

**'KEEP IN TOUCH', Winter 2021**

Copy by, but, if possible, before 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021

All contributions welcome. **Maximum** length: 500 words!

# 'Keep In Touch'

**We continue to encourage  
BEST HYGIENE PRACTICE IN CHURCH  
ASKING WORSHIPPERS TO CONTINUE TO  
WEAR MASKS WHEN MOVING AROUND THE  
CHURCH  
AND WHEN SINGING**

**We may also continue to use the signing-in sheet at  
both church entrances.  
Also display the QR (Test and Trace) notice.**



*Narrow Boat, Birstall*

**KEEPING YOU 'IN TOUCH' IS**

Name .....

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## **AUTUMN 2021**

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

## THE PARISH OF BIRSTALL AND WANLIP

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

## PORRIDGE — FOOD FOR SAINTS

I was preparing a sermon for Evensong at Wanlip on the fourth Sunday of August and noticed that two days in the subsequent week were feast days for St Augustine of Hippo and his mother, St Monica. I knew quite a lot about St Augustine and his 'Confessions', but not so much about St Monica. In my researches, one fact in particular caught my attention. Augustine, in a reference to his mother, spoke of her habit of bringing 'to certain oratories, erected in the memory of the saints, offerings of porridge, bread, water and wine.' I didn't know that porridge was part of the Italian diet in the first century AD! Clearly it was, however, as I discovered researching it on Wikipedia.

Porridge was first produced in Southern Italy during the Palaeolithic era, but became commonplace during the Neolithic era. Today, we closely associate the dish with Scotland. Oats can be successfully cultivated on marginal upland soils and were introduced to Scotland in about 600 AD. In 1775, Dr Johnson wrote that oats were 'a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people'.

Experts say porridge is better for us than statins. It cuts cholesterol levels, boosts immunity and could fight cancer. A bowl provides more fibre than a slice of wholemeal bread and is also low in fat. It is virtually sugar-free and provides manganese, copper, iron and B vitamins. Doctors say eating one bowl per day could transform the health of the nation!

As I thankfully eat my daily bowl of porridge, I shall now also thank God for St Monica and for all that she did for the physical as well as the spiritual needs of her country women and men. *Faithful God, who strengthened Monica, the mother of Augustine, with wisdom, and through her patient endurance encouraged him to seek after you: give us the will to persist in prayer that those who stray from you may be brought to faith in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Canon Anne

## EDWARD LEAR Nonsense or Parody

It was reported in my newspaper (6th July) that some of Lear's unpublished writings had come to light. This included a new nonsense rhyme. *There was an old man on a bicycle/ Whose nose was adorned with an icicle/ But they said – if you stop/ It will certainly drop/ And abolish both you and your bicycle.* Maybe Lear had the experience of a nose dew-drop in hard frosty weather like the great frost of 1895. I knew a man years ago who told me he had skated to work from Farndon to Newark on the river Trent at that time.

I have long thought that much of Lear's writings were puns and parodies of things in the 19th century. The 'Jumblies' surely reflects on Victorian explorers to new foreign lands in ships that were often not really seaworthy. 'They went to sea in a sieve'. New species of plants and animals were being brought to England and were given exotic Latin names. Lear's botany of joke plants like 'Nastycreatureia crawlippia' is a fun pun.

I wonder if the inspiration for 'The Pobble that had no toes' came from a sufferer from frost bite? Could 'The Owl and the Pussy-cat' be about Victorian courting patterns? Whilst Lear's 'runcible spoon' was a nonsense, the name was given to a fork cum spoon for pickles in the 1920s. Kitchens in the big houses were serving new recipes and of course there were Mrs. Beeton's and others' Cookery Books. Making fun of these new dishes, Lear parodied them with his recipes for 'Gosky Patties' and 'Crumbobulous Pie'.

I am reminded of the Wartime (WW2) and for years after when food wastage was almost a crime. We were encouraged to use left-overs and make meals from different ingredients. My mother could be quite inventive and provided meals that were tasty, even if a bit different. When serving up something new we might ask her 'Where did you get the recipe?' and sometimes she might reply 'I got it out of my head,' to which we would respond with 'Augh!'

*Fr. Robin*

## INSTALLATION and INDUCTION OF

### THE REVEREND AMANDA DIGMAN

15<sup>th</sup> September 2021

The Revd Amanda Digman was installed and inducted as Rector of St James the Great, Birstall and Our Lady & St. Nicholas, Wanlip in St James' Church on the evening of the 15th September 2021. A large congregation had assembled to support her on this important occasion. Members of Amanda's family and friends from her previous parishes were in the congregation, together with members of our own parish churches and our local community.

The service began with Timothy Dudley-Smith's rousing hymn 'Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord'. An informal welcome from the Bishop of Leicester led into a prayer that we might all hear the call of Christ the King and follow in his service. The collect that followed held before God all his servants. We prayed that each one of us in our vocation and ministry might serve the Lord in holiness and truth, to the glory of his name.

Amanda was presented to the Bishop and the congregation by a member of the churches in which she had previously ministered. Then the Bishop asked everyone 'Will all of you who are gathered here support and encourage Amanda in this new ministry and in the years to come?' There was a rousing cry of 'We will' from the congregation.

The readings were interesting! The visit of the Queen of Sheba in order to 'test Solomon with hard questions' (*1 Kings 10:1-10,23-25*) and an account of St Paul, on one of his missionary journeys, spending three Sabbaths reasoning with the members of one synagogue, saying that the Jesus he proclaimed to them was the Messiah. They reacted with resistance and rioting. (*Acts 17:1-5*). In his sermon Bishop Martyn reflected on journeys and destinations. He spoke of 'wrong' paths, of the temptation for priests to see themselves as 'rescuers,' and for church members to expect their new priest to 'rescue' them.

'Not so', said the Bishop. The primary role of the clergy is to point to Jesus by their own lives, and, as Christ's messengers, to encourage the members of the churches they serve to do the same. That might mean saying unpopular things. Clergy are called to 'speak the truth in love' whatever the personal consequences, and, with their congregations, bring healing and hope to all in their parishes.

After his sermon, Bishop Martyn invited Amanda to renew her ordination vows. She therefore made the 'Declaration of Assent' and took the 'Oaths of Allegiance and Canonical Obedience'. Then Bishop Martyn invited us all to pray for our local church, our new minister, our churchwardens, all those involved in local leadership and for those ministers already at work in the benefice. All of which we duly did. The bishop prayed that God would give Amanda grace and power to fulfil her ministry among us.

The congregation sat, the new minister knelt and Bishop Martyn read the 'legal document', saying to Amanda, 'Receive this cure of souls which is both mine and yours, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' He blessed her and asked her to work with the people of God in this place, seeking with them to grow God's kingdom. Bishop Martyn then asked the other members of the ministry team and the people of God in our parishes to support Amanda, as we all worked together to grow in faithful discipleship and in witness to the Gospel.

Amanda was next presented with seven signs of Christian ministry. Archdeacon Richard gave her the key to the church, inviting her to work with the people of Birstall and Wanlip to make our churches welcoming places, with doors wide enough for all to enter. Wardens Debbie Shephard and John Borrajo then opened wide the church doors. We all said 'Come all who are heavy laden, and Christ will give you rest. You are welcome here.'

Kieran and Naomi Follows presented Amanda with the water of baptism, inviting her to 'be among us in this ministry of transformation and rebirth, adding to our number those whom God is calling.' We all responded 'Amen. In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.'

Others have used a weekend to welcome or visit a long-unseen friend or relative, or to spend a few days by the sea or in the countryside. My family 'swapped' me by car from Birstall to East Kent for a few days. I exchanged my Birstall bungalow for a rambling farm cottage with horses, chickens, ducks and dogs. The latter two groups contested as to who had access to the kitchen, and took turns to chase each other round the farmyard! Fun, really, is on its way.

Jesus loved visiting and sharing meals with poor and rich. After his rising from death, he even held a barbecue on a beach!

Get out there, explore safely. How many differences will you find? Oh, and just be grateful. Enjoy each 'new start'.

*Noreen Talbot*

## FROM THE REGISTERS

*June - August 2021*

### Weddings

- 7th August Alexander Pendleton m. Kimberley Lyszczarz, St James'  
11th September Daniel Robinson m. Tracey Allen, St James' Church  
18th September Jaspal Gill m. Paula Clifford, St James' Church

### Funerals

- |           |                 |   |
|-----------|-----------------|---|
| 10th June | John Ward       | Our Lady & St Nicholas, Wanlip<br>Burial in Wanlip Churchyard |
| 8th July  | John Crebbin    | Our Lady & St Nicholas, Wanlip<br>Loughborough Crematorium    |
| 26th July | James Paterson  | St James' Church, Birstall<br>Loughborough Crematorium        |
| 17th Aug. | Marjorie Heath  | St James' Church, Birstall Cemetery                           |
| 31st Aug. | Clifford Teagle | St James' Church, Birstall<br>Loughborough Crematorium        |

## CHANGE AND CHALLENGE GRATITUDE AND JOY

Coming out of hibernation, lock-down, extinction, and braving the wide world, things look different! Our familiar Birstall businesses have re-opened, Tesco, Co-op, multiple nail bars and hairdressers and cafés; but only one flower shop survived. Some shops have changed their hours, or close on another day. Orders can be phoned in, more is delivered (thank you all who do so for free).

It is worth exploring and noticing what has arrived: the 5G mast, for example, at the A6 junction with Greengate Lane and Sibson Road; the disappearance of the A6 cycle lanes; adult exercise apparatus in the School Lane recreation grounds; new cricket pitch lines instead of football markings. Something of a miracle, a blessing, is a new greengrocer-cum-farmers market that has risked opening during the pandemic.

We need reminding, as we emerge from our shells, that we must use our facilities if we are not to lose them. Other new shops have come in the past but we did not support them, greengrocers, flower and wool shops. So many people have told me that it was 'so good in the old days, we had a wool shop'. So many good things come, so many blessings and we just don't appreciate them, or, perhaps, even notice them.

Then there's indoors! Some premises have used their lost-time to refurbish and redecorate. How many surprises will you find? Menus have been re-developed; there are new staff; the two-metre rule has changed layouts; and arrows assure a safer traffic flow. Start now searching out all the changes. Enjoy!

Getting out into the fresh air is proving unbalancing and scary for some of our elderly neighbours, previously cloistered in enclosed spaces. Please look out for the unsteady; they may need to use a walking stick or a shopping trolley for extra support. Some of us are venturing out again. It may be a drive out to somewhere open and beautiful, or a walk or cycle ride to a nearby open space or park.

Julie Ward presented Amanda with a prayer book: 'Amanda, we look to you to lead those committed to your care, so that, in word and sacrament, we may be renewed in our life together. Receive this book and be among us as a person of prayer.'

Theresa Harding and Lesley Walton presented bread and wine saying 'Amanda, it is the parish priest's privilege and duty to preside regularly at the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood. Receive this bread and wine, and be among us to proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.'

Revd Kerry Emmett and Sarah Borrajo presented the oil of healing. 'Amanda, hold before us the anointing of the Holy Spirit for wholeness of life.'

A Bible was given by Doreen Wilson and Gill Pope. 'Amanda, hold before us the story of God's love and mercy. Receive this Bible, and be among us as a preacher of the Word of God, and teacher of the faith.'

Finally Bishop Martyn said 'Amanda, let all these be signs of the ministry which is both mine and yours and shared by all the people of God.' We all responded 'Amen. May we find joy together in the service of Christ.'

Archdeacon Richard then installed Amanda in her 'designated seat.' Bishop Martyn said 'Here is your new minister, duly installed. Greet her warmly.' Which we all did. Representatives of our community were then invited by the Area Dean to welcome Amanda. Amanda then led us in our prayers of intercession. Finally the Bishop blessed us all. We all sang '*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart*' while Amanda led the Bishop, Archdeacon and our Churchwardens to the door of the church. Our new Rector read the Dismissal Gospel, threw the doors of the church wide open and said '*Go in peace to love and serve the Lord*'. To which we all responded '*In the name of Christ. Amen*'. We then all duly made our way to the back of the church where church members had generously provided a feast for everyone. It was a very happy occasion which we will long remember.

Canon Anne

## JOHN 'WANLIP' WARD

John died at home on 24th May following a courageous fight against illness. Julie and their girls, Victoria and Claire, were at his bedside. His funeral service at Our Lady and St Nicholas, Wanlip, took place on 11th June and was followed by burial in Wanlip churchyard. The service was conducted by the Revd Vince Jupp. Vince has kindly sent us a copy of the address that he preached for John, and Julie is happy for it to be printed in 'Keep in Touch.' In his welcome to the service, Vince described John as 'John Wanlip Ward'. Hence the above title!

### VINCE'S ADDRESS

Loving, generous, kind, thoughtful, cheeky, a true gentleman .... Julie's rock. These are just a few ways to describe a man who lived life well.

John was a family man and selflessly community minded. He was a man of faith whose passion, after his family, was Wanlip Church and Community. Claire said dad's life's work was what he loved and so it never felt like work. John found much joy in his service to others, living the gospel message willingly as Jesus commanded.

He started life in Abbey Lane, moved to Kilby Avenue and went to Belgrave St Peter's school. His sister Mary remembers the day he was born; sitting at the bottom of the stairs with her dad. She remembers hours of fun playing cowboys and Indians with John, sneaking into the orchard and cricket on the beach. Also, Mary remembers the endless apple pie beds John took delight in making, the holiday to Hadrian's Wall and his calling her 'scraggy neck'. To Mary, John was a (mostly) gentle, teasing brother, a patient brother who will be sorely missed. John went St Peter's School onto Gateway Boys and then to Leicester Poly where he studied engineering to HND level. He was apprenticed to the BU and subsequently worked mostly for the Leicester City Council. One notable project was the plant room for Beaumont Leys Swimming pool. No, not the green leafy variety, the heavy engineered variety. He continued to study and achieved a Master's degree in Science, becoming chartered as an engineer and a Fellow of the Institute.

## WEST SIDE STORY

A few weeks ago '**West Side Story**' was shown on the television, to celebrate its 60th anniversary. I switched on and was immediately transported back to the seventeen year old me, who, with a group of friends, went up to the Odeon, Leicester Square, to see it. What a film! From the first soaring views of the skyscrapers of Manhattan, through the wonderful music, singing and dancing to the sudden gunshot that made the whole theatre jump, and the sad, sad end, we were entranced. When the house lights went up most of the audience was in tears, me among them! Gosh, were we ever so young? Funny thing is, though, I can remember the film, but I cannot remember the people I was with, although they must have been important to me at that stage of my life.

Fast forward a few years and I was, again, in London with friends, looking round museums, art galleries and exhibitions. The days were pretty busy, so one evening we thought we'd go to a jazz club for a bit of light relief, so we went and found Ronnie Scott's Club in Soho which was known for having the top jazz musicians and singers of the day. Unfortunately for us, it also had the top prices. And we couldn't afford to go in! We settled for the 'Flamingo', which was a bit dark and the music was a bit more 'pop' than jazz, and from what I can remember, we didn't stop too long, but it was an experience! We could say, and no doubt did, that we had been to a London night club! But, again, I cannot remember who I was with for the whole of that week.

Throughout our lives we must meet thousands of people, each one having some influence on us, and we on them. Realistically speaking though, most people just 'wander through' our lives and have little impact, but then occasionally there is someone whose life and influence reaches out over centuries to impact on us, to help us and whose guidance we can follow, even though we have not physically met or come into contact with Him. How amazing is that?

*Leigh Reid*

The Covid 19 lockdowns have disrupted boating for everyone over the last eighteen months, but we are all up and running again now.

One of the consequences of Covid, however, has been the massive increase in interest in narrow boating. The brokerage at the Marina have been selling boats within hours of putting them up for sale, frequently selling to customers who have not even been to see the boat! We fear this influx of new boaters will change the culture of the waterways, and not necessarily in a positive way.



During part of our cruising last year we went down to Stourport again, this time bumping into Sheila Hancock and Gyles Brandreth at a lock near Kidderminster. They were out filming for the new version of 'Great Canal Journeys', which had previously featured the above-mentioned Tim and Pru West. Debbie had a long chat with Sheila Hancock, but I didn't see either of them, as I was on the back of our boat in the lock!

We have just got back from a three week trip, again up the Shroppie and on to the Llangollen Canal as far as Whitchurch. We are hoping to get out again later in the year, when I have recovered from my knee replacement operation.

*Andrew Shephard*

John's last few years of work were for *Quality Metal Products*. And when he retired, he continued as a consultant for a short time.

John loved a project, and if he wasn't doing something for work he would be doing something for home or church. His current project: the hall floor, which sadly he won't see finished. Finish it for him, will you?

John was so community minded. He served on the governing body of Highcliffe Primary for years, was their 'go to' Father Christmas for ten years - never once sussed by Vicky or Claire - and he served on the PTA. He did his bit for the Sunday School at Wanlip, and, as you know, was Warden here for 40+ years. He was so diligent. Everything had to be done by the book, many an hour spent in this, his second home.

He was always involved in the running of the Church Bazaars and fayres; first in setting up and last out clearing away. In recent years he and Julie started Old Nick's Coffee Shop to help people mix at minimal cost, make friendships, and enjoy a trip out. It was a huge missional success.

Once a Cub Scout, a Scout and a Rover, John was always prepared! As a Group Scout Leader for St James he was involved in so many activities and shared warden responsibility for the running of the John Lee's Wood camp. He would spend so much time there and the girls enjoyed many adventures with him. That's where he met Julie, who was helping with Cubs. Before long they tied the knot here in Our Lady and St Nicholas on March 22nd 1975, which I'm sure was a very clever scouting one, for it certainly held fast for 46 years. At their wedding they were honoured with a scouting guard, who formed a tunnel for them to pass through. Their first married home was in Syston, but after three years they moved to Walker Road, where they remained, adopting two lovely girls, Victoria and Claire, as babies.

John was a 'brilliant father', always available, and even a 'surrogate father' to Vicky and Claire's friends. He thought nothing of driving to London, bringing them up for a few days and driving them back again afterwards.

Claire's friends called her 'Daddy's princess'. Vicky said, 'Dad just loved to drive, and to listen to classical music on the way. He was so giving; nothing was too much trouble, and he could solve most of our problems over the phone, whether it be about cars or toilets or well... anything.' John had a weird sense of humour and loved to wind them all up, and often they believed every word he said.

Once a Scout always a Scout, John loved camping and many happy memories were created through long car journeys, long walks, and the oft repeated promise that the destination was 'just around the corner'. On the long walks John always managed to find a bog to get stuck in.

Despite having an engineer's perspective on those 'flimsy flying machines,' John wasn't that keen on flying, preferring to holiday in the UK. He and Julie did go to Iceland a few times and he took them all to Spain, but mainly John enjoyed holidays in places of peace and beauty like the Scottish Highlands. Mull was his favourite place. He explored Orkney, the Shetlands, the Inner and Outer Hebrides, usually in a two-man tent, and often in gales, rain and hail.

He walked thousands of miles all over the country in all weathers, camping, caravanning, and loving every minute of it. He loved the scenery, the solitude, and the remoteness. Most of these trips were accompanied by a dog. Malin was his last and his favourite. and John was devastated when he died last Christmas Day. Often a family holiday was a tent, no electricity, no running water, and a bucket, whose contents John would bury each morning.

Ever the engineer, John loved DIY, he built two extensions on the house, altered the attic, but never managed to finish the staging for his beloved train set. He dug a pond in the garden with Vicky, built a shed for his wood lathe and was able to turn his hand to most things.

John 'was' Wanlip Church for many years, and having learned that he had nearly completed his Lay Reader training, I encouraged him to join the preaching rota. You see, as incumbent, you're allowed to invite unlicensed preachers to preach four times a year, so John did one every month.

## THE NARROWBOAT 'UPTON' YEARS

On completion of the fit-out, we moved the boat back to Braunston, which is where we stayed for getting on ten years. Braunston, on the Grand Union Canal, is thought of as one of the key historic narrow boating centres on the system. From here we had trips to Banbury and Oxford, to Foxton, Market Harborough, Leicester, and several trips back up to the 'Shroppe'. We also cruised to Worcester via the Birmingham & Worcester Canal, traversing down the Tardebigge locks, the longest flight on the system. It was at the bottom of the Tardebigge flight that we encountered Tim and Pru (West), who were about to start up the flight. Tim was lying on the ground having just fallen over trying to operate one of the locks! From Worcester, we navigated the River Severn down to Tewksbury and on to the Avon, to get to Stratford-on-Avon.



By this time, Debbie needed to be near her mum and dad, for whom she was effectively their carer, so I was moving the boat as a single-hander from Braunston up to Great Haywood near Stafford, and Debbie would drive out a week later for a week or two of boating. We did this several times, and then decided that if we were going to do most of our boating in this part of the system, we might be better moving the boat permanently to the Great Haywood Marina. So we did, at the end of 2018. This is where we now keep the boat, and from where we have had some interesting trips over the last few years.

Thinking it might be fun to do another Explorer Cruise in Birmingham, we enquired to see if we might be allowed to join the 2019 cruise. We agreed to lead a second cruise as the first one had been over-subscribed. This turned out to be another of our boating highlights, and we had a great cruise around the Birmingham Canal Network, where we made some lasting friendships.





One of the many highlights of our *Serenity* trips was on the Llangollen Canal, and crossing the River Dee on the famous Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, one of the seven wonders of the inland waterways system.

Another highlight was the Explorer Cruise organised by the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society. Starting in Wolverhampton, we ‘explored’ some of the very underused and dilapidated Birmingham waterways, ending up in the centre of Birmingham in Gas Street Basin.

It was not long, however, before I started to dream about getting our own boat! The idea was that we would get a steel shell build - the hull and cabin - and that I would fit it out.

Looking back, this was of course a ridiculous idea, but fortunately as things turned out we were able to get the fit-out done by professionals!

The steel shell, seventy feet long, was started in January 2006 at Braunston in Northamptonshire, and the fit-out finished about two years later by Brinklow Boats near to Rugby.

We decided to name the boat *Upton*, after the Worcestershire riverside town of Upton-on-Severn where I was a member of the Upton Rowing Club.

Oh, and it was also at Upton that Debbie and I had our first ‘date’!



We all benefitted from his wisdom and his love for the Lord. He loved preparing for those sermons, labouring over them and delivering them with conviction and passion.

John had a battle with cancer, did well throughout his chemo and yet he was never quite right after that. He had seizures and after Easter this year gradually deteriorated. John knew he was dying and so on the 14th of April he wrote his ‘death letters’ - as he called them - letters to Julie and the girls and instructions for us today.

He was philosophical throughout, stoic to the end and never gave his family any sense that he was worried. He was a man of faith; accepting that his time had come.

These are his final words to Julie, his beloved wife of forty-six years. ‘Take my love, for love is everlasting. And remember the truth that once was spoken: to love another person is to see the face of God.’

John loved, was loved, and truly saw the face of God. May this faithful man, husband, father, brother, friend, rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

*The Revd Vince Jupp*

### ANGLO-SAXON RIDDLE, c. AD 750

I puff my breast out, my neck swells.  
 I have a head, I have a tail held high,  
 One foot and eyes and ears,  
 A back; my beak is hard.  
 My neck is high, I have two sides,  
 And a rod is in my middle.  
 I have a home above men,  
 I put up with wretchedness  
 When the tree-mover moves me.  
 Rain, in my situation, beats me  
 Hail hits at me, hoar-frost clothes me,  
 Cold snow sits on me, pierced in my belly.  
*What am I?*

## CHURCH FUNDRAISING PRE-1926

Looking through my collection of cookery books one wet day in May, I found a small tattered green one, priced at 1/3d. Remember those prices? It was sold pre-1926 'to fulfil the twofold purposes of helping to build a curate's house in Birstall, and to make at least 1000 households the richer in 'good receipts' (sic)'. The price of property has increased somewhat! Contributions of favourite recipes came from local ladies and gentlemen and their friends afar, numbering 225, with ten specifically 'for the sick room'. Rules for invalid food included 'Consult your Doctor and obey his orders. Cook food to retain nutriment and flavour and serve in small quantities regularly, without discussing the choice of meals with the patient!'

Here are a sample of recipes.

### **Sponge Cake – from Miss Jowers, Cliffe Road**

8 eggs, breakfast cup of flour, 1 lb caster sugar

*Method* Put beaten eggs into bowl of sugar, beat well for 30 minutes, then stir in flour gradually. Bake in moderate oven for 1¼ hours.

### **Scotch Gingerbread Cake – from Miss Henson, New Birstall**

¾ lb flour, ¼ lb lard, ¼ lb sugar, ½ lb syrup, a little warm milk, ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda, 1 teaspoon each of ginger and mixed spice

*Method* Rub lard into flour, add syrup (warm) and other ingredients. Dissolve soda in warmed milk and bake in a flat tin.

### **Date Balls – a delicious treat for children from T Bowrah, 49 Roman Road, Birstall. A family of teachers locally.**

1 lb dates, 1-2 tablespoons water, about 2 oz dessicated cocoanut (sic).

*Method* Cut ordinary block of dates into small pieces. Put into pan with water and place over small heat for a few minutes. Mix, and press with wooden spoon, a stiff mass is required. Take a little at a time and roll into nice balls in the cocoanut. Makes approximately 12. This is a nice eater with bread and butter as a change from jam.

Gordon (the Les Allen aficionado from the boatyard) came out to undertake repairs, but by this time it was dark. We decided that spending the night where we were, next to the Stoke ring-road, was not going to be agreeable, so we set off up three of the next locks by torchlight and tied up for the night opposite Stoke Cemetery. Well, it was quiet!

Our second breakdown was on the Caldon Canal, at the junction with the branch of the canal that went to Leek. A much more picturesque spot at which to break down. Gordon duly tipped up again to repair the throttle control, and we were able to make it back to Teddesley with no further issues.

## THE 'OWNERSHIP' YEARS

Our problems with *Alice* had not put us off narrow boating. Indeed, we realized that clearly just one week a year would not be nearly enough boating, so we decided to buy a share in a 'syndicate boat', a shared ownership boat operated by an organization called *Ownerships*. This would give us at least three weeks a year for the same cost as a single week on a hire-boat.

The boat that we bought into was *Serenity*. It was 57' 6" long, and was then based at Norbury Junction, on the Shropshire Union Canal, about halfway between Wolverhampton and Market Drayton.



We had about seven or eight years of good and very economical narrow-boating holidays on *Serenity*. In the 'Ownerships' system, we were allocated three weeks a year. The boats were moved around various different locations on the waterways system every so often. We started off at Norbury Junction on the 'Shroppie', then to the Barton Turns marina on the Trent and Mersey, next up North to the Leeds and Liverpool, and then back down to Fradley Junction on the Trent & Mersey.

## THE JOYS OF NARROW BOATING

### THE EARLY YEARS

As a young teenager we had two family boating holidays on the Norfolk Broads, of which I have very happy memories, but no more real boating until I was asked to make up the crew for a cruise on a narrowboat just acquired by the mother of one of my son's school friends. It was my first narrowboat experience, and I knew straightaway that this was for me. Very hard to say exactly why. Something about being on the back of the boat, steering it, pottering along through the hidden backwaters of towns, the heritage engineering and architecture, the peace and quiet. Being in another world really.

About twenty years ago, Debbie and I began to hire narrowboats, initially for just the two of us (plus dog), and then to take Debbie's mum and dad for a cruise, which we did a couple of times. In those early boating years, we would put in anything up to nine or ten hours of cruising, but these days four or five hours is usually enough.

Our first boat trip together was on a boat hired from the now defunct Teddesley Narrowboats, which was based on the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal near to Penkridge. The boat was named *Alice* and was, we were told, one of the last boats to be built by Les Allen, someone we had never heard of at that time but who we now know was one of the most respected builders of steel narrowboats on the inland waterways.

Unfortunately, and what we were not told, was that the previous hirers had 'cilled the boat'. This means that the boat had been caught up on the cill of a lock gate and the rudder had become dislodged and damaged. As soon as we left the boatyard, it was obvious that something was wrong, but for some reason, probably because, as amateurs, we were desperate to get going, we didn't complain. It did make the steering hard work for the week though. We got as far as Stoke, on the Trent and Mersey Canal, before our first breakdown. A leaking something or other, which meant the engine was losing coolant and overheating.

### Cheese Pudding for Bachelors – from George Johnson, The Lilacs, Birstall Road. A sweet manufacturer.

1 cupful grated cheese, 1 cupful bread, 2 medium sized tomatoes, 1 fair-sized onion

*Method* Cook onion until soft, then chop fine and add bread, cheese and cut up tomatoes. Moisten with water, add seasoning to taste. Turn into pie dish, put into fairly hot oven for about 15 minutes. Serve on hot plates.

The cooks amongst you may question the lack of detail in oven heat, quantities, frugal ingredients and 'beating the sponge cake mixture for 30 minutes'. No mixers?

If you would like to read the book, do ask .....

Perhaps I should end with a warning: 'don't try these at home.' After ninety-five years tastes may have changed!

By the way -

Where is/was that 1926 curate's house?

Does anyone know?

*Chris Greaves*



Front Street, Birstall 1920

## EARLY MEMORIES OF VISITING BIRSTALL

My mother was one of four sisters born in Leicester. Her next sister Mary Isobel JOHNSON lived with her husband Thomas Gordon TIPPING (always known as Gordon) in Birstall, where they came in 1937 when they were married. I was born at the beginning of 1940 and Aunt Mary and Uncle Gordon had one son, Henry to the family, though he chose to use his first name Charles when in his teens. Sadly, Henry died in 1967 as a result of an infection he got from kicking something on the beach at Skegness when he was eleven.

I claim that I have visited their home in Sycamore Road from before I was born! It was before the end of World War II, and, after that, I recall visiting regularly. Mother and I would take the tram (bus later) from Queens Road to the Clock Tower and walk down Church Gate to St. Margaret's Bus Station. I was always interested in the showroom on the corner of Gravel Street. Castle Motors were the main dealers for Humber, Hillman, Sunbeam Talbot and Commer commercials. The bus station had been built before the War but not at that point fully completed.

Waiting for the Midland Red bus to arrive we were sometimes entertained by a strong man. He carried a dumbbell and a sheet of cardboard on which he would lie sometimes. Wearing only moleskin trousers and a singlet vest in all weathers, his exposed skin was copper coloured. With puffing and panting he would raise the dumbbells.

Years later when I was at Theological College, the son of the Churchwarden at a Church I visited regularly had a similar dumbbell. The son and friend grunted and groaned as they lifted it. When they moved into the other room for a drink, I thought 'I wonder if I can lift it?' As I was wearing a decent suit, I did not want to jerk it up to arm-lock, so I did it smoothly. As I put it down, I was aware of the two lads open mouthed in amazement at what they thought of as my great strength!

## EARLY MEMORIES - 2006

### Showing Off Our New Gowns



This photograph was taken in Cynthia Coltman's cottage garden at Welham, a village next to Thorpe Langton, going into The Langtons.

**Ladies left to right:** June Woods, Diane Stant, Sheila Harrison, Jane Scott, Velma Marriott, Elaine White, Mary Belton, Cynthia Coltman, Beryl McHugh, June Verso, Jessie Wainwright, Leigh Reid, Marjorie Bonshor. *In the middle:* Andy White (St James' Organist)

**Gentlemen left to right:** Vic Nagal, Alistair McHugh, Tony Marriot, David Bark (Wanlip Organist), John Harrison.

#### The choristers also submitted their favourite hymns.

Now thank we all our God (Cynthia), Dear Lord and Father of mankind (Diane and Leigh), I the Lord of sea and sky (Marjorie), Take my life and let it be (Sheila), Guide me, O thou great Redeemer (John and Andy), Thine be the glory (Elaine), The Lord is my shepherd (Beryl and Joan), How great thou art (David), My song is love unknown (Jane), Holy Spirit, in thy presence (Vic).

*Shared by Marjorie Bonshor*

## THE AUTUMN YEARS OF OUR LIVES

Autumn is a season that I have always liked, possibly because I was born at the end of September. I love the changing colours and walking (or shuffling) through fallen leaves as Nature prepares for a pause, then regrowth. We are now preparing to 'shed' the past period (season) of the Covid pandemic, and thinking of our next phase in life where we can hopefully 'grow' all the things we have learnt, especially the coming together of neighbourhoods to support each another in a myriad of ways.

Thanks to Google, I have found this description of our 'Autumn Years'. *If Spring is the season of being born, Autumn is the season of dying — or at least slowing down for the Winter.* Our Autumn Years is that period after we retire from work and begin to slow down. Many people love this phase and enjoy their time in retirement.

We have, however, other phrases to describe this latter part of life. You might hear them called the 'twilight years'. For many this would suggest that the 'end is near'! So perhaps a better expression is 'the golden years'.

This seems to describe a time that is carefree and easy. A time when we finally hit a phase where we don't have to care what other people think any more.

Perhaps this is why we sometimes call the 'autumn years', or 'golden years', a second childhood. A time when we might live like a child again, without a care in the world.

Some people in their autumn years of life may have a few regrets. But, seriously, who wouldn't? Nearly everyone has a few 'what ifs' and 'should haves'.

But, as the phrase goes, we can't change the past. We can only look to the future. Whatever stage of life we are in. (And whatever this virus throws at us next!)

Rita Richards

Back to Birstall visits, and a sign I would always look out for to know that we were only two stops away, was the Monkey Puzzle tree (Chilean Pine) on the right shortly before Sibson Road. We would get off at the Bentley Road stop, which was almost exactly opposite, until some fifteen years later when Loughborough Road was made dual-carriageway in conjunction with the building of 'The Gates' estate.

Walking down Bentley Road with hard leather shoes, there was a 'pinking' sound as I put my heels down. It must have been something to do with gaps under the paving slabs, a phenomenon I have experienced in a few other places.

I remember various shops in Birstall including the Co-Op on Rose Tree Avenue and the small parade on Windmill Avenue of which there is now only the one general shop. Sometimes we would walk to Wanlip and see the church there, and on other occasions St. James' Church, Birstall .

My Aunt Mary only made use of her second name Isobel occasionally. When she did, she was insistent that it be pronounced 'Ice-o-bell' and not 'Is-a-bell'. Years later I discovered that her step Grandmother Johnson had been a 'Lady's Companion' to a Lady Isobel (Ice-O-bell) Duckworth.

My Uncle Gordon worked at what is now City Hall on Charles Street for the Leicester Electricity Generating Company. When he retired, many people knew him as the very smartly dressed Great Central Station Master at Rothley Station before Loughborough Central, and finally at the Leicester Station which replaced the old Birstall and Belgrave Station.

Aunt Mary was well known in Birstall for her flower displays and award-winning cakes. Cousin Henry, or Charles to his friends, had an immaculate 1947 1½ litre Jaguar car which is now in a Motor Museum in Germany.

Happy days!

Fr. Robin



## A HOME FOR ALL

### Renewing the *OIKOS* of God.

*Oikos* means 'home' or 'family' and is the root of all our words starting with 'eco' like 'ecology' and 'economics'. The past year has been a wake up call to the need to restore our relationships with God, creation and each other. Many churches, in response to the environmental crisis, give a particular focus to environmental concerns during the month of September and up to 4th October (*Creation-tide*). The timing includes Harvest Festival, a natural time to think of our dependence on the natural world, as we thank God for growth, harvest and food.

Churches are finding a huge variety of creative ways to give extra focus to Creation during this period. *Creation-tide* is a great opportunity for churches to engage and partner with children and young people on an issue which they are often passionate about. We could encourage them to reflect on what caring for creation means to them, and how they want their voice to be heard in the climate justice conversation. In the run-up to the UN global climate change talks in November 2021, the national church is encouraging churches to hold a special Climate Challenge service or event, to commit to tackle climate change, and to raise their voices to call on world leaders to do the same. We are asked to pray for better stewardship of the earth, for those planning special Climate Sunday services or events, and for our own diocesan response, including a commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

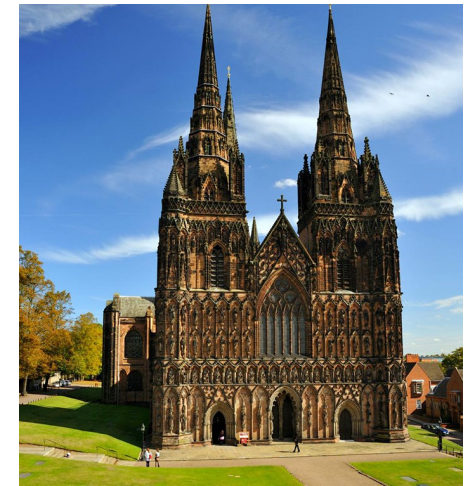
*Extracted from the Leicester Diocesan Prayer Diary*

## HOW TO BE A CATHEDRAL

Be proud.  
Stand tall.  
Let your steeples rise;  
your spires soar.

Let your bells ring out  
over marsh and fen,  
hill and valleys,  
rooftops and ploughed fields.

Celebrate your festivals,  
let trumpets sound, cymbals clash,  
put on your finest raiment,  
Gold, purple, white.



*Lichfield Cathedral*



*Leicester Cathedral*

Be welcoming,  
greet all comers alike,  
Lead them into your quiet nave,  
Your cloistered walk-ways.

Give peace.

*June Crebbin  
14th May 2020*