rich complex of themes, among them the humble Christian service expressed through Christ's washing of his disciples' feet and the Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist.

On Good Friday, many Anglican churches, including St Nicolas', hold a three-hour service of reflection, first

introduced in the 19th century. The last hour of this, called '*Tenebrae*' (Latin for 'darkness'), is built around the Lamentations of Jeremias, which are chanted. The church is stripped of all decoration: there can be no adequate way of recalling the being dead of the Son of God other than silence and desolation.

But within the silence there grows a sense of peace and completion, and then rising excitement as the Easter Vigil draws near on Holy Saturday. This 'week of weeks' preserves some of the oldest texts still in current use and rehearses the deepest and most fundamental Christian memories.

The services below are at St Nicolas' Church unless otherwise stated.

Palm Sunday	14 Apr	10.30 am	United Parish All-Age Worship
Monday	15 Apr	7.30 pm	Compline with Reflection
Tuesday	16 Apr	7.30 pm	Compline with Reflection
Wednesday	17 Apr	7.30 pm	Compline with Reflection
Maundy Thursday	18 Apr	7.30 pm	Holy Communion with Foot Washing
Good Friday	19 Apr	12.00 noon	All-Age Worship
		1.00-2.00	Stations of the Cross
		2.00-3.00	Tenebrae
Holy Saturday	20 Apr	7.30 pm	Holy Communion
Easter Day	21 Apr	9.00 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Holy Communion
		6.00 pm	(St Nicolas', Hawkesley & Immanuel) Compline & Communion

Care FOR THE Workers?

On 8th March, a small group of friends from Kings Norton went to see an unusual theatrical production at the Midland Arts Centre in Cannon Hill Park. Entitled 'Rouse Ye Women', the piece was billed as a new folk opera about the little-known Edwardian trade union organiser and campaigner Mary Macarthur and her involvement with the women chain makers of Cradley Heath. It was pure coincidence that the one performance in Birmingham, part of a nationwide tour, took place on International Women's Day; but, in retrospect, there could not have been a more inspiring way to mark the occasion.

Just before the First World War, the women chain makers of Cradley Heath, a small town in the Black Country between Dudley and Stourbridge just 11 miles from Kings Norton, focused the world's attention on the plight of Britain's low-paid women workers, those trapped in the so-called 'home-working sweated industries'. At the time, girls and women were employed in their hundreds to hammer out chain links day after day in dark, cramped outhouses behind their homes while simultaneously shouldering the load of 'women's work', including the running of their homes, the feeding of their husbands and the care of their children. In return, they received about 5 shillings for a 50-hour week. That's the equivalent of about £28 per week at today's prices or 56 pence an hour.

In 1910, led by Mary Reid Macarthur (above), a Scottish suffragist and the



General Secretary of the Women's Trade Union League, hundreds of working women in Cradley Heath laid down their tools to strike for a living wage. 'Rouse Ye Women' told the story,

in words and folk music, of the success of their ten-week strike, which stirred up the entire country, more than doubled their earnings and helped to make the principle of a minimum wage a reality. At times, the audience simply could not resist singing along with the characters on the stage, so moving was the story, so infectious the tunes and so powerful the rhetoric with which Mary (played by opera singer Bryony Purdue) roused her women.

The play has attracted enthusiastic reviews. 'If you get a chance, go and see this. In fact, go twice,' wrote journalist Lynne Walsh. 'Take friends, family and random strangers.' It's on tour until 19th April, so you may still have a chance if you're prepared to travel (www.townsendproductions.org.uk).

At the end of the evening, the cast invited onto the stage three women from the audience and asked them to talk briefly about their own experience of fighting injustice in the workplace. Their story resembled that of the women of Cradley Heath in several respects and it roused such concern and compassion in those who heard it that your Editor, who was present that evening, felt obliged to give their cause a platform in the pages of this magazine.

What the three women who were, literally, thrust into the limelight wanted to talk to the audience about was the ongoing struggle between Birmingham City Council and our city's

Home Care Enablement Workers. In case you should be unaware, our Care Workers are responsible, among other things, for providing care at home for the first six weeks after a patient leaves hospital, a service which they describe as 'more complex than in the past as service users are more vulnerable' than they used to be, no doubt, in part, because we do not convalesce in the way we used to. This represents a reduction in the care provided since, in the past, when more funding was available, the Council used to provide a much longer-term care package for those who needed it. At the moment, this is a free service. The workers, however, suspect that the Council's long-term plan may involve the privatisation of their service.

In one of their campaign leaflets, they write that the Government's claims 'of bringing choice and control to service users have been shown to have nothing to do with choice for users and everything to do with pressing their agenda of wholesale privatisation and the move to an American system of insurance-based health service.' They go on to point out that, already, the vast majority of both home care and residential care in this country is provided by the private sector. 'The UK's home care industry is on the brink of collapse,' they write, 'with companies either going bankrupt or pulling out of contracts'.

In the mean time, the Government continues to cut budgets for social care

across the country, with direct knock-on effects for local councils. In Birmingham, a workforce of over 7,000 Care Workers in 2010 has shrunk to less than 1,000 today because the money which Birmingham receives from central government has been substantially reduced in that time, a direct consequence of what we have come to call 'austerity'. Unlike those of some other services, the budget for social care is not ring-fenced. The campaigners claim that Birmingham City Council (BCC) has therefore been able to cut the service by 48% in the past year and now plans to reduce its funding by a further £3 million. Older people, those with learning difficulties and mental health problems have all seen major reductions in services to help them because of shrinking budgets, they say.

At the same time, the Care Workers are fighting a plan to move them onto part-time contracts. At present, 60% work full time or over 30 hours per week. According to *Unison*, the public service union which kindly provided the facts & figures for this article, BCC proposes either to make these employees redundant or to offer them contracts of 22.75, 21 or 14 hours. They will be expected to fit into the new working patterns or to leave. They will be asked to work 7 days out 14, making themselves available on opposite days each week. *Unison* alleges that the working hours built into the new contracts will make it almost impossible for Care Workers to get a

second job. It is hard to believe that the Council is not aware of this.

Those involved point out in their campaign literature that they work 365 days of the year doing shifts which cover from 7.00 am to 10.00 pm. Many of them provide their service on foot, working in all weathers. In 2012, BCC removed the pay that they received for weekend working, resulting in a substantial pay cut. Many lost up to £5,500 per year. To put that in context, home carers earn between £15,823 and £18,560 per year, much less than the average wage, which is why many have to take on second jobs to survive.

At the time of writing, 286 home care enablement workers are in dispute

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The Answer's Yes!

over these changes. They write, 'Striking is always a last straw for care workers but we are fighting for the future of the service as well as for a fair and just system of work. We have already had massive pay cuts and should not be driven from our jobs to pay for a recession caused by greedy bankers and their backers [...] The race to the bottom in the care industry has to stop.' They state their belief that all workers should be entitled to a reasonable work-life balance and that everyone receiving social care should have that care provided by someone who has the time and energy to do a professional job.

'We love our jobs,' they write 'and want to provide the best care we can.' They are therefore prepared to confront BCC who, while claiming that it cannot find more money to pay them, is allegedly spending £12 million on consultants to look at merging home care with the health service!

If this story has roused you, given you the desire to do something to help, here's what you can do. Contact your Councillor and your MP. Tell them that the cuts to the home care service are

unacceptable. If you belong to a trades union, ask them to give financial support to the strike or make a donation to the strike fund yourself. If you use social media, you can also find out more on the campaign's *Facebook* page. Just search for 'Support the Birmingham Care Workers'.

Why bother? To borrow an Americanism, you can't fight City Hall, right? Wrong! In recent months, it has been this magazine's privilege to report on two local campaigns which have either shamed BCC into changing its policy or changed the minds of those in power. One of them is featured in this edition: see the article on the reopening of Druids Heath Library on p.55. The other appeared in our January 2019 issue, where we highlighted the victory won by those fighting to save the Fairway Day Centre from closure.

Though faith in democracy may currently be at a low ebb in this country, we still enjoy freedom of speech and your voice still matters. Please use it!

David Ash

If you live in Kings Norton, Frankley, Longbridge, Northfield, Shenley, Rednal, Rubery, Weoley or West Heath, your M.P. is **Richard Burden** (Labour). You can write to him at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, phone his office on 0121 459 7804 or email him at richard.burden.mp@parliament.uk.

If you live in Kings Norton, your Councillor is **Cllr Alex Aitken**, who can be contacted at alex.aitken@birmingham.gov.uk, Other Councillors' contact details can be found by visiting birmingham.gov.uk and searching for 'Councillors'.

REV

There is an old lie, which is often thrown at them in jest, that vicars only work one day a week. Like all lies, it deserves to be exposed for the myth that it is. This month, we are

pleased to bring you the second of a series of articles in which the clergy of Kings Norton come clean about exactly what it is they get up to when the rest of us are about our daily business. We think you'll be surprised. This month, it's the Reverend Caz Hague, the Methodist representative on the Ministry Team.

I guess that many of you will look at this and wonder why a Methodist minister is writing about her ministry in a Church of England parish magazine. Hawkesley Church, one of the three churches in this parish, is a joint Anglican and Methodist church. Consequently, being the Methodist minister linked to Hawkesley, I also have the privilege of being part of the Parish Ministry Team and, as part of that team, I have been asked to share with you what my ministry involves.

I have four different roles: Methodist Minister to Hawkesley Church; Methodist Chaplain to Hawkesley School; Minister to Northfield Methodist Church;

Methodist Chaplain to Holly Hill Infant School in Frankley.

Much of my time is spent performing the expected duties of a minister: offering pastoral support, officiating at funerals, and the occasional baptism or wedding, preaching, leading worship and administering Holy Communion. However, any ministry is inevitably steered by the interests of a particular minister. I have a passion for social justice and for reaching out to the community and this has influenced how I work with the churches.

I have worked with a team at Hawkesley to set up a Place of Welcome. Hawkesley community has very few places where people can gather and get to know one



Northfield Methodist Church is my biggest responsibility. It runs a Stay and Play group for pre-school children and their carers, classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), an English conversation café to support those who want to improve their English, a Dementia Café and a Fellowship Group. I offer support to each of these groups and try and develop the links with the community. I am a member of the Northfield Stakeholders Group and more recently became a Trustee of the Northfield Community Partnership. I also lead a weekly service based at a local nursing home.

Through the Methodist Circuit I am an active member of *CitizensUK*, an organisation that helps civil society to speak out and campaign about issues that are adversely affecting them. Around all the areas I work in, I meet a lot of people who are struggling financially, often working but trapped in the benefits system, and many who are homeless or whose housing is inadequate or insecure. Hearing these stories, focuses my energy in *CitizensUK* on campaigning for people to receive a Living Wage, exploring the possibilities of trialling Basic Income and addressing housing issues.

another. The Place of Welcome tries to provide one such place.

The Reverend Eliakim Ikechukwu, the parish's Assistant Rector, and I take weekly assemblies at Hawkesley School, establishing a relationship with the children and showing them how their values link to a Christian lifestyle. Together we are also present to support the school, the staff, its pupils and its families, pastorally.

I am part of a team that runs 'Messy Church' at Holly Hill School. *(Messy Church is a form of church for children and adults that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality. It's primarily for people who don't already belong to another form of church. For more information, visit www.messychurch.org.uk. Editor)*

I am also part of a team that runs the ‘Street Banquet’ project at Carrs Lane Church in the city centre. We provide the homeless and vulnerably housed with a two-course home-cooked meal every couple of months.

Alongside this I am the District Synod Secretary and therefore also part of the Methodist District Leadership team.

I have often been asked what it feels like to be a Methodist in among a Church of England team. We are not as different as you

might think! The two churches have similar theologies, the clergy train together. Our differences are mainly in rules and structures. I have learnt a lot about these differences over the past 3½ years but, more often than not, I find that both churches are struggling with the same issues and concerns and have a lot to learn from each other. Being part of a Church of England team enriches my ministry.

Revd Caz Hague



Harry L Marks



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ADVENTURES at the Back of Church

The difference between church
with & without kids

Part 7

Gemma Harris continues her series on the joys and the challenges of bringing small children to church.

I have mentioned that the service is a little different when experienced from the back, but the reality for the last seven years has often been that I have moved all around the church.

This last year, as the boys have grown older (5 & 7) I have, for the first time, spent the majority of it sitting down, still at the back; but at the back no-one looks at you oddly for boogying about to the songs with the kids, which I find quite freeing. Also, sometimes, Pauline Weaver and I do our best impressions of choristers, singing in *voce fortissimo*. A healthy disregard of tradition that is maintained for

tradition's sake is something my dad passed on to me. What can I say? And I find belting out tunes in a comic fashion for the entertainment of those around me highly amusing.

Wandering slowly around the church as my children traverse the geography rather like a free-runner means that you discover it anew. Similarly, sermons that, in the past, you might have struggled to engage with, are refreshed. Snippets come at you out of the blue that strike you with fresh meaning. New perspectives on a passage in the Bible that you've heard a million times seem as fresh as fresh,

morning air in the forest. You breathe it in for a second, wondering how you'd managed to exist before without that piece of wisdom in your life, before turning back to your youngster and stopping him from jeopardising some piece of scaffolding integral to the maintenance of the building, or knocking over the Paschal candle, or some other misdemeanour which will threaten your inner peace for months to come.

Scaling pews, climbing across them to reach the walls so they can feel the bumps and lettering, ignoring any obstacle in his way: my little monkey has explored every inch of wall and floor during the sermon.

The prayers and songs and The Peace keep people moving. Sitting down, standing up, kneeling: the landscape changes and the children seem content to read or play in their little area. But the moment a church full of people attempts to engage in 20 minutes of quiet reflection, the children seem to get a wilful desire to explore every nook and cranny of the space.

And why shouldn't they? It occurs to me only now that, physically, they are doing exactly what the person preaching the sermon is attempting to do at the same time. In the only way they know, and in the language they know best, with their bodies they are re-interpreting the familiar. Be it vicar

or toddler, they are doing the same; following the service, trying to understand, trying to engage with the difficulties of life, to problem-solve, to find courage, to keep on keeping on.

While the congregation sometimes falls into the trap of sitting there, passively listening, the child (whether listening, or not, who knows?) is doing, active, being, living in the now. Maybe I've been inspired by the little adventurers and that's why the sermons come alive as much as they do.

Perhaps it's a stretch too far to suggest that we could all reinterpret the sermon in contemporary dance, or mime, or in play, or in art; but can you imagine how we'd all respond differently, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, if we all were free to listen and respond instantly like a child?

There was a phenomenon a few years ago called the 'silent disco'. Everyone would listen to disco music through headphones and dance like there was no-one watching. Each was listening to a different song but they all danced together.

In a way, that's the sermon. Everyone picks out different highlights, different messages, fundamental truths and opinions. It's why you can take your children to church every week and each one comes away with different

'No one's being brainwashed (as my many atheist friends sometimes fear). The power of the sermon is that a multitude can listen to the same voice and respond individually, according to what is happening in their own lives..'

values. No one's being brainwashed (as my many atheist friends sometimes fear). The power of the sermon is that a multitude can listen to the same voice and respond individually, according to what is happening in their own lives. Like a silent disco, each person dances to their own tune. Just like a child.

Gemma Harris



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Kings Norton Park History Trail

Walkers in Kings Norton Park will be able to follow a special trail from Saturday 13th April. Northfield Arts Forum, which works closely with the Friends of the Park, is launching a history trail featuring events from the parish's past. The trail incorporates ten specially researched and created information boards which together create a circular walk through time. The information has been researched by the community. The

trail is free and is open to all visitors.

The Friends of Kings Norton Park are also organising a Litter Pick event as part of the national Keep Britain Tidy campaign. Helpers should meet in the car park on Westhill Road at 10 am, and the event finishes at 12.30 pm. It follows the Community Litter Pick organised by the Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve in the first week of March.

FEBRUARY 2019

BAPTISMS

17th Feb

Lottie Mary-Ann Wakefield
Jamie Anthony Pace

"BAPTISM marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first step in response to God's love. "

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Perennials Are The Answer!



Seasonal tips from a green-fingered reader

OK , but what's the question?

'I would like to have a low-maintenance, attractive garden but I am very busy and have little time to spare. Is this possible?'

Yes! Plant hardy perennials in groups in your borders and all you will have to do is to cut them back as winter approaches, weed once or twice a year and (optional) cover the clumps with leaf litter in the autumn. Clear this away after all risk of frost has gone.

You may be thinking that perennials will take a long time to get going before they flower. Help is at hand! Here is a list of perennials which can be grown from seed and which flower reliably in their first year. Sow outside now!

Gaura lindheimeri "Summer Breeze"
Calamintha nepeta "BlueCloud"
Cephalaria gigantea
Monarda hybrida "Lambarda"
Penstemon barbatus "Twizzle Coral"

Agastache aurantiaca

Achilla ptarmica "Double Diamond"

Echinacea purpurea

Achillea millefolium "Flowerburst Lilac shades" F2 hybrid

Catananche coerulea

Scabiosa nemorosa "Rosenwein"

Scabiosa caucasica "Perfection Blue"

Verbena bonariensis.

To find out more about the above, visit Chiltern Seeds online or ask for one of their catalogues (01 491 824 675) and spend an evening browsing. Chiltern have a vast range of seeds and at reasonable prices.

Plant of the Month : The Crocus

The humble crocus thrives, for some reason, in the West Midlands and you will see great swathes of them on the grassy banks outside Saint Nicolas' Place. Buy as many as you can afford and plant them in drifts on a grassed area. The way to get an informal look

is to throw a handful of corms over your shoulder and plant them where they fall. Don't cut the grass too early in the spring and, thereafter, care is nil. Incidentally, there are many plants that love our area and you can spot them if, on your daily walk (it's good for you!), you glance at your neighbours' gardens and see what looks at home.



Vegetables : The Tomato

Yes I know it is, strictly speaking, a fruit and some pedantic catalogues used to list it with the strawberries but, the way this year is starting out, we could be in for a good crop of outdoor varieties. Two that should do well are *The Amateur* and *Red Alert*, both bush varieties. You will need a sheltered corner with maximum sun and good soil or, of course, a grow bag. Some support may be

appreciated, flavour will be intense unlike some mass production offerings.



Houseplant Corner : Orchids

Previously, they were very expensive and had to be grown in one of those hot and humid greenhouses where your glasses misted up. The magic word is *Phalaenopsis* and these beauties are sold by supermarkets, where the trick is to buy one when they have just come in, and a very good range is kept by IKEA. Other orchids are available but can be more tricky. Cut your teeth on the '*Phals*'. If you are happy with the temperature and humidity, so will your orchids be. More orchids are killed by overwatering than for any other reason, so water with one tablespoonful per week in the summer and every fortnight in the winter. The pot supplied will be transparent because the roots are green and act just like leaves so do not cut off any wiggly roots that appear

above the compost. My orchids are thriving despite having been left in the kitchen sink for three months with no watering last summer. Situate them by a window which does not face south and you will have flowers from December until September.

I have just spotted a couple of pernicious weeds coming up so must attend to them.

Good growing to all!

Adam the Gardener



Mike Baker



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WHAT'S ON IN KINGS NORTON?

Our guide to the best of Kings Norton's lively community life starts here. In this section of the magazine, you will find:

- A list of **Societies, Clubs and Venues** active in and around Kings Norton
- A summary of the **regular services and activities** organised by the church in this parish
- A detailed **Diary of Events** organised over the coming month by the organisations listed and others.

We divide the publicity which we offer to the local community into **advertising and listings**. We charge for **advertisements** placed by local businesses who are seeking to attract paying customers. Meanwhile, in *Societies, Clubs and Venues* and the *Events Diary* we print, free of charge, **listings** of events organised by local social or charitable groups, together with their contact details and a brief description of their aims.

To add your organisation's events to our *What's On* guide for next month, contact Michael Kennedy (michaelkennedy@talk21.com) by the submission deadline shown on page 3. To advertise in the pages of this magazine, contact The Editor, David Ash (editor@kingsnorton.org.uk). Details of advertising charges are available on request or can be viewed on the magazine page of the parish website at www.kingsnorton.org.uk.

Societies, Clubs & Venues

Contact information for Kings Norton organisations and locations that offer opportunities to get together for events and/or to meet people who have similar interests.

LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS

Kings Norton History Society www.kingsnorton.org.uk, clivehartwell48@sky.com

The Society's meetings take the form of talks covering a wide variety of subjects of historic interest, concentrating on the West Midlands region. We also run day visits to places of historical interest. Meetings are normally held in St Nicolas' Place on the last Monday of the month, unless otherwise specified, from September to May. Membership is £12.50 per annum. Talks are free of charge to members. Visitors are always welcome but a charge of £3 per talk is made.

Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve www.fknnr.org.uk, Amanda Cadman on 0121 624 3865 or 07 887 512 382

An informal pressure group to lobby for environmental improvements in and about the reserve. We organise a weekly working party on site (the Tuesday Workout from 10.30 to 1.00 pm, open to all) to manage the Reserve, to increase biodiversity and habitats and to enhance its value for both people and wildlife. We also organise a monthly walk. Dates and meeting locations are on our website.

Friends of Historic Kings Norton www.kingsnorton.org.uk, fhkn@btinternet.com, St Nicolas' Place 0121 458 1223

We raise funds for the restoration of the historic buildings that are known collectively as Saint Nicolas' Place (SNP), through membership subscription and events organised by the group. Members receive regular newsletters containing updates about SNP and listings of Birmingham-wide heritage events. Membership is £10.00 per annum or £7.00 for those not in full-time work. We also arrange guided tours of the Saint Nicolas' Place Heritage Buildings.

Friends of Kings Norton Park friendsofkingsnortonpark.blogspot.com, info.foknp@gmail.com

The Friends of Kings Norton Park and Playing Fields are a group of local volunteers who come together regularly to improve and protect the Kings Norton Park and its neighbouring playing fields. We plan activities and events which aim to make a positive difference to the recreational experience of the people who use these spaces, and we liaise with organisations, including the City Council, which organise events in the parks.

The Fields Millennium Green Trust www.fieldsmillenniumgreen.btck.co.uk, Maggie Sweet 0121 628 1247, sweetc5@sky.com

The Trust and its volunteers meet regularly to maintain and improve the Millennium Green for the benefit of the community. We work closely with the National Trust who, with their young Urban Rangers and others, organise a programme of training and conservation activities. We usually work on Saturdays fortnightly from 10.30 am to 3.00 pm, and sometimes during school holidays.

SOCIAL CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Kings Norton Seniors' Club St Nicolas' Parish Office, 0121 458 3289

The Seniors' Club is for men and women aged 65 and over. We meet at Saint Nicolas' Place every Wednesday from 1 – 3 pm and have a varied programme of events.

Kings Norton Women's Fellowship Carol Devic 0121 458 7667, St Nicolas' Parish Office 0121 458 3289

A group for women of all ages. We meet on the first Thursday of every month from 2-3 pm at Saint Nicolas' Place and offer a variety of activities.

Kings Norton Women's Institute

The WI is now the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK. It plays a unique role in enabling women to take part in a wide variety of activities and to campaign on issues that matter to them and their communities. To accommodate the preferences of members, the Kings Norton WI activity is divided into afternoon and evening groups, each of which meets once a month at the Friends' Meeting House, Watford Road, Cotteridge.

Women's Institute (afternoon group) *Sally Saunders 0121 458 6019*. Meets every third Tuesday of the month from 2pm till 4pm.

Women's Institute (evening group) *Marion Atkin 0121 441 5817*. Meets every third Monday of the month 7 pm for 7.30 pm.

Kings Norton Rotary Club *Colin Guy 0121 444 2020, colinguy1930@yahoo.co.uk*

Rotary is an international network of clubs for business and professional men and women, both active and retired. Clubs are committed to helping local and overseas communities. The local branch meets most Tuesdays for lunch and fellowship at the Kings Heath Cricket Club, 247 Alcester Road South, Birmingham B14 6DT. Visitors are welcome at most meetings, but should contact Colin Guy in advance.

Bournville Townswomen's Guild *Sue Davis 0121 608 0646*

South Birmingham only has two local Townswomen's Guilds and the appropriate one for ladies in Kings Norton is the one based in Bournville, established 65 years ago. A flourishing Guild, it covers parishes within a five mile radius and several current members come from Kings Norton. The group meets every fourth Monday of the month at the Friends' Meeting House in Bournville from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

Kings Norton 41 Club *Michael Bunn 07 831 775 473*

We are a group of former Round Tablers which meets on the second Wednesday of the month at the KN Tennis Club for dinner and a themed talk. Any former members, or former Round Tablers, interested in joining us please make contact beforehand.

Kings Norton Supper Club *Annette Dickers, ardickers@outlook.com*

We meet every month at Kings Norton Golf Club for a two-course evening meal with coffee followed by a speaker. Membership is £12 per annum plus payment for the supper.

SPECIALIST INTEREST GROUPS

U3A (University of the Third Age) www.u3a.org.uk, knu3a.membership@gmail.com, John Taylor 0121 458 6397

Kings Norton's local U3A was successfully established in the first few months of 2017. The U3A is a nationwide organisation based on local groups providing opportunities for retired and semi-retired people to come together and develop their interests. Run on a voluntary basis, it sees members sharing their knowledge and experience with others in interest groups through informal activity sessions covering a wide range of subjects and activities.

Spoken Trend tom_mccann@hotmail.co.uk and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @spokentrend, Tom McCann

Spoken Trend is King's Norton's first regular venture into 'open-mic' spoken word and performance poetry. Launched in January 2017, it is already attracting a significant audience. It gives participants of all ages, many completely new to the activity, the opportunity to perform their own works in front of like-minded people. It takes place on the first floor of the Bull's Head pub on the last Wednesday of every month. Those wanting to perform should check in from 7.00 pm. The event is free for performers while spectators pay a £3 entry fee.

Kings Norton Photography Society www.kingsnortonphotographicsociety.com

Membership is open to men and women of all ages, from beginners to advanced. We meet at Kings Norton Tennis Club most Wednesday evenings from 8.00 pm-10.00 pm throughout the season (October – April inclusive) with a varied programme of events and outings.

Kings Norton Patchwork and Quilting Group Sally Barney 07778 025725 or Deirdre Barker 07980 284416.

We welcome people of all levels of ability. The group meets every Tuesday in term time at the Friends' Meeting House in Bournville from 10.00 am till 3.00 pm.

Birmingham Philatelic Society www.birminghamphilatelic.co.uk, Robert Shaw, 0121 415 5226

We are a group of stamp and postcard collectors, sharing our hobby through displays, buying and selling material, auctions and visits. Everyone with an interest is welcome including beginners. Our daytime meetings start at 2.00 pm at the Friends' Meeting House in Cotteridge.

Greenlands Chess Club www.chess.com/club/greenlands, Richard Collett 0121 458 7617 or 07874 216935

We are a small, friendly chess club, meeting most Tuesdays from 7.00 pm at the Greenlands Social Club in Longbridge Lane. We have members of all standards playing friendly or

competitive league chess. New members are always welcome. There is a fee of £2 per night (the first two visits are free) or annual membership is £40.

Kings Norton Fundraising Group for St Mary's Hospice

www.birminghamhospice.org.uk suebarkerdavies@gmail.com, Sue Davies
0121 608 0646

We are a local group of volunteers who raise money to care for people living with life-limiting illnesses, their families and carers in Birmingham and Sandwell. We organize fundraising activities such as regular charity quizzes and stalls at local festivals. We also aim to raise awareness of the wide range of services offered by the hospice. We meet locally at 7.00 pm on the 2nd Monday of each month so, if you might like to join us or can spare a couple of hours occasionally to help, please contact Sue (as above).

Kings Heath Horticultural Society bron.salway@blueyonder.co.uk

Kings Heath Horticultural Society is the local horticultural society for Kings Norton residents. It usually meets at Manningford Hall on Bells Lane, B14 5TJ. We have a wide range of speakers on gardening-related topics. We also hold two informal shows, spring and summer, where members display and then vote for their favourites. We meet from March to December, usually on the first Monday of the month at 7.00 pm for a 7.30 pm start. Membership costs £6 annually plus £2 members' entrance fee per meeting, or £3 for visitors. For more information please email Bron Salway.

SPORTS & EXERCISE CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS

Health Exchange www.healthexchange.org.uk, 0800 1583535

Health Exchange creates an ongoing dialogue with the Birmingham community about health and wellbeing. It advises local volunteers who wish to offer relevant activities. A Health Exchange-supported walk, lasting for up to two hours with a break, takes place every Friday from 10.30 am, beginning in the car park of Kings Norton Park. Anyone interested in joining the group should contact walk leader Sally Saunders on 0121 458 6019.

South Birmingham Ramblers www.sbramblers.co.uk

Every week we meet up in Kings Norton Playing Fields Car Park to car share to the start of our walks. These are between 5 and 11 miles on various days of the week. For our current programme, please see our website and contact the walk leader for further details. For those interested in gentler exercise, we also have fortnightly mini walks on Tuesdays of approximately 2 miles, starting at 10 am: please contact Jenny (0121 444 4094) for further information.

Active Parks, www.beactivebirmingham.co.uk, 0121 464 2012

Active Parks, part of the City Council's Birmingham Wellbeing initiative, works in partnership with various organisations in order to offer a wide variety of free physical activities across Birmingham parks. With the Friends of Kings Norton Park group, depending on the season, it offers a range of local events, from jogging to Tai Chi, normally meeting in the Westhill Road car park at Kings Norton Park.

Kings Norton Tennis Club, *Grange Hill Road B38 8RE* www.kingsnortontennis.co.uk, 0121 458 2351

Our members benefit from all-year round use of tennis courts (except on rare occasions when club matches or coaching take priority) and access to members' club nights. Membership fees are lower than many clubs in the area, with discounts for couples as well as families.

Kings Norton Motorcycle Club www.evoice.org.uk/knmcc, *Gordon Green* 07504 676766

Formed in Kings Norton in 1944, we are a family-friendly motorcycle club with interests ranging across all types of motorcycles, from classic to modern. Some members take part in trials, scrambles, and hill climbs. We meet weekly on Thursdays at the Woodbourne Sports and Social Club in Rumbush Lane, Earlswood from 8.00 pm onwards. There is a thriving programme of social activities.

Kings Norton Golf Club *Brockhill Lane B48 7ED*, www.kingsnortongolfclub.co.uk, 01564 826789

We offer one of the premier golf courses in the West Midlands, set in 220 acres of beautiful parkland and featuring 27 holes of championship standard, a par 3 short course, a putting green and practice facilities. Applications for membership are welcome. Our impressive Grade 2 listed Weatheroak Hall clubhouse is also a popular venue for weddings, private parties and marketing events. Throughout spring and summer 2018 the club is running a series of lessons for ladies who want to get in to golf. Participants do not need any special golf gear, clubs and balls are provided. The cost is £25 for 5 lessons. More details on the Home and Ladies' pages of our website.

Push Bikes www.pushbikes.org.uk/event/bournville-gentle-cycling, *John & Hilary Porter* 0121 477 2156

Push Bikes is a Birmingham campaign group for better cycling, encouraging people who are not regular cyclists to get on their bikes for easy and sociable outings. Routes, normally of 10 to 12 miles, are mostly traffic-free, exploring local paths and parks and going at the pace of the slowest participant. New riders are always welcome. The nearest local group to Kings Norton meets at 10.00 on Saturdays at Rowheath Pavilion, Heath Road, B30 1HH.

Black Adder Clog Morris, blackaddersecretary@gmail.com or find us on Facebook

Morris Dancing is an ideal way of having fun and keeping fit. Dancers and musicians, beginners or advanced, men and women are welcomed by Black Adder. We meet most Thursdays (except August) from 8.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. in Selly Oak Friends' Meeting House at 930 Bristol Rd South, Birmingham B29 6NB. If you want to come along, please email us to check we're meeting that week.

COMMUNITY CENTRES & VENUES

Saint Nicolas' Place, 81 The Green B38 8RU, www.saintnicolasplace.co.uk, info@saintnicolasplace.co.uk, 0121 458 1223.

Kings Norton Library, Pershore Road South, Birmingham. B30 3EU
kings.norton.library@birmingham.gov.uk, 0121 464 1532

A wide range of books, CDs and materials for all ages including community information and local history. There is also a meeting room for hire and internet access. The Library organises a range of regular events including activities for children, reading and writing groups and our regular coffee mornings. A number of other organisations hold events at the Library.

Bells Farm Community Centre, Bells Farm Close B14 5QP, www.bellsfarm.org.uk, 0121 433 3532

Greaves Hall, Greaves Square B38 9LX www.opkn.co.uk/greaveshall, 0121 448 8760

Hawkesley Community Centre, 51 Edgwood Road B38 9RN,
www.facebook.com/HawkesleyCommunityCentre, 0121 399 0122

The centre organises a number of regular activities. Each Monday, between 5.30 and 7.30 pm, we offer exciting free activities for young people aged 11-17: just turn up. We also have a weekly Wellbeing Wednesday lunch for those aged 50 and over, with a free activity, costing £5.50. Please book in advance. We also run a drop-in centre for young adults aged 18-25 for help with job applications, or just a cup of tea and a chat. You can bring children, but please ensure they are supervised.

Manningford Hall, Bells Lane B14 5RY, www.manningfordhall.com, 0121 430 6005.

MUSIC VENUES

Tower of Song, 107 Pershore Road South, B30 3JC, www.towerofsong.co.uk, 0121 486 1300

We are a thriving music venue, created by a team of local volunteers and featuring music to suit all tastes. Most shows start from 8:30-9pm. Every Wednesday we have Rea River Roots and every Thursday is our Crossroads Blues Club. Please check our website for information on all events.

The Church in the Parish

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

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

St Nicolas' Parish Church

on The Green, Kings Norton, B38 8RU

Sunday	9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
	10.30 am	Holy Communion (with "Oasis" for 7's-11's)
2nd Sunday	10.30 am	Parade Service or Morning Worship for all ages
	4 pm	Holy Baptism (1 st and 3 rd Sundays of the month)
	6 pm	Evening Worship (see below)

Every Sunday evening we offer prayer, music and quiet. 1st Sunday: Taizé Prayer, 2nd Sunday: Holy Communion with Prayer for Healing, 3rd Sunday: Night Prayer (Compline) and Reflection, 4th/5th Sundays: Evening Prayer or Creative Worship.

Mon & Weds	9 am	Morning Prayer
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Hawkesley Church (Anglican & Methodist)

at Hawkesley Academy on the corner of Shannon Road and Old Partway, Kings Norton, B38 9TR

Sunday	10.30am	Worship and Children's Activities (5-11's)
		1 st & 3 rd Sundays Morning Worship
		2 nd & 4 th Sundays Holy Communion
Tuesday	10am	Hawkesley Coffee Morning (every two weeks)

Immanuel Church

at Saint Nicolas' Place, 81 The Green, Kings Norton, B38 8RU

Sunday	10.30am	Worship (with "Oasis" for those at Primary School)
1 st & 3 rd Sundays		Holy Communion;
2 nd Sunday		Joint service with either St Nicolas or Hawkesley
4 th Sunday		All-Age Worship

During the Week

We open Saint Nicolas' Church as much as we can so that all may share God's peace and promise in a space where they have been found and trusted for centuries. There is a place for you within its story. Please pray that more will know it as a safe place for prayer and healing, where sorrow and joy are held in God's love. **All are welcome.**

Wednesday	10.00 am - 12.00 noon : Open Church
Thursday	6.30 pm – 8.00 pm : Marriage and Christening (Baptism) enquiries in Saint Nicolas' Church
Saturday	10.00 am - 12.00 noon : Coffee and "Knit & Natter" in St Nicolas' Church

Children's Activities

Bumps & Babies: for new and expectant parents, in St Nicolas' Church every Monday from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm. **Tiny Tots:** for 0-5's and their parents or carers every Thursday at 9.00 am in St Nicolas' Church.

Children are welcome at all services in all our churches. We offer All-Age worship and special activities for children on certain Sundays.
Please see our weekly newsletter for details.

Growing in Faith

We are exploring fresh ways for all to grow in faith, those making their very first step, those who have made many and those who are rediscovering God's love after times of change. Please ask in each church or see our website for details.

Help us to keep our Parish Church open

It costs almost £1,000 a week to keep St Nicolas' Church open. We welcome all financial support through donations and especially through regular Planned Giving. Do ask for details and, if a taxpayer, ask how you can Gift Aid your offering.

Christening (Baptism) and Weddings

Saint Nicolas' Church is open on Thursday evenings between 6.30 pm and 8.00 pm for enquiries about Christenings & weddings. This is an opportunity to make a booking to talk about these services in more detail.

More details at www.kingsnorton.org.uk

Events Diary April 2019

Monday 1 April

- Kings Heath Horticultural Society, Manningford Hall, Bells Lane 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm: Simon Gulliver 'Plant Hunters'.

Tuesday 2 April

- Kings Norton Patchwork & Quilting Group, Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge 10.00 am - 3.00 pm
- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve conservation workout, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm (for venue see website)
- Funday Tuesday for babies & under 5s, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 -11.30 am
- Creative Writing Group, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 am -12.30 pm
- U3A (University of the Third Age) Monthly General Meeting, St Joseph's & St Helen's Church Hall, Station Road, Cotteridge 2.00 pm
- Greenlands Chess Club, 7.00 pm

Wednesday 3 April

- Coffee morning, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30 am
- Local History Group, Kings Norton Library, 2.00 pm-4.00 pm
- Kings Norton Seniors' Club, Saint Nicolas' Place, 1.00-3.00 pm: Armchair Exercise & Bingo
- Rea River Roots, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Thursday 4 April

- Kings Norton Women's Fellowship, St Nicolas' Place, 2.00-3.00 pm
- Kings Norton Motorcycle Club, Woodbourne Social Club, Earlswood, 8.00 pm
- Crossroads Blues Club, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Friday 5 April

- Kings Norton Library, 2.15-2.45pm: Crafty Tales for the Under 5's

Saturday 6 April

- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start
- Code Club, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30
- Saturday Book Group, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30 am
- Tennis Festival, Kings Norton Tennis Club, Grange Hill Road, 2pm-4pm. All welcome to visit the club and hit a few balls on the courts. Please wear trainers, racquets and balls will be provided.

- Hawkesley Church Quiz night with Fish & Chip Supper, Hawkesley Church Centre, Shannon Road 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm. £7 pp with supper, £4 pp without. To reserve places call David Smith on 07484 642473 or 0121 453 9931. Bring your own drinks.

Monday 8 April

- Kings Norton Fundraising Group for St Mary's Hospice, Stirchley United Social Club, 41 Hazelwell Lane, B30 2PR, 8.00 pm

Tuesday 9 April

- South Birmingham Ramblers: two-mile gentle walk, Kings Norton Playing Fields car park, 10.00 am
- Kings Norton Patchwork & Quilting Group, Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 10.00 am - 3.00 pm
- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve conservation workout, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm (for venue see website)
- Funday Tuesday for babies & under 5s, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 -11.30 am
- Creative Writing Group, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 am -12.30 pm
- Greenlands Chess Club, 7.00 pm

Wednesday 10 April

- Coffee morning, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30 am
- Kings Norton Seniors' Club, Saint Nicolas' Place, 1.00-3.00 pm: Outing to Palace Theatre 'Memory Lane'
- Rea River Roots, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Thursday 11 April

- Birmingham Philatelic Society, Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 2.00 pm: David Shaw 'Around the World'
- Kings Norton Motorcycle Club, Woodbourne Social Club, Earlswood, 8.00 pm
- Crossroads Blues Club, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Friday 12 April

- Friends of Kings Norton Park Litter Pick (as part of national Keep Britain Tidy initiative), 10.00 am-12.30 pm. Meet in car park on Westhill Road
- Kings Norton Library 2.15-2.45pm: Crafty Tales for the Under 5's

Saturday 13 April

- Farmers' Market, The Green, 9.00 am-2.00 pm
- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start

- Friends of Historic Kings Norton charity book sale, St Nicolas' Place, 10 am-1 pm
- Code Club, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30
- Fields Millennium Green Trust volunteer working party, Fields Millennium Green, 10.30 am

Monday 15 April

- Kings Norton Women's Institute (evening group), Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 7.00 pm: 'Blood Banks'

Tuesday 16 April

- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve conservation workout, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm (for venue see website)
- Funday Tuesday for babies & under 5s, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 -11.30 am
- Creative Writing Group, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 am -12.30 pm
- Kings Norton Women's Institute (afternoon group), Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 2.00-4.00 pm: Vicky Farmer 'Being a TV contestant'
- Greenlands Chess Club, 7.00 pm
- Kings Norton Supper Club, Kings Norton Golf Club, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm: Jenny Chinn of St Mary's Hospice

Wednesday 17 April

- Becky's Crafts-Children's Craft Morning, Kings Norton Library, 10 am-1.00 pm
- Coffee morning, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30 am
- Kings Norton Photographic Society, Kings Norton Tennis Club, 8.00 pm-10.00 pm: Fun Competition
- Rea River Roots, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Thursday 18 April

- Kings Norton Motorcycle Club, Woodbourne Social Club, Earlswood, 8.00 pm
- Crossroads Blues Club, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Friday 19 April Good Friday

- Kings Norton Library closed for Easter Holiday , re-opening Wednesday 24 April

Saturday 20 April

- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start

Tuesday 23 April

- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve conservation workout, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm (for venue see website)
- Greenlands Chess Club, 7.00 pm

Wednesday 24 April

- Coffee morning, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30 am
- Spoken Trend 'open mic' spoken word and poetry event, The Bull's Head, The Green: performers report 7.00 pm, event begins at 7.30 pm
- Rea River Roots, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Thursday 25 April

- Birmingham Philatelic Society, Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 2.00 pm: Clive Jones 'Antipodean Trials and Tribulations'
- Kings Norton Motorcycle Club, Woodbourne Social Club, Earlswood, 8.00 pm
- Crossroads Blues Club, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Friday 26 April

- Health Exchange local walk, Kings Norton Park car park, 10.30 am (all walkers, especially new participants, please check with Sally on 0121 458 6019)
- Kings Norton Library 2.15-2.45pm: Crafty Tales for the Under 5's

Saturday 27 April

- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start
- Code Club, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30
- Childrens Book Club, Kings Norton Library, 11.30 am - 12 noon
- Fields Millennium Green Trust volunteer working party, Fields Millennium Green, 10.30 am

Monday 29 April

- Bournville Townswomen's Guild, Friends' Meeting House, Bournville, 2.00-4.00 pm
- Kings Norton History Society, St Nicolas' Place 7.00 pm: David Hess 'Out of the frying pan into the fire: one couple's escape from Nazi Germany in 1938'

Tuesday 30 April

- Kings Norton Patchwork & Quilting Group, Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 10.00 am - 3.00 pm
- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve conservation workout, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm, (for venue see website)
- Funday Tuesday for babies & under 5s, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 -11.30 am
- Greenlands Chess Club, 7.00 pm

Saint Nicolas' Place Weekly Diary

Monday

Rainbows 5.30 pm

Guides 7.00 pm

Zumba 7.00 pm (Verity 07 966 690 476)

Cantare Community Choir 7.30-9.00 pm (Rebecca 07 803 900 154)

Kings Norton History Society 7.30 pm (last Monday of the month)

Tuesday

Slimming World 9.30 am-11.00 am & 5.00 pm – 7.00 pm (Nicola 07 875 555 958)

Rhythm Time 9.30 am – 12.30 pm (Vicky 0121 447 7632)

Circle Dancing 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm (Jan Davies 0121 476 1301)

Brownies 6.00 pm- 7.30 pm

Wednesday

Extend Exercise Class 9.30 – 11.00 am

Shapes & Adders Toddler Maths 9.45 - 10.45 am

Kings Norton Seniors' Club 1.00 pm-3.00 pm (contact Saint Nicolas' Place Office)

FSK Karate 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm (07 703 754 900)

Deeley's Dragon Martial Arts 6.30-7.30 pm

(enquiries@beeches-martialarts.co.uk)

Pilates 7.15 - 8.15 pm

Thursday

Kings Norton Women's Fellowship (first Thursday of month) 2.00 -3.00 pm

Brownies 6.30 pm-8.30 pm

Total Pilates 6.30 pm-7.30 pm (Pauline Austin 07 773 782 463)

Yoga Really Works Pregnancy Class 6.30 - 7.30 pm

Friday

Illumination Youth Theatre 4.00 – 5.30 pm (ages 5-10); 5.30 - 7.00 pm (ages 11-18) (Melanie 07 766 724 834)

Yoga Really Works Stretch & Relax with Baby 11.00-12.00 noon

Saturday

Feel the Rhythm Dance School for children and young people 10.00 am-1.00 pm (Donna 07 788 528 504)

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Coach travel and tour of the Cathedral : £20

Coach and tour of Cathedral plus Choral Evensong: £20, children 5-18 £5; 2 adults and up to three children (not necessarily from the same family for the purposes of ticketing). Family ticket £45.

Coach travel, tour of the Cathedral and afternoon tea : £35

Coach and tour of Cathedral, Choral Evensong plus afternoon tea at the Lincoln Hotel (sandwiches, Lincolnshire sausage rolls, scotch eggs, cakes, scones with jam and cream made on the premises): £35, children £10 (2 small children may share a tea); 2 adults and up to three children (not necessarily from the same family for the purposes of ticketing). Family ticket £80.

The pilgrimage is open to the congregations of Saint Nicolas', Immanuel and Hawksley Churches, Kings Norton, and their families. The three congregations will have priority bookings on a first-come-first-served basis. Under 18's must be accompanied by a family member.

Fill in a booking form as soon as possible. They are available at the back of Saint Nicolas' Church, from the Parish Office or from Thelma Mitchell. Return to Thelma Mitchell or the Parish Office with a deposit of £15 per person before 14th April.

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Washing Tea Towels

The Thoughts of a Lay Minister

Amongst all the doom and gloom in the news recently (I'm not even going to mention the B word. Who knows what will have happened to the UK by the time you read this?) one story has stood out for me. It is the story of Tony Foulds. Up until recently no-one knew the name but following a chance meeting, Tony has become an unexpected media sensation.

His story starts in 1944 when a damaged B17 Flying Fortress bomber, the 'Mi Amigo', deliberately crashed into trees to avoid a group of children playing in a local park. All ten crew on board were killed. Tony was one of those children. He was eight years old.

Tony has tended the memorial to the 'Mi Amigo' crew for decades. Then he had a chance meeting with BBC journalist Dan Walker who was out with his dog in the park. Dan asked what he

needed.

Tony told him that the memorial needed some new steps and maybe a flagpole. And a fly-past for the 75th anniversary of the crash.

And that's what he got. Thousands of people turned out to be with Tony and to watch the fly-past by British and American planes, including four F15 fighters forming the 'missing man' formation to honour the crew. He got his new steps and flagpole too.

All this came from a chance conversation with a man walking his dog, and a social media campaign. For once, it was an example of social media being used for good, something which is often overlooked.



'I wonder how many other people there are out there like Tony, doing things because they need to be done, because they matter not because it will be noticed or rewarded in some way.'

Tony has caught the imagination of the public. Not just because it is a great story but because he is so unassuming. He hasn't tended that memorial for all these years for recognition or reward or fame. He has done it because it was the right thing to do, because it mattered, because it needed doing and because he felt he owed his life to the crew of the 'Mi Amigo'.

I wonder how many other people there are out there like Tony, doing things because they need to be done, because they matter not because it will be noticed or rewarded in some way. We have many of them in our churches,

people who just get on and do things. Cleaning the brass, washing the tea towels, buying the matches and the milk. They may seem small things but they are all things that matter and strangely they are the jobs that we never seem to have difficulty finding people to do. Perhaps because they really are what service is all about: the little things, the things that matter, the 'unseen' things.

I wonder if, in another 75 years, one of our eight year olds will be like Tony, doing something unassuming and unsung. Or maybe just washing the tea towels.

Pauline Weaver

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Nowruz : Spring Equinox

Kings Norton's Iranian (Lay) Reader, Parisa Pordelkhaki, introduces us to the festival of Nowruz.

Nowruz means 'new day' in Persian and is the most important festival of the year in Iran. It is also celebrated in a number of other countries across the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, the Balkans and East Africa, and dates back at least 3,000 years. The holiday has changed over the thousands of years that it has been celebrated, and different regions have preserved or developed different traditions, as well as adding new ones. But wherever it is observed, it celebrates the original message of rebirth and renewal.

Nowruz marks the spring equinox, when night and day are of equal length. This is usually on 20th or 21st March. It's the day when winter changes into spring in the northern hemisphere, and it feels like a new beginning. In Iran it is followed by four days of public holidays, and schools and universities close for two weeks.

People start their preparation for the festivities weeks beforehand. They clean their homes from top to bottom, including carpets, windows and curtains. Everyone in the family helps out. Anything broken is repaired or replaced and the house is

decorated with flowers. By doing this spring cleaning, people wash away the bad things from the previous year and prepare for better things to come in the new year.

People prepare a special table in their homes, where they place small dishes holding seven symbolic foods and spices. The names of these foods all start with the letter 's' in Persian and so the table is called the 'seven s's' (*haft-seen*). The dishes generally

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contain wheat or bean sprouts (*sabze*), vinegar (*serke*), apples (*sib*), garlic (*sir*), a wheat-based pudding called *samanu*, a red spice called *sumac*, and *senjed*, a kind of wild olive which is common in the region. Other symbolic objects can include goldfish, painted eggs, candles and a mirror. The seven s's symbolise life, love, health and prosperity.

Fire forms an important part of the celebrations and bonfires are built and lit on the streets for four Tuesdays in the weeks before Nowruz. On the last Tuesday, people observe the Festival of Fire (*Chaharshanbe Suri*), which involves jumping over these fires, which is believed to bring health and good luck in the new year.

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There are also part-time and full-time work opportunities available. Please do ask Elizabeth/Lizzie for more information in her role as a business coach and mentor.

Iranians spend the night of Nowruz with their family. The traditional new year dinner is white fish with rice and herbs. Many families give a money gift (called *eid*) to the children to mark the new year. People often visit each other's homes and always bring traditional gifts.

People also celebrate on the street. Traditional poetry, song and dance play a key role in the celebrations and

people fill the streets to watch and take part in the performances. Traditional sports are also popular. They often involve horse-riding or wrestling.

The festivities end on the thirteenth day after Nowruz, when people traditionally spend the day picnicking outside. The countryside is full of families eating, dancing, singing and enjoying the last day of the holidays.

International Nowruz Day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution [A/RES/64/253](#) of 2010, at the initiative of several countries that share this holiday (Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan).

Inscribed in 2009 on the [Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity](#) as a cultural tradition observed by numerous peoples, Nowruz is an ancestral festivity marking the first day of spring and the renewal of nature. It promotes values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families as well as reconciliation and neighbourliness, thus contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and different communities.

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Drama in Kings Norton!

As our Events Diary shows, there are many very active social organisations in Kings Norton. Nevertheless, there are a few activities which used to flourish years ago, but are no longer part of the parish's life. One of these is amateur dramatics, in which, back in the 1950s, local people were so active and effective that they even generated positive reviews from Midlands theatre critics! Michael Kennedy tells the story.

During the 1950s, there were two local organisations that entertained residents with their acting and performing talents. The more serious one was the St Nicolas' Amateur Dramatic Society, which performed a number of well-known plays ranging from comedies to murder melodramas. The other, perhaps rather more light-hearted in its approach, was the Kings Norton Youth Fellowship, whose members organised a remarkably extensive range of social activities.

Some aspiring actors and performers graduated from the Youth Fellowship events to become members of the Dramatic Society. I am indebted to one of them, Keith Ackrill, still vigorous and active well into his eighties ('I put it down to clean living ... never having anything to do with it!'). Many readers will remember Keith, who was born and lived in Wychall Lane and attended

Kings Norton Grammar School. He became a very familiar voice and face on local BBC TV and radio, and latterly with Central TV. I am also indebted to Phil Haycock, who has an extensive archive on the history of the Kings Norton Youth Fellowship.

The focus for these many and various performances was the Saracen's Head, now Saint Nicolas' Place. In those days, it was far removed from its current modern, superbly facilitated and stable condition. In fact, in many ways, it was completely unsuitable for dramatic productions, but there wasn't anything else locally. There was virtually no accessible space for actors to dress and change, and a particular problem was that there was only one way to enter and exit the stage... up the fire escape outside!

Apart from the problems of actors



coming on having frozen in the outside air, or with their outfits dishevelled by wind and rain, it provided minimum flexibility if things didn't go as planned. Keith remembers one occasion when one of the actors came on several 'pages' too early, and couldn't exit quickly on the other side. Another actor had to improvise some dialogue to try to explain the unexpected presence to a bewildered audience. Another problem was that there was no peephole through which the producer or his sound effects managers could see what was happening: telephones and door

bells didn't always happen on cue!

In general, the Society's plays were directed and produced by Glyn Evans, who was an arduous taskmaster, demanding from his cast the highest of standards. Glyn had a background in 'amdram' in Yorkshire, where the Northern audiences were particularly demanding. He was a perfectionist: his constant instruction was 'I don't want any member of the audience to go out saying "They were pretty good... for amateurs."'

Keith Ackrill recalls playing the part

of a blind man and receiving exhaustive instructions from Glyn on how blind people look over people's heads. Glyn also put a table on the stage, telling Keith to stumble over it! In fact, under Glyn's regime, several actors took their own initiative to play their parts effectively. For the same role, Keith even visited the local Blind Society to perfect the way he portrayed reading Braille.

It was all taken very seriously, and it was an indication of their confidence and commitment that the group was active in inviting the theatre critics of local papers, including the Birmingham Mail and the Redditch Indicator.

The selection of appropriate plays wasn't always successful. The first Drama Society production was *Quiet Weekend*, and was generally well received. But its second play, *Winter Sunshine*, was condemned with faint praise by the critics, one of whom said 'It was a pity that this talented

company could find nothing better to bring the best out of them'. In complete contrast to *Winter Sunshine*, the Society's performance of JB Priestley's *They Came to a City* was described by the same critic as their 'finest play'.

Normally, the Society would perform the play on two or three evenings at The Saracen's Head, and then on the following Sunday take it over to West Heath Sanatorium, as it was then known. They performed at the end of a ward, with extra beds from other wards having been wheeled in. These performances also had an unlooked-for benefit for Keith. As a result of his involvement, he joined the Birmingham Hospitals' Broadcasting Association, which in turn led to his successful radio and TV career.

One interesting initiative arranged by Keith was the recording of one of the Society's plays for transmission across the radio network in local hospitals. It was, of course, a



'Bollywood was not a name I recognised. I assumed it was somewhere in Worcestershire. Anyway, they said that my skills as a dancing master would not be needed that evening. So how else can I help my local church?'

'Where there's a will, there's a way, Edgar. Where there's a will...'

It's never too late to be generous. Talk to one of the clergy about remembering Kings Norton Team Parish in your will, or enquire at the Parish Office.



significant challenge for the cast, effectively doing a play for radio rather than a live audience. There was the ever-present risk that an actor might slip 'out of voice' and confuse listeners with an unfamiliar accent.

As well as actors occasionally coming on to the stage embarrassingly early, there were other occasional hiccups. In March 1958, the play was *Who Lies There*, a rather serious Victorian murder melodrama. But one performance turned into a comedy when the high winged collar worn by one actor broke, and he spent much of the act trying to fix it unobtrusively. Cast and audience dissolved into inappropriate laughter.

Some readers will remember some of the Society's 'regulars'. Norman Glover often took the male lead, while Doreen Reed was a popular female lead. Stage Director was usually David Richards and Stage Manager was Benjamin Gilbert. Lighting and special effects were the responsibility of Ron Stone and George Harris, while the scenery was designed and painted by Victor Skinner, who produced a much praised backdrop for *Winter Sunshine* within an hour!

While the Dramatic Society began to take shape in the mid-1950s, it was actually the Youth Fellowship that came first, presenting its first variety concert in August 1950. The Fellowship was formed in a period

where, without TV, people had to make their own entertainment and performing was one of the first activities to emerge. This began a tradition of doing two or three similar concerts each year, though in September 1951 it performed *Hay Fever* by Noel Coward.

The first variety show was at St Agnes' Hall in Cotteridge, while *Hay Fever* was performed in the main hall of Turves Green School... but only just. Minutes before 'curtains up' it was realised that no entertainment licence had been granted, or even applied for, so the performance would be illegal. But the headmaster turned a blind eye and, as everyone hoped, the local constabulary didn't turn up.

Apart from the plays, the Fellowship's variety performances were in the main devised and scripted with commendable wit and skill by members of the group, who also displayed a high level of talent. In 1954, the group formed a highly ambitious plan to present the musical comedy *1066 and All That*, based on the humorous and best-selling book of the same name. But as rehearsals proceeded, it was realised that British history was going to be a problem.

The play demanded Roman soldiers, saints, fairies, medieval barons,

policemen, crusaders, monks, cavaliers and roundheads, Julius Caesar, Henry VIII and all his wives, Sir Francis Drake and his crew, Queen Elizabeth I, four King Georges, Nelson, Napoleon and Wellington and many more characters and eras. Though the potential cast of more than 30 was willing to persevere, it was decided that the vast complexity of so many changes of costume made the play impractical.

Though the regular variety shows continued, only one other play was performed, a comedy called *Little Lambs Eat Ivy* in 1954. Interestingly, that play provides a link with the developing Drama Society, because one of the local newspapers commented 'Undoubtedly some of the youngsters will graduate to the senior society'.

The demise of 'amdram' in Kings Norton came with dismaying finality around 1960. The Saracen's Head was pronounced too dangerous and, around the same time, the upper floor of the Old Grammar School, where both groups had rehearsed for years, was declared unstable. By the time each was restored, the era had disappeared.

Michael Kennedy

Saint Nicolas' Place Tudor Garden

For a week in February we had a real taste of Spring weather. As I look around the courtyard here at Saint Nicolas' Place and the little Tudor garden, there are certainly signs that the good weather is on the way. The pots and clumps of daffodils, though a bit battered by the wind, are brightening up a dull day.

Over the last few months there has been little to do in the way of gardening except to tidy up the dead stalks and leaves and, we're sorry to say, pick up people's litter from the garden. Now there is evidence of new growth.

Towards the end of March, depending on the weather, we will once again have our sale of plants in the inner courtyard at Saint Nicolas' Place. We have some lovely new display shelving which will not only make it easier to see the plants, but will enhance the look of the courtyard itself. The plants will be a

reasonable 50p or £1.00 with some larger ones being individually priced. Last year was the start of this project, so this year we will be building on last year's success and having a wider range of plants available.

At the April Kings Norton Farmers' Market we will run a stall as we did in October. Despite the pouring rain it was well worth it and we appreciate being offered the pitch again.

Once again, we'd like to thank everyone who has helped us with the garden project, with raising funds, donations of plants and pots and those who have bought items. We hope that, as people get to know about us, we can become self-supporting, so please pay us a visit at Saint Nicolas' Place or at the April Farmers' Market.

Cas and Don Hamilton



Where can you find ... up-to-the-minute parish news; tickets for local events (bookable online); the churches' weekly newsletter; past editions of this magazine; details of Sunday services; contact details for the Parish Office; a Who's Who of the Ministry Team; information about booking a wedding; advice on planning a funeral; a parish map... **24 hours a day? ***

* Why, the parish website, of course: www.kingsnorton.org.uk. Give it a try!



As some readers will know, Kings Norton Team Parish is developing a connection with Druids Heath communities, particularly through the warmth and welcome of Kath's Café in Idmiston Croft.

We wanted to know more about the café and so I asked the owner, Kath Coogan, to tell us a little about its history and what the business means to her.

As part of our conversation, I asked Kath why she had recently commissioned a mural to be painted on the outside wall. Kath's response demonstrates her big heart for Druids Heath and her part in ensuring that it is no longer "the forgotten estate".

When was the café opened?

21 July 2014.

What made you open a café?

It was my husband, Paul's, idea. To cut a long story short, I didn't want to go back to driving instructing and couldn't carry on with my cleaning business because of a bad back; so I invested in a café. Before 2014, I'd only cooked family dinners so the thought of owning somewhere and cooking for loads of people was terrifying! I chose the Idmiston Croft location in the end because it was right opposite the Maypole Driving Test Centre, which I knew, having been a driving instructor.

I used to have to check with pupils if they needed the toilet before their driving test because there was no toilet at the Test Centre and not many nearby. I thought opening a café would mean there was a toilet

for pupils and somewhere for instructors to have coffee. They could see through the café window when their pupils arrived back from their driving tests.

What was the café before?

It was a newsagent's that had been closed for a year. I saw it on Google and didn't know Druids Heath at all before then. We took over the lease on 12th April and opened on 21st July. The shop had to be gutted and we needed to be really resourceful with the interior. We found the tables and chairs in charity shops and the counter and breakfast bar are made from scaffolding boards found at the back of our garden.

The business grew really quickly from the beginning, largely through word of mouth and passers by.

Why do you care about the Estate?

I've become interested in the Druids Heath community through getting to know individuals. I met women when they were first pregnant and I've had the opportunity to watch their kids growing up over the last few years. In ten years' time, they'll be teenagers going past and still saying hello. I have a real heart for youth, to be a Mum, a host.

I want to help people. I don't like hurt, upset and struggle. Just being nice to people makes such a difference. We're all wounded and



battered. I empathise with people's struggles. I understand mental health difficulties and depression.

I want people to know the café door is open and that they will be greeted with a smile, tea or coffee. I want to welcome everyone, even if they just want to use the toilet. I don't want to see people hungry, suffering and feeling degraded about themselves. Life is about give and take. If I've got it and don't need it, you can have it. The café is my sanctuary and I want it to be a sanctuary for others.

Why did you want to commemorate Druids Heath on a mural?

Lots of people say that Druids Heath is a bad estate, that it's rough. I disagree. I've heard about burglaries and crime but I've only seen good things.

Lots of people are saying the wall is fantastic. Someone's son was

fascinated by the picture of the squirrel! It's making people happy to see something positive rather than hearing 'It's Druids Heath. What do you expect?' Everyone sees something different in the mural.

What are your hopes and dreams for the café?

I still see it being here at the end of the twenty-five year lease. The café was originally meant to be an investment for my kids' future but its effect has been completely different from what I expected. I didn't expect the vibe, energy, atmosphere, or the regulars. The café is so friendly and feels like you're at home. It's a home from home. I feel like I'm inviting people into my home, offering them hospitality and finding out how they are.

Revd Catherine Matlock



Druids Heath Library

People power ensures it has a future!



A petition signed by more than 1,500 local people, together with a public protest, has helped to make sure that Druids Heath Library will reopen in the next few months.

The Library had been closed by the City Council in September last year because of a faulty boiler. Users and local representatives became increasingly concerned that no action to repair the boiler seemed to be happening. There was a growing fear that cutbacks in the Council's budget might mean that the work would never be done and that the Library would remain closed. The Library is a major focus for the Druids Heath community, not only through book loans but as a centre for several local services and facilities, including Neighbourhood Watch, events for

children and the provision of PCs and IT access.

With the support of local councillor Julien Pritchard, the petition was organised. Signatories included members of our three church congregations. It was presented to the Council on Tuesday 26th February with the public protest outside the Library a few days later.

The response was immediate, with the Council confirming that money was available for the boiler repair and that work would begin within days. Councillor Pritchard said 'Birmingham City Council has listened to our community. I have been proud to work with residents and community groups to lead this successful campaign to get the library re-opened'.

Serving the Dying in Selly Oak

The school song of one of the best-known schools of Birmingham, King Edward's, includes the memorable lines 'Forward therefore, live your hardest, die of service, not of rust'. As far as we know, neither Revd Jayne Crooks, whose account of an active retirement we featured last month, nor Revd Donald Sampson, whom many readers will remember with affection as our former Methodist minister, have any connection with that school; but we think you'll agree that they embody the challenge of those lines, examples of what it means to live for others in a world where need is bottomless.

The Reverend Jayne Crooks' article in the March edition of the Parish Magazine added more inspiration to your wonderful monthly publication, which I most gratefully receive and read with keen interest. It reminded me of the ten years in my early retirement during which I was highly privileged to work in rich fellowship at Hawkesley. Canon Rob Morris was a most supportive and encouraging leader of the Parish Team. Personally, I owe him a great debt.

This article will focus on my privilege of serving at St Mary's Hospice for the last eighteen years.

My dear wife Annette continues to do community work at Northfield, essentially with people from overseas who need help in learning English. Like Jayne, we also make time to see our seven grandchildren in London and Cambridge, alongside their parents, whom we pray for each day.

I was appointed as Free Church Chaplain to St. Mary's Hospice, Selly Oak in May 2001. More recently I have been designated as 'Volunteer Chaplain' since I am unpaid.

It was Cecily Saunders who founded the modern Hospice movement; opening St. Christopher's Hospice, Sydenham to receive its first patients in 1967 after nine years of planning. She was very concerned that it should be ecumenical and extend hospitality to all terminally ill people, caring for them within a Christian environment, thereby helping them to live truly during their final days.

During the past eighteen years, St. Mary's has become multi-faith and multi-ethnic in a very attractive and highly supportive manner to all patients. My main duty, on a Thursday, within our chaplaincy team, is to speak slowly to each in-patient. This week, I knelt with a Muslim daughter, holding



her hand and that of her weakening mother as I led the three of us in prayer.

On three days per week, the twenty-five beds are complementary to the Day Hospice which normally receives about twenty day patients. Each is offered transport. There is a chance for volunteers and nurses to sit and talk to people, some of whom live alone. A short, relevant input regarding some aspect of concern is often given before a tasty lunch for those who can eat it.

The work I have mentioned is but a part of the support provided by the Hospice's network each day to 400

individuals, many of whom are seen in their own homes.

Happily, the Hospice is well staffed for round-the-clock care. This being said, I find it important to give appropriate support to all staff. Nurses experience much satisfaction in their work but also have times of grief.

Once per quarter we have a 'Time to Remember' occasion. This is normally attended by about eighty people for quiet reflection. It falls to me to read slowly the names of the twenty-five to thirty people who have recently passed on. The whole occasion is highly worshipful for those who choose to use it that way. Time for refreshments afterwards is greatly cherished and facilitates pastoral conversation. The cost of this work is £8million a year with over half the funds coming from voluntary donations. This requires a resourceful team working in the fundraising department.

For me, this work is balanced by a weekly afternoon in the local Infants' School, listening to children reading, as well as facing 360 Juniors for an Assembly twice a term. Such duties lead me to live by the mantra of Nelson Mandela: 'Don't count your days; make every day count'.

The Reverend Donald Sampson

Memories of Egypt

Eddie has regaled us with stories from many exotic locations over the years, but Egypt would not appear to be one of them.



A three-month voyage was due to end at Southampton and I was looking forward to some leave at home. However, we received news that my relief was unwell and I was asked by Head Office if I would stay on board for an extra week. I would be flown home from Suez. A relief Catering Officer would board the ship while it was in transit through the Suez Canal.

So, as our large container ship entered the canal in the early hours of a hot morning, I was keeping busy as the ship passed through Port Said. The usual

officials boarded by launch, collected the usual papers and rushed off. Of course, we handed out cartons of cigarettes to the staff at Port Health, Immigration, and so on and I was given in return faded photocopies of new forms 'for next time'.

What a fiasco the whole lot were! The only official of any repute was the Surveyor. He was on the scrounge like all the others, but at least he checked the details of the ship's 40,000 ton cargo, a procedure which would facilitate charges to the company for our transit of the canal. Egypt is, frankly, a dump for seafarers and the whole country seems to be on the take, sad to say.

So, as I sat in the ship's office once the rush was over, muttering various expletives, my replacement appeared. He had been brought to the ship by launch. 'Hello Eddie!' said Andy. We had met before on a P & O cargo ship in New Orleans, USA. He continued by saying that he would never join a ship at Suez again. He had had a terrible time. Customs officers at Cairo airport had asked him for money because he had a camera in his suitcase. The agent's man

who met him at the airport had also asked for a 'tip', as had the crew of the launch which had just brought him to us.

'Andy,' I said, 'I will show you to your cabin, and there are a couple of cold beers waiting for you there.'

'Gosh!' he said, 'Civilisation at last!'

'I will be leaving the ship at the Red Sea end of the canal tonight,' I said, 'So we have all day to complete a hand over with the books and cash accounts.'

This we did and a pleasant time was had. All went well and we both cheered up.

That evening, I left the ship by launch as its transit of the canal ended. I was then driven to the Red Sea Hotel, from whence I would be driven to Cairo Airport in the early hours of the following day. I will not elaborate on the hotel, except to say that it was fly blown with grey sheets!

With me on the launch from the ship was an engineering officer from a tanker, who was returning home because he had broken his arm. He was going to the same hotel and then, like me, flying to England. I told him that I was not going to eat any food while we were there but that I had some sandwiches with me and a bottle of Coke. The risk of getting a stomach upset in Egypt is very high indeed. The officer told me he had a bottle of Bacardi with him; so I invited him to share my sandwiches!

At midnight, I received a call from the hotel staff. They said that the roof café

was open if I wanted to make use of it before I left for the two-hour drive to the airport. I found my way there but had nothing more than a hot black coffee with my friend from the tanker. The waiter said, 'We have good breakfast.' 'No way!' we both replied.

So then, we set off on the two hour drive to Cairo and went our separate ways when we got there. I headed for our agent's office in the city. What a dump! I was invited to rest on a cracked leather settee for the next two hours before being taken to the terminal. By the time I was due to leave, I had once again been invited to 'tip' on several occasions!

As the taxi approached the airport the sun was rising. The driver said, 'You'll like the airport. It's all very modern. The terminal is new.' It was indeed but, to get there, we had to pass a huge rubbish dump on which people were foraging for goodness-knows-what. At last, I boarded an Air France plane for Paris, where I would then change flights for Heathrow. Imagine my delight when I was served a breakfast of omelette and croissants with tea on the plane!

It is hard not to be critical of Egypt. It really is what we used to call a 'third world' country and, though many Egyptians are very friendly, I suspect that life there is very hard for some, not least for the Christians, who often experience persecution.

Eddie Matthews

CONTACTS

If you cannot find what you are looking for here, you will probably find it on the parish website (www.kingsnorton.org.uk). Alternatively, please ask questions at services, during Open Church or at the Parish Office.

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

THE CHURCH WARDENS

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

OTHER CONTACTS

Parish Administrator & P.C.C. Secretary	Judy Ash
Finance Officer	Catherine Deghani
Safeguarding Coordinator (0121 459 6185)	Clare Dean
Regular Giving	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Church Facilities Manager	Sylvia Fox
Flower Arranging (0121 486 2837)	Alison Blumer
Oasis (Sunday School) Tiny Tots & GPS	Pauline Weaver
Oasis (Sunday School) Immanuel	Nicky Moorcroft

MUSIC

Church music, choir training and handbells are overseen by Sylvia Fox (07 778 449 170). Choir practices : Fridays (tuition 4.45 - 6.30 pm, juniors 6.30 - 7.45 pm, adults 8 - 9 pm). Handbell practices : Mondays 3.30-4.30 pm (number notation & sheet music) and 7.00 - 8.00 pm (number notation only). Please phone first to check we are meeting.

BELL RINGING

Due to concerns about the condition of the masonry in the church tower, the Tower Captain and the Rector have agreed to suspend bell ringing until a full structural survey is completed. We hope to have the bells ringing again as soon as possible. A survey of the tower has been commissioned. After the report has been received, we will update our readers on the condition of the tower and give details of any further action that needs to be taken.

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

Scouts and Cubs

198th Birmingham St Nicolas'

Alan Haynes (Group Scout Leader) 07 534 615 489
198thscouts@gmail.com

*Tuesdays at Oddingley Hall,
Oddingley Road, B31 3BS*

Beavers (6-8yrs): 5-6 pm
Cubs (8-10½): 6.15-7.45pm
Scouts (10½-14): 8 pm

Guides and Brownies

Rainbows: Mondays 5.30 - 6.30 pm
Brownies (188th Birmingham): Tuesdays 6.00-7.30 pm
Brownies: Thursdays 6.30 - 8.00 pm
Guides (247th Birmingham): Mondays 7.15-9.00 pm

Guides and Brownies

at Hawkesley Church Centre

Rainbows (1st Kings Norton): Mondays 5.30 pm
Brownies (259th Birmingham): Wednesdays 6.30 pm
Guides (141st Birmingham): Thursdays 7.00 pm
www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

Hawkesley Church Primary Academy

Shannon Road, Hawkesley, Kings Norton, B38 9TR 0121 459 6467

Headteacher: Mr Derek Higgins

A New Electoral Roll

Every six years, a completely new electoral roll must be prepared in each parish. This is a more extensive exercise than the annual revision of the existing roll. In February 2019, new forms will be made available. Everyone who attends one of our churches and who wishes to be eligible to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (see below) must fill out a form even if their name has appeared on previous electoral rolls. There will be a box in Saint Nicolas' Church for completed forms or they can be returned directly to the Parish Office. Hawkesley and Immanuel Churches will also be distributing forms to their congregations.

This year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place on 14th April 2019.

FEBRUARY 2019 FUNERALS

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

5th February	Leslie Brindley	90	SN.Bu.BE
8th February	Grace Ada Richardson	86	SN.Bu.CY
12th February	Margaret Sheila Davies		SN.Bu.CY
27th February	Anthony Walter Tyler	94	Bu.CY
28th February	John Phillips	71	SN.Bu.CY

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

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Join us at Hawkesley Church for our annual
Quiz Night with Fish & Chip Supper

Saturday 6th April, 7.00 p.m. for a 7.30 p.m.start

Gather some friends and meet us at the Hawkesley Church Centre,
Shannon Road, Hawkesley.

To reserve your places contact David Smith Tel 07 484 642 473 or 0121
453 9931. Admission is £7 with supper or £4 for the quiz only. We look
forward to seeing you. Please bring your own drinks.



Hawkesley Christian Aid Coffee Morning

Saturday 18th May, 10.30 - 12.30

Join us for tea or coffee at the Hawkesley Church
Centre, Shannon Road, Hawkesley.

Bric-à-brac! Home-made cakes! Tea & coffee! Smiles !
Everyone is welcome.

Here for you in Kings Norton

Our Funeral Directors are
available 24 hours a day,
365 days of the year.

24 hour
service

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arrangements

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memorials

Our new **Co-operative Funeralcare** is now open
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0121 667 7554

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www.centralengland.coop/funeralcare

[@mycooplife](https://twitter.com/mycooplife)

Central England Co-operative



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