

KINGS NORTON

Parish Magazine

It Ain't Half Hot, Mum!

Three experts on our changing climate

Three Cheers for the Arts!

Kim Duce celebrates the arts in Birmingham

Kings Norton Library

A gift from American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie

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Welcome

EDITORIAL

Mention "The Bull" to most Kings Nortonians and the first thing they will think of is the pub on Kings Norton Green. I wonder if the events of this summer will have changed that?

From the moment of its first appearance, wreathed in steam, red eyes aglow, during the spectacular opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games, Birmingham's new mascot shot to stardom. In the space of a few days, thousands braved the crowds in Centenary Square just to gaze up at it, to take selfies with it. The lucky ones saw it move. Hundreds more signed online petitions to save it from the scrapyard, lobbying the Council to find The Commonwealth Bull a permanent home in a city which, in a matter of days, had become enraptured by this charismatic symbol of industrial might, artistic originality and civic pride.

Interviewed after the games, Andy Street, Birmingham's Mayor, spoke for thousands: "I've never felt so proud to be a Brummie. We have shown the world what a vibrant, friendly, and inclusive place we are."

Those qualities of vibrancy (full-of-life-ness), friendliness and inclusivity are key features of Kings Norton's church and community life too, often commented upon by those who live here and by those who visit. You have only to look back through a few past editions of this magazine, available on the parish website, to see what I mean. Or to read this month's eclectic mix of religion, science, culture, history, food, gardening and anecdote. Sustenance for body,

mind and spirit as summer gives way to autumn. Happy reading!



David Ash

Healing the Nations

Conference Aug 22

Larry Wright reflects on the rôle of religion in society.

In recent years, I've attended and contributed to an online conference titled, rather dauntingly, "Healing the Nations". The conference is sponsored by the Next Century Foundation, a peace and reconciliation charity working mainly but not exclusively in the Middle East. It attracts activists, analysts, academics and faith leaders from a variety of countries, who are willing to engage with differences while seeking ways forward for peace in our world. This year's conference (7th-14th August) considered the prospects and obstacles to peace building across the Middle East and Europe.

This year, my emphasis was on the role of faith and theology as a means of enriching debates and discussions regarding peace building rather than a

cause of division and conflict. Such an approach has little impact upon extremists of whatever persuasion. Extremism fosters a rigid and closed understanding of the world, impervious to reason or rational debate. Fortunately, extremists tend to be located on the fringes of religions, though their activities can be dramatic and terrifying.

Religion is a potent force in the world. It shapes cultures, gives identity and provides an historical and poetic narrative to lives. It does not provide a basis for government. Theocracies rarely flourish. But religions can and, in many places, do provide a moral basis for governing while also bringing moral and ethical insights to bear on the policies and programmes of political leaders and governments.

Western liberal democratic forms of government reached the peak of influence and global authority after 1989 with the



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



fall of the Soviet Empire. The “End of History” debate of the early 90s promoted the idea that capitalism had triumphed over communism, democracy over autocracy. From 1990 onwards, religions in the former Soviet bloc were resurgent. They played a courageous role in opposing state atheism and were ready to fill the spiritual void opening up as the personality cults and rigid structures of Soviet society unravelled.

Since 2000, this optimistic view of Western liberal progress across the globe has faltered, challenged by forces and ideologies opposed to Western expansionism. Though these forces of opposition are primarily political, they are aligned to or underpinned by religious, cultural or philosophical movements. Examples such as Political Islam, Jihadist Islam, Indian Hindu nationalism and ultra-nationalist Russian Orthodox

↑ Religion is a potent force in the world. It shapes cultures and gives identity.

Christianity have all emerged as significant forces with contrasting views of history, politics and the ordering of societies.

Religious belief also provides adherents with stories of their history and achievements and with a notion of an apocalyptic future. Such a vision can imply an ultimate struggle between opposing forces from which only one will emerge triumphant as the world as we know it ends. Accelerating this apocalypse is seen by some as virtuous. Death and paradise become alluring, individually and corporately, for the devout and the fanatic alike, though with different emphasis.

So, where are we now? Currently, we have a number of conflicts which cast a shadow over our sense of global security and any hopeful vision for the future. Yemen, Syria and Ukraine are examples. Each of these areas of conflict is infused

with a religious culture. Yet, religion doesn't appear to play a major role in resolving them. It does emphasise the suffering endured. It does reach out to international allies for support and provides a spiritual and moral framework by which the history of suffering will be judged.

Governments and rulers think in terms of decades, religions think in terms of epochs and eternity. There is no single system of government which has lasted as long as the world's major religions. The three Abrahamic faiths are what is known as "revealed religions", their origins are rooted in a metaphysical revelation of truth as opposed to an entirely human, rational based search for universal truth or truths. Believers claiming divine inspiration for the truth of their religion endeavour to live according to that truth in all circumstances.

Those who seek to promote universal truths through reason, the secular approach, are forever subject to the forces and circumstances prevailing in their history and generation. This approach relies on the political beliefs of the rulers and the imposition of laws which reflect their beliefs. Thus, nations that were once monarchies have become democracies, former colonies have become decolonized and nations which were once

democracies have become autocracies.

An interesting case study of rapid changes of governance in the last 100 years is Iran. Occupied by Britain after the First World War, it was then a monarchy. During the Second World War, Britain and Russia invaded Iran to protect its oil fields. In the 1950s, attempts to form a democratic government under the Shah made limited progress. When the Iranian prime minister announced that he would nationalise the oil field then owned by BP, he was ousted in a British and American backed coup. The Shah became an absolute ruler again until 1979, when the Islamic revolution established the country as a theocracy.

In England we have a unique system of governance when it comes to religion. By law and historical precedent, Bishops of the Church of England have a right to sit in the House of Lords and therefore vote on legislation. They are not there as politicians but as the "Lords Spiritual". They are expected to speak with the voice of faith. Other members of the House of Lords are from other faiths by the request of the prime minister and sovereign. Despite the deficiencies of our system, is the relative stability of our government sustained in part by this balance of religion and politics? I, for one, think it is.

...keeps an eye open for the rosy starling

The rosy starling is a beautiful bird with a pink beak, pink breast and white flashes on the shoulders. It used to be seen as a rare migrant from the Eastern Mediterranean and would have the twitchers all a-flutter. This year it has been seen in good numbers, particularly in the South of England. Keep an eye open for it in your garden. If you see a flock of ordinary starlings then take a second look as the rosy guys often flock with common starlings. I think this comes as a reminder that climate change is a reality.

Another hint of change is that this Spring has been very dry and the dry spell shows every sign of continuing into Summer. I did mention last month that xerophyte plants, resistant to drought, would come into their own before long. I am finding heaving a watering can about every other day rather tiresome so this whole situation is worth looking at. One of the Royal Horticultural Society gardens has an extensive area of drought-resistant plants which has not been watered since 2001! So it can be done.

Drought-tolerant plants have a multitude of ways of conserving moisture and one is to have only



small leaves, often glossy. One of these is our tree of the month, the Tamarix. In late Spring, the branches disappear under thousands of pink flowers which wave about gently in the breeze. You can often see them lining the promenades of up-market resorts in the Mediterranean. Here it is happily oblivious of the heat, sun and dry breezes plus it will tolerate some salt in the soil. I have seen a couple of Tamarix doing very well on our own dry, sandy soil so you might like to give it a try.



I am writing this in mid-summer. The grass outside the house is brown and parched except for a patch around the winter-flowering cherry tree which I have watered, as I would hate to lose it. Sadly I have lost some perennials from the south-facing flower bed. I am going to have to bite the bullet and re-design this area featuring drought-resistant plants which are hardy in our milder winters. I will try to avoid any watering except where new plants are getting established. I have just received an email from Chiltern Seeds listing recommended plants for this very situation and they can all be grown from seed. Here is the list:

Echinacea purpurea (don't try the off-white one).

↑ **Tamarix pentandra.**
Happily oblivious of the heat.

Eryngium planum "Blue Glitter".

Stachys lanata. This one can sprawl a bit so at the end of the season don't be afraid to cut it back.

Verbascum hybridum
"Southern Charm".

Perovskia atriplicifolia.

This is a very short list and in particular there are a number of Eryngiums available, including the silvery "Mrs Wilmot's Ghost" whose leaves can be rather prickly.

There used to be seed collections "For the Children" and they would often contain a colourful packet of *Mesembryanthemum criniflorum* with dazzling

daisy-flowers and fleshy leaves with sparkly bits. Our first drought-resistant plant of the month is therefore an annual and the kids were recommended to scatter the seeds about where they were to flower. The results tended to be a bit uneven so you might try the small tray to larger tray method and then planting in your flower bed. Beware when transplanting as the roots are very fragile.

For a more permanent effect, look around for seeds of Lampranthus (photo, right) and Delosperma they are available in different colours, daisy-flowered and are generally hardy perennials (oh, and drought resistant). How hardy are they? I must be honest, I am not sure. Many varieties come from the Channel Island of Tresco so that might be a hint but of course the climate is changing from where I am looking.

I once pulled in to an Italian petrol station and spotted some floriferous pink Lampranthus growing alongside the little shop. Becoming bold, I asked the attendant if he would mind if I took a few cuttings. "Certo!" was the reply. He then disappeared out the back and re-emerged with two carrier bags full of the plants as a gift!

Gardeners should always be generous to one another and indeed to everybody else. It's what makes the world go around.

Let's look forward to living in a Mediterranean climate as an adventure.

Happy September!



It Ain't Half Hot, Mum

Britain's notoriously wet and cold climate is changing. You won't like what replaces it.

The UK had the driest start to a year since the 1970s in 2022, with large parts of southern England receiving less than 50% of their normal winter rainfall. On top of that, southern England recently received just 17% of its average rainfall for July, in what was the country's driest since 1935.

How the atmosphere circulates moisture is incredibly complex and so there is huge variability in rainfall from year to year. This makes it very difficult to conclude trends from past observations.

Temperature trends, meanwhile, are more straightforward: increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have raised average temperatures and made dry periods in Britain drier, as hotter weather evaporates more water. Short and intense rainfall, which does not replenish parched soils, rivers and aquifers as well as gentler, longer showers, is also increasingly common as warmer air can hold more moisture.

Reservoir levels were healthy entering 2022, having been replenished in the preceding autumn, but some in southwest England are now less than half full.

Farmers across southeast England have been reeling from an agricultural drought (when levels of moisture in the soil are low enough to affect crop production) since spring. Warmer than average summer temperatures, plus a heatwave during which temperatures reached 40°C for the first time in the UK, have further dried out the soil.

At the time of writing, many rivers across southern England are exceptionally low. The situation could significantly

worsen if a dry autumn or winter follows.

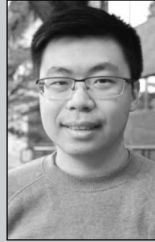
Rivers with underlying aquifers in southern England (such as chalk streams) can take months to respond to changes in rainfall. Projections by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology suggest that flows will remain below average in these groundwater-fed rivers over autumn and potentially beyond.

Yet, the UK retains its reputation for being a rainy country. A survey titled The Great British Rain Paradox conducted in 2020 showed that 77% of the British public agreed with this sentiment. But with most of the UK forecast to have hotter and drier summers, it's no longer as simple as that.

The Great British rain paradox

The UK has experienced regular periods of drought in the past, including the last official drought in 2018-19. The National Infrastructure Commission, which advises the government, warned then that the UK must do more to prepare for water shortages. The Environment Agency estimates that water demand may outstrip supply across southern England in as short a timescale as 20 years if the country does not adapt to its new climate by building

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Nigel Arnell is Professor of Climate Change Science.



Ted Shepherd is the Grantham Professor of Climate Science.

reservoirs and desalination plants.

So what does that new climate look like? The latest set of simulations project hotter and drier summers plus warmer and wetter winters, with larger changes in summer compared to winter rainfall. Prolonged periods of below average river and groundwater levels are projected to become more severe. Summer droughts are likely to affect the entire country, while multi-year droughts are more likely across southern England.

There will be an increased risk of cascading hazards in future too, such as when a flood quickly follows a drought, spoiling crops and damaging infrastructure. Record rainfall in spring 2012 suddenly ended a drought which had begun in 2010, causing flash floods which affected more than 4,000 properties.

How low rivers and public water supplies recede each summer will depend on rainfall in autumn and spring. There is less agreement between climate model simulations on how rainfall patterns will change in these seasons, which is when aquifers are usually replenished. Water demand will add an additional strain on these sources as the population grows, particularly as severe

heatwaves are set to become much more common.

Severe droughts in the UK's past have always included one or more dry winters, such as 1975-76, 1988-93 and 2010-12. The severity of future droughts will be determined by how sequences of dry seasons interact.

Research has shown that the probability of a dry winter and spring being followed by an extremely hot summer, like the one the UK is experiencing in 2022, is now at least five times more likely compared with the 1970s. A drier than average winter is much more likely to be followed by a dry summer too.

Although winters are projected to become wetter on average, scientists aren't sure how the sequencing of dry seasons is changing. This is due to uncertainty around the influence of climate change on atmospheric circulation, such as the position and strength of the jet stream, a major driver of heatwaves and dry weather in the UK.

Where the rain ends up falling also matters. The northwest of the UK, including Northern Ireland, receives more rain than the southeast. So a wet winter nationally could still mean drier than average conditions in the southeast.

Water companies cannot discount the possibility of consecutive dry winters and the potential for three consecutive dry winters are particular concern. This was narrowly avoided in the 2010-2012 drought, but research has revealed that continued dry conditions in 2012 would have meant critically low river flows across southern England.

Water companies must develop regional plans for transferring water to meet public need and boost efficiency in homes and businesses through smart metering and fixing leaky pipes.

To prepare for a drier future, the UK must reckon with the ways drought will make food production, biodiversity conservation and even electricity generation (as a result of cooling water shortages and reduced hydro-electricity) more difficult. Droughts will have major implications for the country's national food strategy, its nature recovery targets and, critically, progress towards net zero emissions, which will be essential for bringing extreme weather under control.

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DO NOT BE AFRAID

With all the excitement which gripped Birmingham in early August when the Commonwealth Games came to town, you could perhaps be forgiven for failing to notice another large and significant international event which took place at about the same time. Meeting around every ten years since 1867, the Lambeth Conference brings together the leaders of the Anglican Church from across the world. This summer's conference (26th July-8th August) was the 15th such gathering. Over 600 bishops and their wives or husbands representing dioceses and Christian communities from around 165 countries were invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to gather in Canterbury and London to reflect, debate and worship together.

To gain an accurate picture of what took place and what was achieved during this year's conference, you need to consult a reliable source. So much (social) media reporting of the event was partial and biased, focusing, predictably, on points of controversy rather than expressions of hope or unity.

To learn more about the worldwide Anglican church's response to some of the most urgent crises of our time, you need only visit the Lambeth Conference website at lambethconference.org. The resources include a library of videos of key moments.

Among those moments was the closing address given by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was an impassioned call to "radical, bold, courageous, revolutionary" discipleship which included these words:

"When we fear we cling to what we know. We clutch at what



Lambeth 2022

makes us feel in control. Be that the things we own, the possessions we have stored up for ourselves, the story we tell ourselves about who we are, what our power is, what our importance is and what is possible. We want, when we are afraid, to be comfortable with the familiar and familiar with the comfortable. And these things, our assumptions, our possessions, become a comfort blanket which ultimately smothers us. For they forbid us to engage with each other and with Christ. [...]

"[But] we are continually being invited to begin a journey from fear to faith. And when we slip from faith to fear, then Christ comes to us as he did to the fearful disciples in the upper room. He appears to us and says 'Do not fear'".

To read the full text, scan the QRT code to the left or visit bit.ly/3CI0QB4



Closing Address

Three Cheers for *The Arts!*

As I write, we in Birmingham are enjoying a wonderful festival and celebration of games and sporting endeavour. We are hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games. I witnessed the marathon competitors in action, literally passing my front door! And all this is happening shortly after the "Lionesses" beat the German team to win the European women's football championship.

Our city also has a proud history of encouraging, sponsoring and supporting the arts in many forms. Birmingham Royal Ballet, the C.B.S.O. and the Museum & Art Gallery come immediately to mind. There are many other galleries and specialist museums, including the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at Birmingham University, one of the finest small art galleries in Europe.

I recently became personally quite involved in promoting the arts when I was elected Chairman of The Arts Society, Birmingham or NADFAS. The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts. Yes a bit of a mouthful: no wonder they shortened it! The Arts Society Birmingham (TASB) is one of 360 similar societies in the UK and mainland Europe. There are also societies in New Zealand and Australia. As with many such

organisations, things began in a modest way. In 1965, the Chilterns Antiques group was formed. By 1968 there were eleven such societies and they founded NADFAS. Through the 1970s, there was a rapid expansion of societies throughout the UK. Various new initiatives were launched such as Church Recording, Young Arts and Heritage Volunteering. Like everything else, TASB was severely affected by the lockdown. Meetings, outings and visits ceased. However, the programme of monthly lectures was able to move online and so the society continued to function.

Today, we are just about back to normal, or pre-pandemic times. Monthly lectures, our central activity, resumed at our current venue, the CBSO centre in Berkeley Street. The lectures continue to be available online. The Society will continue this hybrid service next season. The lecture programme has been as varied as ever. Such topics as The Bayeux Tapestry, Opera in England, Dutch and

English Delft and The Topsy-Turvy World of Misericords entertained, enlightened and amused us. This coming season, we look forward to learning about The Venerable Bede, Conan Doyle, The Music of the Sixties, Stamford Raffles, Goya, and English Furniture Design Today, to name but a few topics.

Happily, outings, study days and other activities are back on the agenda. Visits were enjoyed to Compton Verney and the Royal Horticultural Society at Bridgwater. The first was predicated on the Grinling Gibbons exhibition. At Bridgwater, the Royal Horticultural Society has spent several years restoring the original gardens and has created new gardens with diversity as one of the themes. Personally, I appreciated visiting the Vincent Van Gogh self-portrait exhibition in the newly renovated Courtauld Gallery. The Study Day was on the work of the artist Holbein. Two lunches with lectures were held. One at Christmas time and the second to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee.

The Arts Society, Birmingham continues to support a range of community projects. BRB

Dance Track provides dance classes for children, many of whom would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn. Quite apart from developing their dancing, there are important benefits to their ability to listen to instruction and to their team-working and communication skills.

A big project, recently completed, which has taken several years is the Birmingham Diversity Project. It is exemplified by school visits to places of worship. Each year, 100,000 children visit places of worship in Birmingham. A small team of TAS West Midlands volunteers has completed illustrated guides, virtual tours, quizzes, and arts related activities for six of these: Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha Gurdwara, Shri Venkateswara Balaji Temple, Birmingham Progressive Synagogue, Birmingham Buddhist Vihara, Birmingham Cathedral and Birmingham Central Mosque.

It's an obvious thing to say but, if you would like to know more, please visit the websites of The Arts Society itself and of the two Birmingham societies, namely Birmingham and Birmingham Evening.

I hope you agree that the arts are alive and well!

Find out more about The Arts Society Birmingham at theartssocietybirmingham.org, or at theartssociety.org.



Arts Soc B'ham



KIM DUCE IS
A RETIRED
HEADMASTER
AND THE
CHAIR OF
TASB

One Bounce Too Many

Well, August didn't turn out quite as I had planned. I had a very silly accident at the end of July which was totally my own fault. It ended up with me breaking my leg. I needed surgery to pin it back together and a stay in hospital over in Peterborough. It's a long and funny story but I won't go into it here.

What was interesting for me was having to spend a week in hospital unable to do a huge amount for myself. Those of you who know me will know that I am fiercely independent and not used to asking for or wanting help. When you are stuck in bed with your leg in the air that has to change. It was time to take a shovel load of humility, to ask for help and to be gracious in receiving it. I also needed to find huge reserves of patience, not something I am known for.

Being in hospital was frustrating on many levels. Boredom was the worst thing. I was in a room with two other ladies but, sadly, one had dementia and the other spoke only Polish, so our conversation was limited. I had books, puzzles and magazines but was left with the concentration of a flea courtesy of the pain medication. Television was limited too and there is only so much you can watch without losing any remaining sanity. So, I did what I always do and talked to everyone who came into the room about anything and everything. From cleaners to consultants, no-one escaped without some sort of conversation.

There are many practical things that are frustrating too. I tried to work out what they



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

were going to be and how I would fix them, which was also a useful way to pass the time.

One realisation was that hospital life could be improved very easily at little cost. A £1 spray can of WD40 used on every trolley would make a huge amount of difference to how much sleep patients get, because every single trolley squeaked! Sleep is so vital to recovery. It's bad enough trying to sleep in an unnatural position with interruptions for observation checks without the constant squeaks of trolleys and doors.

Another discovery was poor hospital design. A three-bedded bay in which one bed was so dark and gloomy that it was depressing. A bathroom where you couldn't reach everything from one point and in which the bin was foot-operated so that you couldn't open it with a broken foot! Daylight bulbs for dark corners and an adhesive bin bag for each bed would have been such an easy fix.

And don't even get me started on the food! Really, it would be so easy to improve it with just a few small changes. Toast made of wholemeal bread instead of white, dried fruit to go with cereal, improved use of seasoning to give things more flavour and adding a cool bag to the trolley so that the ice cream doesn't melt and end up as an unappetising blob.

Fortunately my stay was relatively short, otherwise I may have ended up reorganising the entire ward!



THE HUNGRY GARDENER

Let's Get Fizzy Together



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

As I write this article it is early August and our garden is in peak production. What shall we do with all this food? Regular readers will know that I am a new student of the art of fermentation. So I have a few ideas.

A friend recently introduced me to Water Kefir. It's a sweet fermented drink that is both fizzy and delicious and you can flavour it with whatever fruit you wish.

Ingredients

60g sugar (*preferably a sugar with some mineral content*)

1 litre unchlorinated water

Water kefir grains (*I got mine from Freshly Fermented*)

Pinch of salt (*mineral salt e.g. sea salt*)

Dash of lemon juice

First, dechlorinate the water or the grains will die instead of turning your ferment fizzy. Simmer boiling water for 15

minutes, then allow to cool and add a dash of lemon juice.

Mix the sugar into the water, add the kefir grains and pour into a jar with a piece of cloth covering the top and attach with an elastic band.

Leave for 2-3 days, by which time you should see some bubbles.

Pour into a jug and then pour into a clip-top bottle (keep the kefir grains behind in the jar for your next batch).

Add fruit to flavour and leave for another 24 hours or until you like the taste (the sugar in the fruit will allow for more fermenting and create more fizz, if you leave it longer it will develop into a sweet sour flavour)

When you like the flavour keep it in the fridge

Note: water kefir grains feed on minerals so I try to add this through the sugar and the

pinch of salt. The pinch of salt is optional. If the kefir grains are happy they will multiply and you can share with friends. The clip-top bottle is important as your drink will have a lot of fizz. It is a good idea to "burp" the bottle frequently to release the pressure.

If you are going away for more than two days, you can pop your jar with water kefir grains in the fridge to slow it down until you return. You can flavour with any fresh or frozen fruit. Fruit from the garden is ideal due to the natural yeasts on them. You could also try fruit that the children have asked you for but haven't touched. Experiment away: it is so much fun!

Water kefir is a probiotic. I had a little bloating in the first week so I would recommend limiting it to one tumbler glass per day for a week and then gently increase. For Charles, I added a table spoon to his daily porridge. There could be a trace of alcohol but this is no more than 0.5%.

The first fruit I tried were raspberries and it was gorgeous and fizzy. Charles suggested I try strawberries next and this was equally fabulous. We were hooked! Now we have 2 jars and 2 bottles on the go on a rotation basis.

I have also been experimenting with courgettes. Preserving them when you have too many means you can keep them until autumn. They will be used in our home to brighten up family favourites like a bolognese. You can ferment them whole if they are little or if they are a bit bigger slice them.

Ingredients

30g salt

10g sugar

1 litre of water

Vegetables (whole or chopped e.g. courgettes, onion, garlic)

Optional: Herbs or spices (mustard seed and fennel or dill seed are popular), horseradish leaves

Dissolve the salt in 1 litre of water.

Pack your vegetables in a jar as tight as possible (e.g. courgettes and chopped shallots).

Optional: Add herbs and spices (e.g. mustard seed) Don't try oregano, I didn't like its fermented taste!

Pour the salted water over the vegetables.

Optional: Add a few leaves of horseradish (or grape, raspberry or blackberry leaves). These have tannins to make the ferment crisper.



Instructions

PHOTO BY CLAIRE LINDOW



Put your weight on the top to keep everything below the water line.

Leave in the jar for 5 days in a dark cupboard at room temperature. The jar shouldn't be sealed. Use a piece of cloth with an elastic band or a kilner jar without the rubber seal. After 5 days, taste daily until you like the flavour.

Put the vegetables in a smaller jar and store it in the fridge. You can use it straight away or leave it in the fridge for up to 2 months.

I haven't put a quantity of vegetables in the recipe so you can adapt it to what you have available. Pick a suitably-sized jar for your quantity that allows 3 cm or so space above the water line.

Happy experimenting with your produce and I hope your household enjoys your homemade fizzy pop as much as we have!

**The recipes above are my take on recipes from Sour, Mark Diacono and Food for a Happy Gut, Naomi Devlin.*

Funerals July 2022

8th July	Siobhan Helen Lynch	55	In.CY
11th July	Theresa Lyne Avery	59	SN.Bu.KN
12th July	Elizabeth Powell	71	SN.Bu.KN
13th July	Pamela Ann Smith	71	SN.Bu.KN
15th July	John Sweeney	77	Bu.CY
18th July	Patricia Pallett	84	Cr.LH
20th July	Jean Ann Ward	71	Bu.CY
25th July	Jeffrey Pike	54	In.CY
28th July	Jennifer Ellen Bromley	65	In.CY

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

YOUR PARISH CHURCH

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

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THE MINISTRY TEAM

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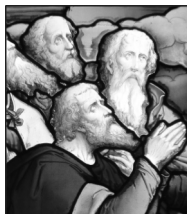
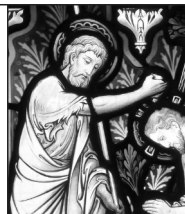
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Hawkesley Church Jim Clarke
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We are a Church of England Parish serving all in Kings Norton through St Nicolas' Parish Church, and, in partnership with the Methodist Church, through Hawkesley Church, meeting in the Primary Academy.



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

1st Sunday of the Month

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

2nd Sunday of the Month

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

3rd Sunday of the Month

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

4th Sunday of the Month

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

5th Sunday of the Month

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

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

The 3 Choirs Festival

During the final week of each July, I take myself off to one of the cathedral cities of Hereford, Gloucester or Worcester for the Three Choirs Festival. I go as an audience and congregation member, not as a singer. It is my version of an annual retreat. The programme is very varied with classical music concerts and recitals, family events, lectures, meals, theatre (as much or as little as you and your wallet wish) and, at the centre, daily Evensong, sung by the combined choirs of the three cathedrals.

I intentionally seek out concerts with new pieces (new commissions or new-to-me) or performers I have not yet heard. Some will remain a once-only experience and others will be added to the "I would like to hear more of them" list.

The festival itself is around 300 years old. It began as a meeting of the musicians of the three cathedrals and developed into an internationally famous classical choral music annual event. It has paused only at times of Europe-wide warfare and, most recently, in 2020 because of the pandemic.

Being in the cathedral of the year for the best part of a week, not to mention other local churches and abbeys too, means you get to know the building across the whole stretch of a day, seeing the effects of natural and artificial light on the windows and high architecture. There is a visual feast as well as the musical one.

An extra treat over the last few years has been to watch the steadily-increasing acceptance of girl choristers. This year, all three cathedrals also have women alto lay clerks. The Anglican cathedral music world is finally catching up with the world of the clergy. These girls and women are the role models for all future choristers, who will come to see equality in the stalls as something un-noteworthy and completely natural. Having been the first girl choral scholar at Birmingham Cathedral in the early 90's, when cathedrals were just beginning to have such things, I



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



PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

find it wonderful to see the pioneering work of the Chapters and Directors of Music coming to fruition. The quietest but largest acknowledgment of this change was on Thursday of this year’s festival. Evensong was led by the “lower voices of the combined choirs”. No longer did it say “the men’s voices”.

If you fancy trying a single day at a Three Choirs Festival, it is back in Worcester in 2024 and is at Gloucester next year if you want to incorporate a stay or a late journey home. There are concerts all through the day each day of the week. The website is very informative (3choirs.org). I can thoroughly recommend it. It just needs to

be better-known on our side of the Lickey Hills! If the American Friends of the Festival can make it each year, I think Kings Norton might manage it too.

The Three Choirs Festival is a week-long programme of world-class music making, featuring choral and orchestral concerts, solo and chamber music recitals, talks, cathedral services, theatre, exhibitions, and walks, rotating each summer between the beautiful English cathedral cities of Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester. You can read more about it at 3choirs.org or by scanning the QR code (right).

▲ A CHOIR SINGS EVENSONG IN HEREFORD CATHEDRAL



3 Choirs Festival

Five common words we are all using incorrectly

Many people think they know their main language intimately. But there are many words and phrases in English that people often use wrongly. Whether these erroneous uses truly count as “wrong” is up for debate. After all, a mistake that has become widely adopted should really be considered acceptable. But whichever side of this argument you err towards, here are five examples of ones that we are all making.

1. Stark naked

Someone who has no clothes on is widely described as being stark naked. Originally, however, the phrase began as start naked, from the Old English *steort*, meaning “tail”. The phrase literally meant “naked to the tail”, probably referring to the buttocks. Although the word *steort* is not recorded in this sense, tail has often been used in this way, as it still is in the American phrase work your tail off. The word *steort* fell out of general use around 1300, surviving only in the names of birds like redstart and wagstart (better known today as the wagtail).

The switch from start to stark naked was triggered by start becoming obsolete,



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combined with an association with stark, meaning “completely”, in phrases such as stark dead, stark blind and stark naught, first recorded in the early 16th century in the savage put-down, “Ye count your selfe wele lettred [educated], your lernyng is starke nought.”

2. Sneeze

The verb to sneeze is imitative in origin. The sound of the word mimics the sound of the thing it names, as with words like drip, fizz, beep and the noise created by a sneeze: atishoo. But the original form of the word was *fnese*, along with *fnesung* (“sneezing”), and *fnora* (“a sneeze”). The change from *fnese* to sneeze arose through confusion caused by the way the word appeared in medieval manuscripts.

Medieval handwriting employed several different forms of the letter “s”, including an 8-shaped form, another resembling a kidney bean, the Greek letter sigma and a long form, still found in printed books of the 18th century. This last letter closely resembled the letter “f” and it was confusion between the long “s” and “f” that resulted



PHOTO BY ANDREA PIACQUADIO

in *fnese* being adapted into modern English sneeze.

3. Gravy

While gravy may seem a quintessentially English sauce, the word is actually French in origin. Gravy was originally *grané*, meaning “spiced”, from Latin *granum* “grain”. The letters “u” and “n” were often indistinguishable in medieval handwriting. Both were formed using two single vertical strokes called minims, so that it would be easy for a scribe to misread the word as *graue*.

While the letters “u” and “v” are distinguished by the

sounds they represent today, in medieval English they varied according to position: “v” appeared at the beginnings of words (vntil, “until”) and “u” in the middle (loue, “love”), irrespective of the sound. As a result, the word grané came to be misread as gravy, and this form has been used ever since.

4. Adder

Adder (the snake) goes back to the Old English word *nædre*; it is one of a small number of English words where the initial “n” has been lost due to confusion over where the boundary falls when following the indefinite article a/an. As a result of this process, known as metanalysis, a *nædre* became an adder. The same misapprehension lies behind words like apron (from *napron*, related to *nappe*, “tablecloth”) and umpire (originally *nonpeer*, “no equal”).

The word orange was also formed this way, although in this case, since it is a borrowing into English from French, the mistake had occurred before it was adopted into English. The French orange is itself a borrowing of the Arabic word *naranj* (the initial “n” is still found in modern Spanish *naranja*); it was confusion following the indefinite article *un* that produced the modern form.

5. Cherry

The word cherry originates in the northern French dialect word *cherise* (a variant of the standard modern French *cerise*), which was adopted into English after the Norman

Conquest of 1066. Because it ended in an “s”, English speakers mistakenly understood it to be a plural form and so the false singular cherry was born. The same process lies behind the word *pea*, erroneously derived from the singular form *pease* (ultimately from Greek *pison*), preserved in the nursery rhyme “pease pudding hot, pease pudding cold”.

Although these changes took place hundreds of years ago, the process can be observed today in the emergence of *bicep*: a singular form of *biceps*. This may seem logical, but *biceps* is an adoption of a singular Latin noun, from *bi-* “two” and *-ceps* “headed”, referring to a muscle with two points of attachment.

The tendency for speakers to associate the “s” ending with plurals has also given rise to erroneous plural forms. Despite phenomena being the plural of Greek *phenomenon*, the false plural *phenomenas* is sometimes used. But the error of this type that is most likely to make pedants reach for their red pens is *paninis*, the supposed plural of Italian *panini* (singular *panino*); a reminder that what is acceptable for some remains anathema for others.

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Kings Norton Library

A gift from Andrew Carnegie

Kings Norton has more than its fair share of historic buildings. But there's one that is not generally recognised as significant: the Kings Norton Library.

It sits there fairly inconspicuously half way up Pershore Road towards the Green, as it has done for more than a hundred years. It doesn't look particularly special architecturally, and inside it looks like most other local libraries. But just as you enter, you'll see on the right-hand wall a tablet that tells you that it is, in fact, very special.

It's what's known as a Carnegie library, of which there are only some 2,500 across the whole of the world. If you've only heard vaguely of Andrew Carnegie, or don't know him at all, his is perhaps the most astonishing example of all time of the classic rags-to-riches story. Not only did he achieve phenomenal business success, but he devoted the vast proportion of those riches to charitable causes, including the

funding of new libraries around the world. Books and libraries were always very special for him, because it was almost solely through the knowledge he acquired by reading that he achieved greatness.

The story of his life still takes one's breath away, even though he died more than a hundred years ago. He came from the humblest of circumstances, born in 1835 in a single-room weavers' cottage in Dunfermline, Scotland. That single room served as bedroom, living room and kitchen. His prospects as a child would not have extended beyond following his father as a weaver and never leaving Dunfermline. Instead, he was to become the definitive force in the development of the American steel industry, becoming one of the richest men in history and perhaps the best-known philanthropist who has ever lived.



MICHAEL
WRITES
REGULARLY
ON LOCAL
HISTORY

During the last 20 years of his life, having built his fortune, he gave away almost 90 percent



PHOTO BY MICHAEL KENNEDY

of it, some \$350 million (\$6 billion at current rates) to charitable causes. Throughout his career, his overriding philosophy was that rich people should employ their wealth to improve society.

His story is almost too complex to summarise. His childhood in Scotland was what the Americans would have called "dirt poor". In fact, Scotland in general was at the point of starvation. He was helped, however, by the fact that his father borrowed money to emigrate to America when Andrew was 12, believing that

▲ KINGS
NORTON
LIBRARY

the family would find new prospects there.

Andrew had no particular skill to offer America. Initially, he found work in a Pittsburgh cotton mill as a bobbin boy. But even in his early teenage years he showed a natural affinity and vision for business. By his mid-twenties, having carefully invested his relatively small earnings, he had created an investment portfolio which including burgeoning industries such as the railways, bridge-building and oil production. The value of his investments grew, helped by the fact that he became a very successful

bonds salesman. Eventually, he had enough funds to create the Carnegie Steel Company in Pittsburgh in 1892, an initially small, local business which became the basis for the mighty US Steel Corporation. After selling the company in 1901, he became even richer than the legendary Rockefeller!

From then on, he devoted his life to philanthropy on a massive scale, focusing on world peace, scientific research and education, with a particular devotion to funding libraries not only across the United States but in Europe and several other parts of the world... including Kings Norton!

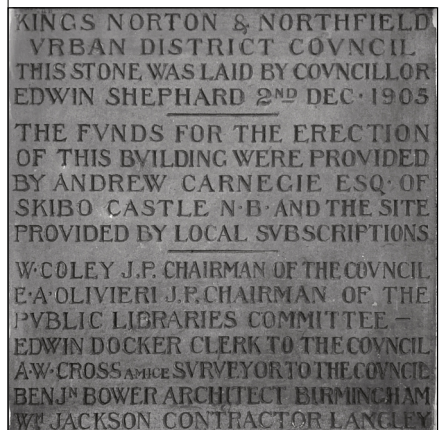
Why was Andrew, unlike most other businessmen, so committed to charity and the community? Why were libraries so important to him? The reason lies in his childhood. Despite his humble beginnings, he was fortunate in his educational opportunities. He found a place at the Free School in Dunfermline, a gift to the town from a local philanthropist. As a boy, he also came under the influence of his maternal uncle, a Scottish political leader called George Lauder, who encouraged him to develop a wide range of reading. He continued to read in America, though working twelve hours a day, using the facilities provided by the local

Tradesman's Subscription Library, and borrowing books from a local man, Colonel James Anderson, who opened his collection to local workers every Saturday.

Carnegie knew not only that reading, and the availability of books, had transformed his prospects, but also believed passionately that even the humblest of individuals could transform his life by self-help, in which reading should play a significant role. He was determined that all people should have that opportunity.

A total of 2,509 Carnegie libraries were built between 1883 and 1929, mostly in America and Europe, but also in Canada, and Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, the Caribbean, Mauritius, Malaysia, and Fiji. At first, they were almost exclusively established in places with which he had a personal connection, Scotland

► THE PLAQUE WHICH RECORDS THE FOUNDING OF THE LIBRARY IN 1905



and Pittsburgh, his adopted hometown. But from 1899 he extended funding internationally. As the programme progressed, provided local authorities met the stipulations he set down for local involvement, very few of the towns that requested a grant were refused.

These stipulations were known as the "Carnegie Formula". They required financial commitments from the town and its inhabitants that were requesting a donation. Carnegie demanded significant local support on a continuing basis because he believed that the community should itself have a vested interest in the library, as a guarantee of its stability and success. So the Kings Norton authorities had to demonstrate to the Carnegie organisation not only the need for a library, but provide the site, pay its staff, and guarantee a free service to all its users.

Libraries could be built in a number of styles, but there was a stipulation that the architecture was typically simple and formal, welcoming patrons to enter through a prominent doorway, nearly always accessed via a staircase or steps from the ground level. This "ascent to knowledge" symbolized a person's elevation by learning. Kings Norton library, which opened

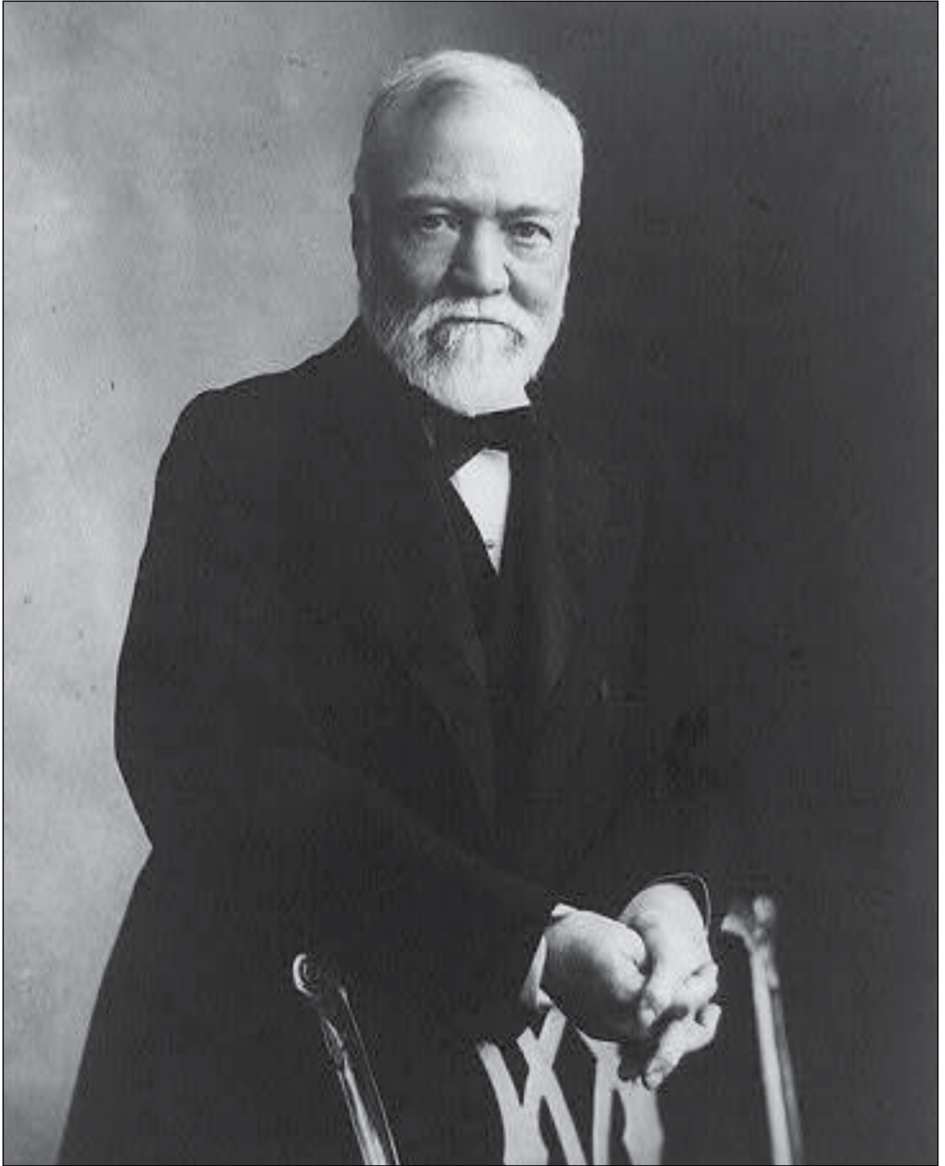
in 1906, is a good example of this approach.

Our library retains many of its original features. Its exterior is largely unchanged and most of the bookshelves, free-standing and wall mounted, are original. Its children's area was modernised recently through a contribution from The Wolfson Foundation, but essentially the overall structure is as it always was, including its wooden pillars.

One interesting point to note. The tablet that can be seen in the doorway includes the words "The funds for the erection of this building were provided by Andrew Carnegie Esq of Skibo Castle". No mention of America, no mention of the mighty Carnegie organisation. This is interesting because Skibo Castle is in Scotland and, by the time of the building of the Kings Norton library, Carnegie had lived in America for nearly 60 years. But he was always eager to retain and build on his Scottish roots. He bought Skibo Castle in 1897, investing a significant amount in the restoration of the historic 13th century building. It was his primary residence in Scotland until he died in 1919.

Skibo Castle became famous in the 1980s when businessman Peter de Savary bought it from the Carnegie family and created the Carnegie Club, an

► PHOTO
OPPOSITE :
ANDREW
CARNEGIE
IN 1905,
THE YEAR
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KINGS
NORTON
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OPENED



exclusive private members' club. He improved and extended it even more before selling it in 2003. It is still a magnificent members' only facility, with a golf course, an artificial lake (not called a loch!) and an

exceptional setting overlooking the Dornoch Firth in the highland county of Sutherland. Another great Carnegie legacy.

September Days Are Here



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

*By all these lovely tokens,
September days are here,
with summer's best of weather
and autumn's best of cheer.*

These lines were penned by Helen Hunt Jackson (1830 - 1885), the American poet, writer and an activist on behalf of the native Americans. As the Parish Magazine goes to press, we are enjoying last of the summer before the glories of the colours of autumn. Now we have shorter days and the nights are beginning to draw in. There's still time for a bit of a read over the late August bank holiday. Make the best of it as it is the last one before Christmas!

I made mention of killer opening lines last month, those introductory words which immediately make you want to read on. Most people recognise the opening lines of "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in position of a small fortune is in want of a wife." This is a splendid and ironic opener to one the greatest novels in the English language.

Having discovered recently for the first time Dodi Smith's "I Capture the Castle", which I wrote about last month, I have rediscovered and reread another classic masterpiece, "The Towers of Trebizond" by Rose Macauley. It begins; "Take my camel, dear,' said my aunt Dot, as she climbed down from this animal on her return from High Mass." It is one of the most famous openers in modern English literature and makes me smile every time I read it. The continuing story definitely does not disappoint!

"The Towers of Trebizond" was written and published by Dame Rose Macaulay in 1956, two years before she died. She was a Midlander, born in Rugby in 1881, and educated at Somerville College, Oxford. Rose had worked as a nurse and, in the First World War, in the British Propaganda Department in the War Office. She continued a romantic affair with a married writer and former Jesuit priest from their meeting in 1918 until he died in 1942.

The novel describes the exploits of a small Anglo-Catholic group crossing Turkey by camel. It was a spiritual autobiography, reflecting Macaulay's own changing and conflicting beliefs. In her words, her faith at the time was not in "mere Christianity" but in a more "complex, mystical sense of the Divine". She returned to the Anglican church and to Christian faith later in life, having renounced belief somewhat ardently for some years.

"The Towers of Trebizond" is a tragicomedy, a funny, poignant adventure story with wistful humour and deep sadness, farce and fantasy. It is still as wholly entertaining as it was when it was written. There's the eccentric Dorothea ffoulkes-Corbett (Aunt Dot of the opening lines), her high Anglican clergyman friend, Father Hugh Chantry-Pigg, who travels with his collection of sacred relics in his pocket, and the narrator and central character, Laurie. Their journey takes them across Turkey from Istanbul – or Constantinople as Aunt Dot would have it, Byzantium as Father Chantry-Pigg insists on calling it - to Trebizond. There they want to explore the possibility of starting an Anglo-Catholic mission. Fr. Chantry-Pigg is keen to meet the fanatical residents who live at the top of Mount Ararat while Aunt Dot plans the emancipation of Turkish women through the wider use of the bathing hat! For Laurie, the trip is pure pleasure.

Macaulay explores, through humour and a charming writing style, the attractions of mystical Christianity and the conflicts between her adulterous love affair and the demands of the Christian faith. It's definitely another book to put on the list, to read or reread for this late summer escape. Let's face it, there's plenty to take a break from.

Another book I read this month was the prescient "Archangel" by one of my favourite authors, Robert Harris. Written in 1998, it begins with a fictional eyewitness account

the death of Joseph Stalin, reflecting on his appalling and terrifying cruelty towards his family and the citizens of Russia, his country's unburied past and the possibility that he left a son, ready to assume his mantle. Robert Harris is a historian. The historical detail hangs lightly yet accurately. The background he provides to the rise of Stalin informs the vision and understanding of Russia today and its claims to a "ruskiy mir" (русский мир). This is a concept which dates back to the 11th century. It describes a mythical, philosophical Russian world, based on a diverse language, culture and tradition. Thus, in this Russian philosophy, Ukraine and other former Russian states which are now sovereign countries, are waiting to be reunited as one Russia.

This is not Harris's best novel by any means, although the Stalin flashbacks are very good. I was most impressed by its remarkable prescience, especially as we learn of Putin's references to "ruskiy mir", the Russian world order. Overall, though, it is a rattling good thriller!

I must just return briefly to the "Wagatha Christie" case which I wrote about in the July magazine as the verdict came in this week. Ms Rooney was vindicated in the strongest terms. Ms Vardy was described as self-destructive and left with her reputation in tatters. A question had been put to Ms Vardy during cross-examination. She began to answer; "If I'm honest ... " The barrister responded curtly, "You're in court under oath, you have to be honest!" The judge, in her summing up, was highly critical, labelling Ms. Vardy "an

unreliable and untrustworthy witness who was likely to have destroyed potentially crucial evidence on purpose."

What an expensive, self-destructive way to end a friendship which has now become even more bitter. Was it jealousy, attention seeking? Was Ms Vardy egged on by "friends"? A commentator likened it not only to an own goal, but to repeatedly heading the ball into the back of the net! Now there follow vengeful repercussions.

Enough is enough! I am reminded of Exodus 20:19, the ninth Commandment; "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour." We should all heed this ancient directive. Both women will survive and will probably make loads of money from the case. Let's not feel sorry for them, but pray for them and their families. **And this, I promise, is the last word from me on the matter.** I am now committed to never reading, nor writing one more word about it, you'll be relieved to know!

Enjoy the last days of summer to the full, if you are able. My last words this month are taken from the writing of J.K. Rowling:

"Autumn seemed to arrive suddenly that year. The morning of the first of September was crisp and golden as an apple." (Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows.)

Parish Book Group

The book group has now started after hold-ups during the pandemic. We now have a core group of six people with an additional two interested. So far, we have met in different houses but, if the numbers increase, we may need to look at the possibility of meeting at St Nicolas' Church.

At our first meeting, we discussed our love of books, our particular favourites and how we expected the group to proceed. Our first book was "The Dictionary of Lost Words" by Pip Williams. It focused on a fictional character, Esme, who was involved in the production of the very first Oxford English Dictionary. The book recounts Esme's life in the context of British and world events of the time but is also a joyous exploration of words and their meanings. It even tells of Esme's trip to the local outdoor market where she gathers some choice words from the stall holders.

We had a very interesting discussion about our love of words enriched by the thoughts of those group members who know Oxford and have been privileged to visit the Ashmolean Museum and Bodleian Library.

For our second book we are reading "West with Giraffes" by Lynda Rutledge. The story is fictional but based on real events. Two giraffes survive a crossing of the Atlantic on a boat and are then taken across America to San Diego Zoo.

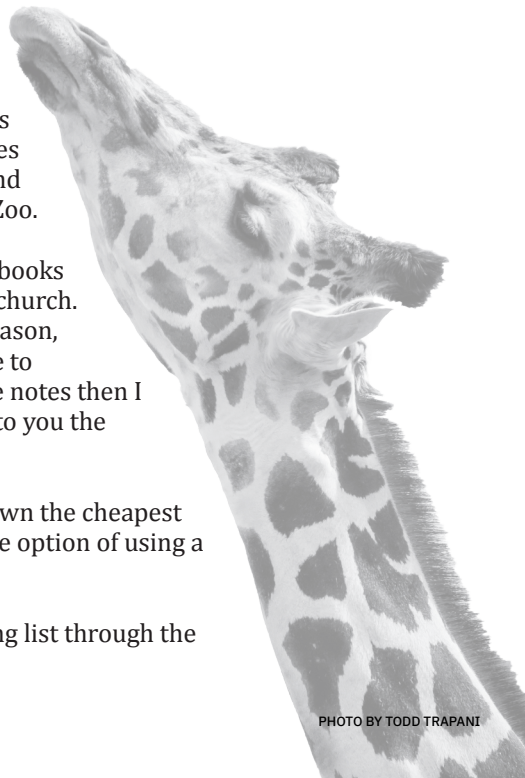
I am happy to receive suggestions for future books from the group or from other readers in the church. I can also include those who, for whatever reason, are unable to attend in person but would like to contribute. Read the book and send me some notes then I will take them to the meeting and feed back to you the group's thoughts.

Judy Ash has taken on the role of tracking down the cheapest prices for the books and of course there is the option of using a Kindle too.

I hope to keep you up to date with our reading list through the year ahead.



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



Treasured Memories



**Eddie
reminisces
about visits to
the Far East**

There are some countries and cities which are often in the news. When I hear references to them, my memory bank opens up and recollections appear, not all of them without sadness. Sri Lanka, for example, and the riots in the main city of Colombo have been much in the spotlight recently. In one of my previous tales, I wrote of having visited the island in a cargo ship whose last port of call was Kolkata.

I waxed lyrical about how enjoyable I found Ceylon, as it was then known, and said that I thought the people, although poor, were so welcoming. Alas, circumstances have changed. Today, the country is on the brink of financial disaster and, once again, Covid is a factor. The normally booming travel business has virtually collapsed. To see mobs storming the presidential palace makes me feel rather sad.

I have also mentioned Hong Kong in previous articles. The crews of all the ships on which I served loved Hong Kong as it used to be in the days before China reoccupied it. We would have quite a hectic time when we disembarked there, getting suits made in two days and eating like lords.

Hong Kong had a good nightlife, too, and all the shops were full of cheap goods. In fact, seafarers would often be quite exhausted by their visit! We used the expression "a touch of the honkers" to describe the after-effects of a visit to Hong Kong; but today, it has lost its ambiance under the heel of a brutal regime.

A final memory, for this month, is of Japan. In the late 1980s, I was on a large container ship which was situated in the

Mitsubishi shipyard at Kobe, Japan. The vessel was there for almost six weeks for modification. Kobe has always been my favourite Japanese port. I made several friends among the locals and some of them helped me to understand the enigma of this country.

It wasn't long after our refit that the Kobe area was devastated by a huge earthquake in 1995. I remember seeing, on the news, pictures of the raised causeway which I knew so well, which had collapsed onto the road below it, a road along which we used to travel by taxi from the shipyard to the city on our runs

ashore. You can see the fallen causeway in the YouTube video linked to the QR code below. Inevitably, people had been killed and injured. I thought about the friends I had made and with whom I had lost touch, wondering what had happened to them.

These are just a few of the many clear memories which I treasure of times past. Ageing can sometimes seem a cruel process, especially when you stand in front of the mirror; but I am grateful to God that I can remember so much.



PHOTO BY NIC LOW



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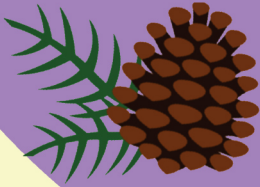
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