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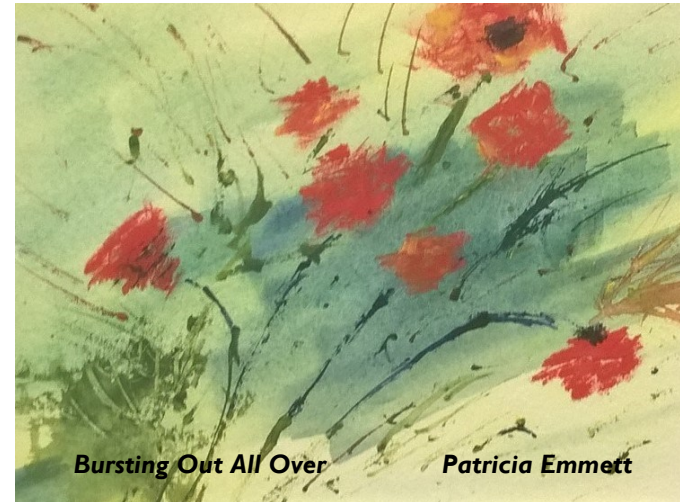
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AUTUMN 2018

***CHURCH & VILLAGE
BIRSTALL & WANLIP***

THE PARISH OF BIRSTALL AND WANLIP

Rector	Revd Vince Jupp, 251 Birstall Road LE4 4DJ <i>email: vincejupp@btinternet.com</i>	2674517 07840 855030
Hon Asst. Priests	Revd Sheila Skidmore, 15 School Lane Revd Kerry Emmett, 1 Chamberlains Field Canon Anne Horton, 8b Copeland Road Revd Robin Martin, 22 Sycamore Road Revd Michael Webb, 31 Bramley Road	2673318 3194736 2677942 2671651 07813144645
Churchwardens	Mr Tony Bloxam, 17 Sandgate Avenue Mr Andy Proud, 97A Wanlip Lane Mr John Ward, 28 Walker Road Mrs Debbie Shephard, 41 Roman Road	2675381 07889 807087 2677600 2672630
Licensed Readers	Mr Peter Chester, 12 Oakfield Avenue Mrs Lesley Walton, 16 The Crossways Mrs Tricia Emmett, 1 Chamberlains Field	2120236 2674995 3194736
Pastoral Assistants	Mrs Doreen Wilson, 13 Poplar Avenue Miss Sandra Robinson, 7 Lambourne Road Mrs Gill Pope, 26 Blenheim Road	2674680 2677238 2675086
Safeguarding Coordinator	Mrs Annette Marshall <i>annette.marshall8@gmail.com</i>	
Sunday School	Mrs Rose Parrott <i>rose.parrott@btinternet.com</i>	07811662235
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Treasurer	Mrs Nicki Wills, Church Office, Church Hill <i>email: stjames.birstall@btconnect.com</i>	2671797
Tower Captain	Mr Clive Mobbs, 30 Wanlip Avenue <i>Practice night—Thursday at 7.30pm</i>	2677156
Wanlip Church Hall Bookings	Mr John Ward, 28 Walker Road	2677600
Nearer Group	Peter and Gill Chester <i>pete.chester@ntlworld.com</i>	2120236
Editor of Keep in Touch	Canon Anne Horton, 8b Copeland Road <i>rahorton@outlook.com</i>	2677942
Editorial Team	Revd Vince Jupp, Mrs Lesley Walton <i>lp.walton@ntlworld.com</i>	



*Come my guardian angels, misfortunes overcome.
Whatever good in my heart, I know who put it there.
Lead me loving, lead me true, I will follow you I swear.*

In May I was privileged to hear *The Bohemian Choir* singing beautiful music and telling heart-breaking yet heartening family stories of dark days in the life of their country, now part of the Czech Republic. The choristers were all young adults from the University of Liberec. 2018 marks two anniversaries within the Czech Republic: the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the country and the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the violent Communist military occupation in 1968. To mark these anniversaries, and to promote awareness of the history and culture of their country, the Bohemian choir worked on a unique project: ***Dark Times in Beautiful Places***. Combining music and story-telling, the choir entertained and educated us with respect to the Communist era in Czechoslovakia. Beautiful choral pieces were interspersed with stories of those terrible days, all stories drawn from family memories of the choir members themselves. I found it utterly heart-breaking, not least the thought that these things had been happening during my adult life, and I hadn't known the half of it. The concert ended with the song ***Guardian Angels***. We were each given an English translation on card as a keepsake, and encouraged to pray it as they sang. **Anne**

KEEP IN TOUCH', Winter 2018

Copy by November 1st, please

All contributions welcome. Maximum preferred length: 500 words.
(If longer, the editor reserves the right to edit!!)
The editor wishes to say a big thank you to all who kindly contribute.

REGULAR EVENTS AND GROUPS

Weekly

- Thursday 7.30-9.00pm **Bell ringing practice (St James)**
Contact Clive Mobbs 0116 2677156
- Saturday 10-12 noon **St James Church open + Tea and coffee**

Monthly

- 2nd Monday 7.30pm **Monday Group (Village Hall)**
Contact Jane Scott 0116 2673761
- 4th Monday 10.15am **Mothers' Union (St James)**
Contact Helen Tarry 0116 2677493
- 1st Wed. 10.30am **Contemplative Prayer 76 Sibson Road**
Contact Noreen Talbot 0116 2672756
- 3rd Tuesday 10am -12.30 **Old Nick's Coffee Shop**
Wanlip Church and Community Centre

REGULAR SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>St James, Birstall, Sunday</p> <p>8 am Holy Communion (<i>said</i>)
 10 am All Together (<i>1st Sunday</i>)
 10 am Parish Communion (<i>other Suns</i>)
 10 am Sunday School</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Weekdays</p> <p>Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9 am Morning Prayer</p> <p>Thurs. 9.30 am Holy Communion</p> | <p>Our Lady & St Nicholas, Wanlip Sundays, 6 pm</p> <p>1st Sunday
Holy Communion</p> <p>2nd, 3rd, 4th Sundays
Prayer Book Evensong</p> <p>5th Sunday
Alternative Service of the Word</p> |
|--|--|

BURSTING OUT ALL OVER

God, Me and Art 2018



A small group from Birstall and Wanlip meets every two months on a Wednesday, 2-4 pm, in the Church Office for **God, Me and Art**. We are not expert artists. We are not all artists in the traditional sense. We are not competitive or judgmental, but we do enjoy what God has inspired each of us to bring along. In June we had the theme **Bursting Out All Over** and there were contributions in watercolour, poetry, drama, flower-arranging and collage, to name just a few of the media used. On October 10th, the theme is **Tides and Seasons**. On December 5th, the theme is **Generosity**. We'd love you to join us.



On BBC 1's Songs Of Praise around Easter, a church was featured which had produced its own **Stations of the Cross** through the artwork of its members. Birstall and Wanlip have lots of artists of many kinds and so we plan to produce a set of Resurrection Stations of the Cross for Easter 2019.

As well as paint in various forms, we are thinking of collage, tapestry, embroidery and much, much more. We'd love you to be involved. We need to start planning very soon. If you'd like to be involved or would like more details, please contact Lesley Walton or me.

Kerry Emmett.

RECTOR'S RAMBLINGS



By the time you read this, I will (hopefully) have been rested, had a holiday road trip around some lovely English cities including Oxford, York and Bath and begun to plan the Autumn programme. As I write, however, I am sitting in my study following July's *All Together Service*, listening to Sheryl packing upstairs and shouting the occasional question about what I want to take with me: 'the usual... pants, socks, shirts but not my phone or laptop.' I'm learning!

At this morning's 8am service I preached on the passage in Mark's gospel about two of Jesus' healings, the woman with a 12-year bleed and Jairus' daughter. I had an equality theme in mind. This week in Westminster Hall, an exhibition opened. Called 'Voice and Vote,' it marked one hundred years of votes for (some) women. I'm reminded, however, that around the world, life is still very unequal for women, and in so many different ways. I asked the women in my life what it's like being a woman today and found that even in Britain the inequalities are still anger-making and in many ways. For women further afield - around the world - it can be horrendous, abhorrent even. I realised that I was not as aware as I thought I was. And that's been an eye-opener.

Jesus calls us to treat everyone as equal in the sight of Almighty God. Treating everyone as equal isn't just about saying it, but meaning it. And meaning it requires that we stand up to inequalities and speak out whenever we see them. We sort of lament when we see inequalities in other faiths, other countries and other cultures, but we don't always notice when inequality rears its ugly head in our own sphere. I need to notice how I am complicit, or ignorant, or accidentally or, sadly, purposefully misogynist because of my white male middle-class upbringing. Of course, this reads across to race relations too. How am I racist?

Highlighting the injustice of the 1832 Reform Bill in *for the first time* restricting the franchise to 'male persons', she concluded, with considerable outrage, *the character of the seventeen ladies with whom I have the honour to be associated makes its own appeal. Their private and public virtues, the distinguished service they have and are rendering to the community, their interest in and acquaintance with public questions are known and appreciated. It is a scandal that these, and such as these, should be condemned to political serfdom while the votes of the most degraded of men are solicited and welcomed.*



The *Representation of the People Act* became law in February 1918. From then on women over 30, who were occupiers of property or married to occupiers, were entitled to vote. This was seen as a major success for women's suffrage. The Act was not, however, such a success for women under 30. They would have to wait a further ten years before they received the same rights.

Some of our readers may have their own family memories? Please do write and share them with fellow readers of *Keep in Touch*.

The Editor



2018 marks the 100-year anniversary of the *Representation of the People Act*, which gave (some) women the right to vote in local and national elections. There are two interesting books about the struggle for women's suffrage in Leicester: Jess Jenkins' *The Burning Question* and Shirley Aucott's *Women of Courage, Vision and Talent: Lives in Leicester 1780 to 1925*, but neither mention significant women's suffrage supporters from Birstall or Wanlip.

Living in Belgrave Hall, however, were the Ellis sisters, daughters of John Ellis MP, who was a Quaker and social reformer. His daughters inherited his convictions. In January 1907, Charlotte Ellis was one of nine 'respected ladies of the town' who attended a council meeting in Leicester Town Hall supporting the claim of 18 female town ratepayers to be admitted to the list of parliamentary voters. Charlotte was the first candidate. The chairman, it is said, looked at her with amazement, and pointed out that it had been decided forty years ago not to admit women to the franchise. He did, however, admit Miss Ellis to the witness box, where she pointed out that she and her sisters were joint owners of Belgrave Hall and had paid rates for over thirty years. Their claim was, however, disallowed on the grounds of 'legal incapacity'.

Edith Gittins, one of Charlotte's companions, immediately wrote to the local papers: *The fundamental principle of the Constitution is that with taxation goes the right of representation. All through the Middle Ages, women who were freemen, and there were such in every borough, were among the choosers. We therefore ask for no new privilege, but for the restitution of a right.*

Is it because I'm not aware enough, or don't care or don't do enough to stand up and speak out against racism? So, my summer reading is both Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* and Reni Eddo-Lodge's *Why I'm No Longer Talking To White People About Race*. I recommend these books to you for your Autumn reading. As a white middle class male, it would be patronising to say I understand the issues, but what I can do is to raise my awareness, and practise loving everyone as I love myself, loving all my brothers and sisters as I find them. I believe God calls us to grow in our understanding of him and of his teaching, and so improve our relationship with all our fellow travellers.

One of the themes for this magazine is 'centenaries'. WWI ended a hundred years ago, yet we didn't learn the lessons of that human tragedy immediately and went to war again just twenty-one years later. A hundred years ago, women in Britain got the vote, but only about 30% of them! That was a positive beginning, but the journey to change hasn't finished yet. We still have so much to learn. If we want to change the world and to grow God's kingdom, we have to commit to changing the bits we can change: ourselves, our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

Jesus set the scene 2000 years ago. For him women were equal with men. He readily broke down his society's barriers of gender and race, and welcomed everyone into God's kingdom as children of the same heavenly Father. When we do the same, God's kingdom will grow! As we watch our thoughts, our words and our deeds, measuring them against Jesus' teaching, we'll do fine. Compare yourself to no-one else but to who you were yesterday. Be the best person you can be today, loving everybody as you would expect to be loved yourself, irrespective of gender, race, culture, or faith. Be a part of the solution.

With every blessing.

Vince

The views and opinions of the authors who have submitted articles to 'Keep in Touch' belong to them alone and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the wider church.

EXPLORING LEICESTERSHIRE

As some of our readers will recall, an ‘expedition’ to one of the lesser-known parts of our county took place in mid-May, when a small cavalcade of cars with their passengers set off from Birstall to explore the lovely Mount Saint Bernard Abbey, near Whitwick. <http://www.mountsaintbernard.org/>

It was a beautiful bright day, though with a cool breeze, which became more obvious when we disembarked at our destination! Not many of our group had been there before, as the abbey is almost impossible to reach by public transport.

The abbey was clearly visible several miles before we arrived, its tower emerging from above the green tree-lined roads we were following (except for one car which went the long way round via Loughborough!)



Mount Saint Bernard Abbey is a Trappist monastery. It is not an ancient building, like Rievaulx or Fountains in the North of England, so there are no picturesque ruins, rather an Abbey Church and stately living quarters for both monks and visitors on retreat.

The monks are almost entirely self-sufficient. Until recently, they maintained a home farm, but now, as you may have read in the press, have become brewers, producing their own special beer to help finance their establishment.

Most of us chose first to look round the Abbey Church, which is very simple, with soaring pillars and a wonderful calm atmosphere. Only the monks can enter the sanctuary area (enclosure), but people can come into the main body of the church either to pray, or to participate silently in the daily Mass and Offices. That cool breeze made most of us decide to visit the Abbey Shop, where cards, books and gifts can be purchased.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE FOSSE TEAM

The Bishop is pleased to announce the appointment of The Revd Canon Lee Francis-Dehqani, who holds Permission to Officiate in the diocese and who was formerly Team Rector of the Benefice of Oakham in the Diocese of Peterborough, as Interim Team Rector of the Benefice of the Fosse Team for a period of eighteen months. There was a public Welcome Service for Lee on Monday 20 August at St Peter and St Paul, Syston. Please hold Canon Lee and the Fosse Team Churches in your prayers.

FROM THE REGISTERS

May - August 2018

Baptisms

27/5	Amelia-Rose Fryer	St James
29/7	Harrison and Neve Popple	Wanlip
5/8	Freya Lambie, Sienna Smith	St James

Marriages

30/6	Dean Sargeant and Marisia O'Connor	St James
21/7	Simon Audas and Laura Burton	St James
27/7	Stuart Warren and Sophie Kirby	St James
28/7	Kyle Durrance and Emma Mugginson	Wanlip
4/8	Andrew Grace and Pamela Moore	St James

Wedding Blessing

11/8	Malcolm and June Williams (40th anniversary)	St James
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Funerals

29/5	Dylan Campbell	St James
25/6	Mavis Stretton	Gilroes
30/11	Laurence Musson	St James
1/8	Michael King	St James
6/8	Mary Vesty	St James
20/8	Jasper Jonathan Lynch	St James

There are two Greasleys, Pte. Arthur (21), and Pte. William (28), but they are not known to be related. Arthur's father was the licensee of *The Earl of Stamford* (the original building in Front St.), while William worked on the horse drawn trams in Leicester.

Sgt. James Reed (28) died in the Battle of the Somme, as did Pte. Arthur Dawson (27). Both played football for Birstall United and both have no known grave. Lieut. Kingsley Reynolds (24), was the son of the Reynolds of Birstall Holt (now apartments); Pte. Frederick Liquorish (36), was a groom at Cliffe House, next to St James' Church. Pte. Walter Bayliss (30), was a tailor; Pte. Edward Endall (23), a cowman; L/Cpl. Tom Henson (32), a clerk; Pte. JohnToon (28), a dairyman; Pte William Walton (35), a farm labourer.

There are two more, Pte. Arthur Pritchett, and Pte Arthur Dawson. Of both men little is known, save that they too died for King and Country.

All those mentioned on our War Memorial came from different walks of life. They all left grieving parents, wives and children. It remains our duty and privilege to remember their service and sacrifice, and to ensure that their memory continues to be honoured.

Tony Bloxam.

'DOWN MEMORY LANE'

AFTERNOON TEAS

at Birstall Methodist Coffee Shop, bi-monthly 2.30-4 pm

6th October, 8th December 2018

If you are or someone close to you is experiencing some loss of memory, or are feeling isolated or lonely ... join us for a drink, music, cakes, a sing-a-long, some entertainment and always a chance to have a chat. If family members or friends would like to come with you, they will be very welcome. To find out more, please contact

Meg 0116 2672213, or Janet 0116 2671471

We also found shelter in the delightful garden, maintained by the monks, which is at the top of and around the 'Calvary' mound.

After a fascinating morning, our trip was rounded off with lunch at the St Joseph's Café, which we can recommend. It is only a few hundred yards away from the gates of the monastery. The ride back home was another opportunity to admire the beauty of the scenery in this part of our country. I have never heard of any tourist agency, as there are in other parts of England, extolling the Leicestershire countryside as a holiday destination, or offering holiday cottages for rent, but perhaps we don't blow our own trumpets loudly enough!

Beryl McHugh

EXPLORING BERKSHIRE

Parish Holiday June 4-6, 2018

On the Monday morning at 9.30 a.m. 43 members of St James' and friends departed from Birstall to spend a few days at Warners' Littlecote House Hotel in Berkshire. After a stop for morning coffee at Banbury we continued to the Hotel, set in 113 acres of landscaped gardens. After the usual problems of rooms, keys and wine (?) we went our separate ways, all meeting again for our evening meal.

Next morning after a superb breakfast we were off to spend the morning in Newbury followed by an afternoon barge trip on the Kennet and Avon canal. Here some members alighted to 'help' the barge through the lock and again on our return. The barge captain gave us an interesting talk on the history of canals. Back at the hotel, our evening entertainment was provided by



'a Top Quality Comedy Speciality Act that delivers on every level'. Taffy Spencer (well, he made us laugh).



The next day we visited Salisbury. Most of the party started at the Cathedral.

What a beautiful building!



Mention must be made of the flock of 3000 white origami doves 'flying' over the nave to commemorate the centenary of the ending of the first world war.

There was then time to potter around the shops where the dove theme had been continued in some windows.

Thursday was a free day to relax, do your own thing or sample the activities available at the hotel. These included the Historic House tour, Tai Chi, bowling, archery, dance workshops, rifle shooting and swimming. We put three teams in the morning Mensa Quiz but did not come away with any prizes! One couple walked to nearby Hungerford and another, not content with three days on a coach, took another long ride to the Cotswolds to take a steam train ride.

Friday was 'going home' day. We broke our journey with a stop in the delightful Roman town of Cirencester where someone bought a plant large enough to require its own seat and seat belt! So ended a most enjoyable Parish Holiday on which there was a very happy atmosphere. Our thanks go to Sandra and Lesley for organising everything. Sadly Sandra could not enjoy the fruits of her labours but she received a daily progress report. Doreen kindly stepped in to count heads every time we boarded the coach!

Cynthia and Alan Chapman

Birstall Church War Memorial



This year, a hundred years since the cessation of hostilities in World War I, we remember with extra significance the terrible cost in lives that was necessary to achieve victory in the war that was deemed 'The War to End All Wars'. Sadness and loss was visited on the families of all seventeen men mentioned on the Birstall War Memorial. The memorial, financed by public subscription, was erected and dedicated in 1921, and refers to the conflict between '1914 and 1919'. Although hostilities ended in November 1918, the peace treaty was not signed until June 1919.

The very first death following the declaration of war on 4th Aug 1914, was that of Corporal H. G. Fielding Johnson (20), son of the Fielding Johnson family who lived in Goscote Hall. He was a dispatch rider and went to France with the British Expeditionary Force, which landed troops in France between 7th and 16th August 1914. Fielding Johnson was lost just 19 days after the declaration of war. His body was never recovered.

The last recorded death was that of Pte. William Smith (20), whose family farmed Cliffe Farm (now the site of Highcliffe School). Killed in action on 4th November 1918, just a week before the Armistice was signed, William is buried in a cemetery in France.

Pte. A. Adnitt (24), son of a commercial traveller, and Sgt. W Gladding (25), were both killed in the Battle of Loos on the same day and have no known graves. Both are commemorated on the Loos Memorial in France.

William served in the 20th Batn., London Regiment and was killed in action on the 27th September, 1918. He is buried at the Flesquieres Hill British Cemetery, France.

Robert George Oxbury

The son of George and Charlotte Oxbury. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission gives Charlotte's address as Warwick Street, Leicester. Robert was born at Swaffham c.1896. He was one of five children. The 1911 Census lists him and his father as 'Farm Labourers' at Holbeach, Lincolnshire. By 1914 he was probably employed at Wanlip Hall. Robert served in the Northumberland Fusiliers (Tyneside Scottish). He was injured on active service and died on 19th September, 1918. He is buried at the Leicester Gilroes Cemetery, England.



Arthur Hyslop Gascoigne

The son of William and Mary Gascoigne, Boundary Road, Mountsorrel. Arthur was born in 1899 in Caxton, Cambridgeshire. He had one sister. The 1911 Census lists his father as a gardener living at Wanlip Hall Gardens, with Arthur at school. Arthur served in The Kings (Liverpool Regiment) and was killed on the 29th September, 1918. He has no marked grave. His name is engraved on the memorial at Vis-En-Artois, France.

++++

As we remember the terrible conflict that cost so many lives, let us reflect on the closing words of Siegfried Sassoon's poem 'Aftermath':

***'Have you forgotten yet? ...
Look up, and swear by the green of the spring that you will
never forget.'***

John Ward

LITTLECOTE RAMBLINGS

So, after the longest, coldest, wettest, rottingiest winter in the whole history of the world, a group of intrepid travellers huddled together at the beginning of June to set out to the wild and uncharted regions of Berkshire. We were prepared to meet whatever came our way. We had provisions; and a tin of sweeties.

Wild life roamed through the plains as we travelled - cows and sheep, Alpacas from the high Andes, rabbits and horses, bounced through drifts of ox-eye daisies, cow parsley and hedgerows of dog-rose and elder flowers, along with blue thingies and yellow thingies - the names of which I know not. The countryside was in full and glorious bloom.

As we turned into the driveway of Warner's Littlecote House in Hungerford, there was an audible gasp of appreciation. The first view of that most beautiful house set in immaculate gardens was really quite breath-taking.

The exploration of our new surroundings proved no less fascinating. The gardens revealed a 'Stumpery', an intriguing short, winding path through old trees and woodcarvings, beautifully overgrown, and giving birds, insects and other small creatures places to live, hunt and hide.



Among the jewels in this particular crown is, of course, the old Tudor house, covered with ivy, and, hiding within, the original wood carvings and stonework, and the haunted bedroom that holds a terrible secret.

Actually, I found the atmosphere in the chapel much less peaceful than the bedroom and was glad to leave it (or is that just me?).

Outside, and down to a clear shallow, stream that once was part of keeping the fish for the estate, which was also evident in the discovery of a fish retention pool during excavation works, the ditch and pool being dated at c. AD 170-180. What we see now is the remains of the Roman Villa - the Orphic Hall, dated to c. 360-362, and which is the earliest building of this style (a triconch) from our knowledge of the Roman world. The building also contains, along with baths and a hypocaust, the 'Orpheus Mosaic', an amazing piece of mosaicist art. It was only discovered in 1727, but reburied by 1730 on the orders of Sir Francis Popham (the landowner), then re-discovered in 1977 and restored.



The myths around the pictures and symbols in the mosaic seem to be mostly centred on the Orphic cycle of rebirth (Zeus resurrected, his son, Zagreus, as Dionysus (Bacchus), and /or wine (Bacchus being the God of the vine). The images of feasting and partaking of wine together with rebirth/resurrection bear (in my mind) great similarity to Communion. There seem to be many similarities to Christianity through these ancient Gods.

Littlecote did more than just give us a lovely time, it opened a whole avenue of thought and knowledge.

Leigh Reid

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

11th November 1918-2018

To mark the Centenary of the end of the Great War, we remember with thanksgiving and prayer all those whose names are inscribed on our war memorials in Birstall and Wanlip.

The War Memorial in Wanlip Church



lists four men from the village who were killed during the First World War. Four young men killed from a total village population of, according to the 1911 Census, 96 (men, women and children). At the time of the 1911 Census, Wanlip comprised of 23 separate households (including the Hall).

Albert Marlow

The son of Herbert & Caroline Marlow of 24 Main Street, Barrow on Soar, Albert was born in 1895 in Barrow on Soar. He was one of ten children (three of whom had died before the 1911 Census). The 1911 Census lists him as 'Market Gardener' (probably employed by 1914 at Wanlip Hall). Albert served in the Leicestershire Regiment and was killed in action on the 17th December, 1915. He is buried at the Bienwillers Military Cemetery, France.



William Goodey

The son of Charles and Florence Goodey, Wanlip Hall Gardens, William, born in 1895 in Babraham, Cambridgeshire, was one of ten children (one of whom had died before the 1911 Census). The 1911 Census lists him as a 'Farm Labourer' at Ashwell, Rutland. He, as well as his father, was probably employed by 1914 at Wanlip Hall.

CALLED TO .. BAKE FAITH-FULLY

All Souls' Cakes

The traditional Soul Cake recipe is a cross between a scone, a cake and a biscuit. Traditionally made on 2nd November, All Souls' Day (Day of the Dead), the cakes were distributed by the rich to the poor of the parish, often saying prayers, singing psalms or songs for the dead. In the UK it may have replaced an ancient Celtic Festival called 'Samhain' or 'Feast of the Dead'. Bonfires were lit at night on high ground in order to light *All Souls'* way to heaven.

The British mediaeval tradition of 'Souling' and giving out of Soul Cakes on All Souls' Day was continued until the 1930s by both Protestant and Catholic Christians.

Traditionally each cake eaten would represent a soul being freed from purgatory. The cakes are full of currants and spice, then marked with a cross before being baked. They make a simple treat for afternoon tea to enjoy today.

Recipe for All Souls' Cakes

Ingredients

6oz butter, 6oz caster sugar, 3 egg yolks, 1lb plain flour
2 tsp mixed spice, 4 oz currants, a little milk to mix

Method

Heat oven to gas 5, 180°C, cream butter and sugar, beat in egg yolks one at a time. Sift in flour and spice, stir in currants, add enough milk to make a soft scone-type dough. Roll out and cut little cakes with a biscuit cutter, and mark with a cross. Place on a greased tray and bake for about 10 - 15 minutes, until golden brown. Cool on a wire tray, and keep in an airtight tin for 5 days.

Share with friends, pray, and enjoy.

Julie Ward



SUMMER HEATWAVE

Birstall is so quiet in the heatwave: a few cars leave between 6-8 am, then silence; a scattering of children pass languidly by on the way to school, a few men pass to collect newspapers, one or two dogs amble past, dragging their owners, then silence; between 9 and 9.30 shops open their doors, shutters go up, then silence. A burst of movement begins at 9.30: the banks and post office are ready; late dog-walkers, a few shoppers hurry to complete their business; then, mostly, silence.

What a joy the heatwave silence can be for peace, stillness, internal awareness and no distractions. So many people think they are not good at silence, they fear listening to the thoughts lurking in their minds. Yet churchgoers talk of a heavenly life in a spiritual body, being forever in the presence of God, healed, content and at peace. Why not practise that now?

We have sun, heat, silence and lack much physical energy. Summer gives us a reason to 'chill out', we can lie around noticing creation all around us: bird-song in the trees, the swarms of many-coloured butterflies that flutter in my garden; the sudden flower-burst in pots and dark corners of the garden; the raspberries, strawberries and herbs hiding behind leaves; so many reasons to sit quietly and gaze on our wonderful world.

If we can only stop wittering away and, with a sense of wonder, feel God's presence. There is no need to chatter to God; God already knows our every thought. Take a few minutes every day to just BE.

Noreen Talbot

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BIRSTALL & WANLIP

Those who read my CTiBW piece in the Summer edition of 'Keep in Touch', will be expecting a report back from our July meeting, along with details and plans for our forthcoming events, not least for the Advent and Christmas season. Holiday plans however, meant that we had to adjourn our meeting to a later date.

High on the agenda will be planning for joint events, especially on Advent Sunday. All I can say at the moment is that two special individuals have accepted an invitation to join us in the afternoon of Advent Sunday, and we are hoping that the quartet in the other photo will also bring some friends along.



My husband, Andrew, and I are narrow boaters, so our holidays take us all over the country (where there's a navigable waterway anyway!) to places which, over the years, have become familiar.

Wherever possible I worship at the various churches along the way, rejoicing in the knowledge that I am part of an enormous family. I meet perfect strangers who aren't strangers because they worship the same God as I do, and believe and trust in the same Holy Trinity. The knowledge that we share our Christian faith means that we don't need to go through that discernment process which so often takes place when meeting new people. *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland* unites Christians of all denominations, drawing us closer together so that we may be a united force, showing God's love in our communities with the shared confidence that we all worship the same God.

When I am with a congregation in Great Haywood or Audlem, or awed by the majesty of the cathedral in Chester, I feel that same unity. We are united, but different, gifted with a deep underlying understanding of who each of us is. Maybe we take this for granted in our own village, as we work together and pull together almost without thinking. In many cases, of course, we've known each other for many years, so it is good to reflect sometimes and to cast our minds back to the root of many of those friendships - our Christian faith.

Of the remaining 49 cards, 29 were purchased in support of a charity, which is laudable. I suspect that many of these charities did sell Nativity-related cards. So let us use the Christmas cards that we send to show our families and friends that, for us, Christmas is first and foremost a time to be thankful for God's most precious gift to us of His Son, and not just a time of general goodwill.

Another way in which we can witness to our faith, which might require a little bit of explanation, is always to refer to the fourth Sunday in Lent as Mothering Sunday (not Mother's Day). Mother's Day is an American invention and is celebrated in the US on the second Sunday of May. Of course we should give thanks for our mothers, and fathers too, but on Mothering Sunday we should also give thanks for our Mother Church.

Dorothy Wakefield

YOU ARE VERY SPECIAL

In all the world there is nobody like you. Since the beginning of time, there has never been another person like you. Nobody has your smile, your eyes, your hands, your hair. You're special. Nobody can paint your brushstrokes. Nobody in the universe sees things as you do.

You are different from any other person who has ever lived in all history. You are the only one in the whole of creation who has your particular set of abilities. There is always someone who is better at one thing or another than you, but no one has your combination of talents and feelings. You're special. You're rare, and in all rarity there is an enormous value.

You're special.... And it's no accident you are. Please realise God made you for a special purpose. He has a job for you to do as well as you can. Out of the billions of applicants, only one is qualified. Only one has the unique and right combination of what it takes, And that one is you. YOU ARE SPECIAL.

Anon. Submitted by Jane Scott

what about the appropriate speed? counting the number of verses and changing the stops to reflect the nature and sentiment of each verse? I remember the first hymn I ever played: 'Thou, Whose Almighty Word', to the tune *Moscow*. I played the first line as an intro, and put down the opening chord. ... Everything was fine. I also remember a family holiday in Norway (1966), where the Anglican priest in Ulvik was looking for an organist to cover the Sunday service. I jumped at the chance and can still recall playing 'Stand up, Stand up for Jesus' to the tune *Morning Light*. The bright sound of the instrument seemed to resonate across the fjord.

Those early days in organ playing were fostered by a number of experienced organists and tutors, who were sources of inspiration and encouragement. It would have been quite easy to get too emotionally involved and 'carried away' by particular hymns or occasions. It became apparent to me from favourable feedback that it was possible for me to 'make a difference' to services when it came to providing the music.

These earliest memories were special and had a spiritual quality about them, I feel. This experience has continued and expanded over the years as I have had many varied and diverse opportunities to play the organ in many different places.

Andy White

CALLED TO .. SHARE OUR FAITH

As Christians, we are urged to share our faith with those around us. Many of us find it difficult to discuss our faith, except, possibly, with a group of like-minded people. There are, however, some simple ways in which we can demonstrate our conviction of God's love for all.

One way is through the cards we send out at Christmas. I have noticed a decline in the number of Nativity related cards that I have received over the years, even from my church friends. Of the 69 cards I was fortunate enough to have received last year, only 20 illustrated any aspect of the Nativity. (The previous year it was 23.)

Just a quick note from our holiday! The Shropshire Union Canal runs almost at the feet of Chester Cathedral which is an absolutely magnificent building and with such a fascinating history.

I promise that the next edition of *Keep in Touch* will have a full diary of events for Christmas, but you will have to rely on the church notice sheets for details of that exciting ecumenical event on Advent Sunday which will mark the beginning of our Christmas preparation and a new Christian year.

Debbie Shephard *CTiBW Chair 2017 - 2019*



CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL

Link to Hope is a Christian Charity rebuilding Lives & Communities in Eastern Europe through Education and Social Care since 1991

In 2017, 43,996 shoe boxes were taken to Romania by the charity **Link to Hope** <https://linktohope.co.uk/> We sent 36 boxes from Birstall. Many thanks to those who prepared a whole box or who provided items.

Shoebboxes are given to the poorest people, and the conditions in which they live are dreadful, so these gifts are incredibly welcome. Please start saving items now so that we can send even more boxes this year. The stories brought back by the team who delivered the boxes (including a wheel-chair bound gentleman with no legs) were both heart-warming and sad.

We are so glad we can be part of this organisation which brings joy into dark places. We shall be asking for gifts from August onwards, so please help once again. <https://linktohope.co.uk/shoebbox-appeal-2018/filling-a-shoebbox>

Silvia Simes and Doreen Wilson

CALLED TO BE .. A READER

Nothing was further from my mind three years ago when by chance both Vince Jupp and Anne Crosby called in at my home for a cup of tea. They had recognised that I seemed to be witnessing a call from God and that I was struggling to fathom out quite what was going on.

One of the tasks that Anne had been assigned as part of her curacy training was to run a *Journey in Faith* course and, before I knew it, I was sitting in St James' Church at the beginning of the first session. Not having an academic background, I felt this was going to be something I was going to struggle with, but I was confident in the knowledge that I had read the Bible many times, and I believed at the time that I had a fairly clear insight in what the scriptures said. I could not have realised at that point how little I really knew. In the biblical sessions, we categorised the books of the Bible into major and minor Prophets and the various different biblical genres, and then spent some time looking in more depth into each of the categories. The more we learnt the more I wanted to know. The course seemed to be over as soon as it had begun, and I was faced with the challenge of whether to apply for a place on the Reader ministry training course. It was not until the last day for application that I finally decided that I should apply.

My application accepted, I had just two days during which to prepare a presentation on *Church Mission in our Parish*. I had to present this before a panel of clergy, including the Archdeacon. It was to last fifteen minutes, followed by a question and answer session. Then there were two individual interviews.

All of a sudden I started to feel that the scriptures were speaking to me personally. Never before had I felt so much a part of God's living word. I felt much like Jonah - wanting to hide in the belly of a fish and to avoid God's call. I discovered that it sometimes takes being taken into a dark place of listening and discernment so that we learn to let go of our private agendas and self doubt. I knew that if I were to pass this stage, then God really had called me and this time I really would have to lay down my nets and follow.

Having been accepted onto the course and spending more time being able to reflect on where I felt God was leading me, I accepted that he would not be guiding me to a place that I was not capable of dealing with. Only at that point did I start to understand my true self and begin to enjoy my training.

Now that I have completed my two years training, I am preparing for my October licensing as a Reader. I find myself reflecting on the changes in both my lifestyle and character that the Reader training has made. I now understand that Christian vocation is not a goal to be achieved but a gift to be received. Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to become something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person that I was born to be, to fulfil the original selfhood given to me at birth by God.

Andy Proud

CALLED TO BE .. A CHURCH ORGANIST

The power...the surge of sound....the variety of tonal possibilities.... the experience and feeling of accompanying voices - all these formed the magnetic pull to the organ.

The calling to organ playing was, on reflection, a combination of circumstances. Growing up in the 1950s and early 60s, my family attended church on a regular basis. Church life became part of my routine. When I was a teenager I had the opportunity to become the Sunday School pianist - with up to 50 children on the books - and to liaise with the organist to arrange special children's services in church. This served as an opening and gave me further opportunity to actually play on the organ. The organist, Mr Atherton, invited me to sit alongside him during Sunday services, and this is how I began observing and learning necessary skills. All manner of advice and tips was forthcoming on that organ seat.

After a short time, I was accompanying the congregation for one hymn and then a whole service. On the first occasion, I was filled with a number of fears: would people actually join in and sing?....