

'KEEP IN TOUCH', Spring 2022

Copy by, but, if possible, before 1st February 2022

All contributions welcome. Maximum preferred length: 500 words!

(If longer, the editor reserves the right to edit!!)

'Keep In Touch'



West Window, Wanlip Church
St Nicholas (right panel)

KEEPING YOU 'IN TOUCH' IS

Name

Address

Tel. No.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THEM

WINTER 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.

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

Hi. I hope you are all keeping well.

I am working in the Church Office on Tuesdays and Fridays between 9am and 1pm. If you have a notice you would like to put in our weekly Church Information Sheet, please email me at stjames.birstall@btconnect.com, and/or sheryljupp@hotmail.co.uk. (I would prefer to receive it twice than not at all.)

If you don't have access to the internet, please write your notice down and leave it on my desk or post it through the church letterbox which is at the bottom of the glass doors. If you are unable to get to church, please contact Amanda or one of the churchwardens.

I will continue to send the Church Information Sheets out digitally, but as more of you are able to come to the services in church and you no longer wish to receive them digitally, please will you let me know. Thanks.

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and are able to celebrate with your family and friends.

Take care, Love Sheryl

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Patricia (Annie) Hurst - d. 8 Sept. Funeral 22 Sept at L Crem.

John Middleton – d. 13 Sept. Funeral 30 Sept at St James'/L Crem.

Kaye Sanderson – d. 1 Sept. Funeral 7 Oct at St James'/Birstall Cemetery

Terence Grocock – d. 4 Oct. Funeral 18 Oct at St James'/L Crem.

Marlene Carter - d. 6 Oct. Funeral 29 Oct, L'boro Crematorium

Joyce Snow - d. 17 Oct. Funeral 5 Nov. L'boro Crematorium

ON THE FEAST OF STEPHEN

Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr, is honoured as the first Christian martyr and was one of the first deacons of the Christian Church. He is believed to have been a Greek-speaking Jew who converted to Christianity. As the number of Christian disciples increased, it became necessary to organise the distribution of alms and the ministry to the poor. Stephen was chosen to be one of the seven deacons to perform this task.

Stephen was also an excellent and trusted orator and an effective preacher. Many of the Jews found this worrying. They accused him of blasphemy and made him stand trial. In front of the Sanhedrin, Stephen described the many mercies that God had given the children of Israel and the ungrateful way in which they had repaid him. Jesus' coming, he said, had been foretold by Moses, yet they had put Jesus to death. The Jewish crowds were angered by this accusation, and they stoned Stephen to death. Stephen called out to Christ as he died asking forgiveness for his murderers.

We are told that a young man, Saul, witnessed his death, looking after the cloaks of his murderers. This young man later converted to Christianity; we know him now as St. Paul.

Stephen is said to have been buried in a grave north of Jerusalem, but his body was later exhumed and buried in a new grave outside the Damascus Gate, where his stoning was believed to have taken place.

Described as a man 'full of faith and of the Holy Spirit', Stephen is the patron saint of deacons and of sufferers from headaches.

His feast day is the 26th December.



Canon Anne

SAINT NICHOLAS OF MYRA

St. Nicholas is known as Nicholas of Bari and Nicholas of Myra. Myra flourished in the 4th C and is near modern Demre in Turkey. In the West we keep the feast of St Nicholas on 6th December. He is one of the most popular saints commemorated in both Eastern and Western churches and is today traditionally associated with the festival of Christmas. In many countries children receive gifts on December 6, St. Nicholas Day. He is a patron saint of children and of sailors. And of course he is our patron saint in Wanlip.

We know nothing certain about St Nicholas' life except that he was probably bishop of Myra in the 4th century. According to tradition, he was born in the ancient Lycian seaport city of Patara, and, when young, travelled to Palestine and Egypt. He became bishop of Myra soon after returning to Lycia. Nicholas was imprisoned and likely tortured during the persecution of Christians by the Roman emperor Diocletian, but was released under the rule of Constantine the Great. He may have attended the first Council of Nicaea (325), where he allegedly struck the heretic Arius in the face. When he died, he was buried in his church at Myra. His shrine there became well known and much visited. In 1087 Italian sailors or merchants stole his alleged remains and took them to Bari in Italy. This greatly increased the saint's popularity in Europe, Bari becoming one of the most crowded of all pilgrimage centres. St. Nicholas' relics remain enshrined in the 11th-century basilica of San Nicola at Bari, though fragments are said to have been acquired by churches around the world.

I first 'discovered' St Nicholas when I came up to Leicester University in 1962 and became part of the university chaplaincy centre at 27 Knighton Road. The house was the old rectory to St Nicholas' Church in Leicester, then the university chaplaincy church. My life within the chaplaincy fostered and nurtured my adult Christian faith and sense of vocation. I thank God for my time there. And for the more recent joy of worshipping with you at Our Lady and St Nicholas, Wanlip today. *Holy St Nicholas, pray for us.*

Canon Anne

RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS



I'm writing this two thirds of the way through October. It is pouring with rain and I am trying to think about Advent and Christmas for this edition of Keep in Touch, whilst still preparing for Sunday, All Souls Day and Remembrance Sunday!

In some ways I love this time of year. I hate being cold, but I do love it when it's dark and the lights start appearing in windows. It's something to look forward to as the nights draw in. We can get cosy and have an excuse to eat comfort food and drink hot chocolate by the fire.

At this point in time (October), I have bought a total of three Christmas presents and have thought about ordering a Christmas Tree made from pallets as it's the only tree that will fit in the window I have available for outsiders looking in to see. I think it's so lovely to see other people's Christmas Trees! Let's take a few moments to think about those outsiders who might be looking in at our Christmas Trees and at our nice warm homes.

Very recently, I was an outsider here in Birstall and Wanlip. The only things that made me feel like an outsider, were that I couldn't find my way around, I didn't know which bin went out when, I didn't know which GP / hairdresser etc to go for and I didn't know anyone's name. But I was made to feel really welcome. There have been so many thoughtful gestures – gifts, cards, food, positive comments (particularly that you can hear 'every word' – I just hope they are good words!), letters saying you would love to invite me for coffee, but understanding that I have a lot to do at the moment and, the most beautiful of all, chocolate! People have actually bought hot chocolate for their homes and the church, for when I am there.

God's Christmas gift lasts forever — it is still a joy, a sign of love, forgiveness and eternal life.

So spend time this Christmas when you are giving; what will bring your loved ones real delight, long-term joy, and something to treasure?

Noreen Talbot

Ordinary Shepherds in the Fields.



Lowest of the low, imperfect,
Despised, no longer exemplars
Of the Shepherd King, David;
So ordinary, as to be unseen
By frequenters of holy places.

No cleverness, nor wit, nor learning
From books or pedagogues,
Just to sit, night after night,
Half asleep, half watching and waiting
For the dawn of new life.

How can God love the ordinary,
The silent watchers of the dark?
They shall be first to know
his coming and his redemption;

Theirs is the song of angels
Filling and blessing their lives.

L.A.H.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Just as the greatest gift was God's gift to the world, the incarnation of the Word of God as an 'ordinary' human baby, Jesus, bringing joy, love and healing; so we set out in this season to offer gifts to our fellow humans which will bring joy, love and well-being.

For family we carefully select gifts that they will delight in, to suit their interests and personalities. For children especially, we make sure the gifts are safe and long-lasting.

I still have a toy Scottie dog my aunt and uncle gave me for my third Christmas. He has lost his tail, an eye is loose, and a loop of metal sticks out from a front paw. He still stands erect on a bedroom shelf. A scruffy panda with rusted fur round his eyes sits nearby; he belongs to my eldest son, but stayed with me so that he was safe from babies and cats. The rust comes from an early bath; my son thought it sad that he had a daily bath, and 'dear, darling little panda' could not share that pleasure. He was once abandoned in a Hong Kong bin when we came home on leave in the '60s, but, when we returned five months later, our Chinese servant had put him, washed and brushed, on the pillow in the nursery. He has never left us again.

I still remember the totally unexpected books that relatives gave me at 14 and at 18 years old; first the biography of a knighted and famous journalist - I wanted immediately to become a writer; and then a wonderfully bound copy of Walt Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass' - his poetry collection. I was puzzled at the time why they had chosen these for me, but both 'blew me away' and remain favourite books. How well my relatives knew what would challenge me.

The right gift at the right time is precious and loved. Expense is not important; I love the jewellery that my husband gave me, but I love equally the cheap plastic brooch in the form of a pendant doll made of threaded beads that my small boys bought me at the Chinese border. It cost a few cents, and is probably worthless now, three pence perhaps.

It's a little thing, but it shows awesome hospitality.

Jesus too, welcomed hospitality. He was known – even accused – for spending his time with the outsiders. Not the nice rectors, who are welcome to come in (and are very grateful) for a hot chocolate, but also the other outsiders. The ones we are not so sure about – the prostitute (it takes two to make a prostitute, let's not forget!); the single mum (it takes two to make one of those too!); the foreigner; the lost; the confused; those in pain; the slightly 'off the wall'; the really 'off the wall'; the annoying; the rude, and anyone who is different from us. Do we remember to invite in the outsider and hear their story, and realise we're not so different after all?

But I'm preaching to the mainly converted. I've already heard plenty of stories of welcome from and in Birstall and Wanlip as well as stories of giving to all sorts of groups of people outside of the parish and indeed the country. What a wonderful place to do ministry.

I'm still excited to be working with you in this place and at this time. Thank you for inviting me - I hope you won't be disappointed! And just keep up the good work!

Amanda



VICARS and RECTORS of BIRSTALL PARISH CHURCH

In 1912 the Revd RB Disney was Curate -in-Charge of Birstall. At that time Birstall was the daughter church to St Peter's, Belgrave.

It was not until the 18th October 1925 that the Revd FW Walker was appointed as Birstall's first resident Vicar. It was a further three years before Birstall became a fully independent parish within its own ecclesiastical boundaries.



20th February 1912 Induction of Revd RB Disney

Vicar of Birstall and Rector of Wanlip

2nd February 1925 induction of Revd Frederick W Walker
6th June 1935 induction of Revd Cecil G Thornton
23rd June 1944 induction of Revd Francis W Pratt
24th November 1954 induction of Revd Arthur A Lander
19th May 1972 induction of Revd Martin N Philips

On May 22nd 1983 (Pentecost) the Parishes of Birstall and Wanlip were inaugurated, and the incumbent became the

Rector of Birstall and Wanlip

26th June 1989 induction of Revd Charles A Bradshaw
10th September 1999 induction of Revd Malcolm E Lambert
24th November 2005 licensing of Revd James DG Shakespeare as
Priest in Charge
10th September 2009 induction of Revd James Shakespeare as *Rector*
14th March 2011 institution & induction of Revd Vincent J Jupp
15th September 2021 institution & induction of Revd Amanda Digman

*Kathryn Mobbs Dip GV (Hons)
former Verger of St James the Great, Birstall*

THE CHRISTMAS TREE FAIRY



Here I am at the top of the tree,
Not as young as I used to be,
But doing my best—even if
My wings are torn and my joints are stiff
And my head is almost touching the ceiling
To radiate the Christmas feeling.

This year they've put me out in the hall,
Squashed in the corner, close to the wall,
And a fearful draught from under the door
Keeps wafting my wand down to the floor.

Now, they've tied it on to my hand
With a far-too-tight, far-too-strong brown rubber band.

Last year, I thought they'd gone a bit far
When the eldest child wanted to put up a star!
But the father said, 'Yes, I know she looks jaded,
Her hair's lost its silver, her white dress has faded,
Her wings aren't so golden, her wand's a bit worn,
But we bought that fairy the year you were born.

So here I am at the top of the tree,
Not the most comfortable place to be -
No one knows how the pine needles prickle,
No one would guess how the tinsel can tickle -
But while I'm up here, I know my place
And nothing can alter the smile on my face!

Poem and illustration by

June Crebbin

PONDERING

Making Sense of Extraordinary Moments

According to St Luke, Jesus was born in Bethlehem and placed in a manger. Shepherds came from the surrounding hills to visit him. They found Mary, quietly 'pondering' on what the birth of her baby meant. It would appear that taking time to 'ponder' was something that Mary came back to again and again throughout the Gospel stories. Her stories are full of the ordinary and extraordinary together, as are our own stories, if we take time to ponder too.

The shepherds outside Bethlehem were just 'doing their thing,' up on the hills with their sheep, an ordinary night shift on an apparently ordinary day. Then an extraordinary, unexpected and amazing event changed everything. What did it all mean? We are not told how those first visitors made sense of that encounter. But all these biblical stories might fruitfully encourage us to reflect on how we make sense of extraordinary moments in our own lives? Whatever we do, or don't do over Christmas, a little prayerful pondering wouldn't come amiss. It might indeed work wonders.

'This Christmas, Lord, take a corner of my life and steal in . . .
Invade the busyness of my doing with the quiet of your coming.

This Christmas, Lord, take a corner of my mind and steal in . . .
Illuminate the darkness of my thinking with the brightness of your seeing.

This Christmas, Lord, take a corner of my heart and steal in . . .
Infuse the coldness of my loving with the warmth of your Being.

This Christmas, as at Bethlehem's stable, come and steal in.
Take the unprepared places of my life and make them fit for your dwelling.'

Above prayer found in Ruth Burgess' 'Hay and Stardust', Resources for Christmas to Candlemas, Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community

OLD NICK'S COFFEE SHOP

TUESDAY 9th DECEMBER

After a very long deliberation, I have decided to hold a 'coffee shop' on **Tuesday 9th December**, 10 am—12 noon. (Not the usual third Tuesday this month, as I shall be busy that week.)

I look forward to welcoming everyone back to enjoy a drink, a piece of cake, a natter, and to meet up with old friends and new.

It is such a long time since this happened - February 2019. The March coffee shop was cancelled at 6 p.m. the night before, by the Prime Minister, which left me with a kitchen full of cakes. Thank goodness for freezers!!

2022 will see the Coffee Shop back to the usual third Tuesday of the month, 10 am till 12 noon. The first being **Tuesday 18th January**.

ST. NICHOLAS FAYRE

Saturday 4th December, 2 pm — 4.30 p.m.

Another date for your diary is the long-awaited **St Nicholas Fayre**. This will be held in Wanlip Hall and in the Church on **Saturday December 4th from 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.**

As usual we ask for your generosity in helping us, by making cakes, supplying bottles, tombola items, raffle prizes, etc., and helping on stalls.

Most importantly, we look forward to seeing you there, enjoying yourselves. PLEASE WRITE THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW!!

Julie Ward

Monday 18th October 2021 marked Anti-Slavery Day. Modern-day Slavery is a major issue in the UK. In Leicester there are approximately 10,000 people in various occupations, who have been trapped into modern-day slavery: working an illegal number of hours, working in unsafe conditions, having their wages taken from them, being threatened with violence or community isolation or having documentation taken off them so they are not able to leave that employment. Victims are sometimes forced to live in squalid conditions, where they are subject to repeated abuse and rarely paid. The exploitation of children and young people includes 'county lines' when they are forced or coerced into acting as drug couriers.

All the Mothers' Union branches in Leicestershire were asked to knit chains to be displayed in Leicester Cathedral and other churches to draw attention to modern-day slavery. 11,154 chain links were knitted. Most were on display at Leicester Cathedral (*see picture*) of which 410 were knitted by some of our Birstall & Wanlip Mothers' Union members. A further 20 chain links were put at the back of St James' Church with the 'Anti-Slavery Day' poster.

Each link represents an enslaved victim of modern-day slavery. The chains were put together to help us to think about and understand the enormous impact that slavery has on individuals and our community, both in the city and county. *If a situation does not feel right, please phone the Modern Slavery Helpline: 08000 121 700.*

ONCE UPON A PRACTICE NIGHT

It was Friday 25th November

A night St James' Choir will always remember.

We had assembled, you see
For 'Advent Sunday' it was going to be.
Our singing we practiced with fervour and glee
And we walked down the aisle for all to see.

Our appearance and voices were sweet to be heard.
But 'the Vicar' dispelled us with a few chosen words.

'You waddle like ducks; you wail like cats;
And you waggle your necks like a lot of giraffes!'

'Instead of being all inspired
You all leave much to be desired!'

Oh what consternation! The choir's in a state!
What has made our vicar so irate?
Has someone upset him with licentious suggestions?
Or is he just suffering from indigestion?

Whatever the reason. It's clear to see -
An animal lover, clearly is he!

So forgive us, Vicar, if we appear weak.
As Christ once said 'We must turn the other cheek.'
And, as Christians, we wish you all good cheer
'A merry Christmas and a Happy New Year'.

*Memories of a true event,
put into words by my friend Ella Whittington.*

Marjorie Bonshor (chorister)

IS THERE MORE TO CHRISTMAS?

Doris has been Christmas shopping and is at her wits end, as she explains to her husband, Tom, who has heard it all before.

Doris: That's it! I've had enough! Never again! It's all too much! I'm exhausted! Crowds everywhere in Highcross! And the queues to pay! It was absolutely horrendous!

Tom: You say that every year.

Doris: Well, I mean it this time. Christmas gets more expensive every year. The crowds get worse. My temper gets shorter. I get older. I am 100% certain, totally certain, that this IS the last time.

Tom: We'll see.

Doris: I hate Christmas! I've still got the food shopping to do. Why we need to eat and drink so much, I just don't know. All the food prices have gone up this year too. What it will be like now we've left the EU, I dread to think. What if the Chancellor raises the tax on alcohol yet again? Only time will tell. There must be more to Christmas than this!

Tom: There is. I was wondering if you would like to go to the Carol Service at St James' Church tonight. We can have a good sing, and meet people whom we haven't seen for ages. It'll be a good night.

Doris: I'm too tired. I don't think that I want to go. But then, I like a good sing, if I've got the energy. So I MIGHT go. I take it that you're going?

Tom: Oh yes, I'm going. Do come with me to discover the real meaning of Christmas: the birth of Jesus, God's Son. It'll help you forget shopping - food, drink and presents - and concentrate on the best present of all, Jesus, the Saviour of the World.

Doris: OK, I'll come. It'll probably do me good. It might even give me a fresh perspective on Christmas. I'll just go and change, do my hair, splash on some perfume, and add a bit of colour to my face. I'll be ready in half an hour.

Tom: That's great.

Kerry Emmett



A PRAYER FOR INTERNATIONAL VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY

Loving God, we call to you with hearts in pain for all in our world who suffer the horrors of modern slavery; for all who dream of a better life in another place only to be trapped, tricked and traded; for all those who labour, forced and unseen, to make our everyday possessions; for all who agonise for loved ones lost into this trade in human beings.

Your Son came to bring good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed – may we too be voices against oppression, channels of good news. May our eyes be opened wide to all who suffer in our midst but out of sight. All this we pray to you, loving God, for whom no one is invisible. Amen

Prayer written by the Revd Rachel Carnegie, Executive Director of the Anglican Alliance.

Helen Tarry

CINDERS AND A WET DAY IN LONDON

On the 2nd of October we set off to London St Pancras but the weather forecast was not good. We arrived in London armed with umbrellas, and quickly made our way to the British Museum. I love looking around museums in general, lots to see and learn and free to enter. The British Museum is dedicated to human history, art and culture. We were limited on time so could only spend a couple of hours there. We picked on *Living and Dying* in the Wellcome Trust Gallery covering Australia, New Zealand and The Solomon Islands. We also managed to pull in Africa, how can you leave out Africa, probably the hardest working people yet the poorest by far.

On leaving the British Museum we made our way to The Plough for a well earned fish finger sandwich and a pint of London Pride.

Leaving refreshed, we called into a couple of retro shops, and then on to the Gillian Lynne Theatre to see Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cinderella*, a new romantic musical comedy.

This theatre was reopened in 1972, calling itself the New London Theatre. It hosted smash hit shows such as *Cats* 1981 and *War Horse* 2009. Did you see *War Horse* when it came to the Curve in Leicester? That was a truly amazing show that I will never forget. In 2018 the New London Theatre was renamed the Gillian Lynne Theatre, becoming the first West End theatre to be named after a woman. The theatre has a 60 foot revolve, which includes the stage, orchestra pit and part of the seating.



Myth 4. Christmas is a time of celebration. *Or is it a time for self-indulgence, and celebrating for the sake of celebration?*

Myth 5. Christmas is a time of peace and joy. *Police statistics indicate that figures for violence, sex offences, theft and crime are double in December than in June.*

Myth 6. Christmas is a time for compassion. *Yet many thousand people in our inner cities are homeless. And crime figures escalate.*

Myth 7. Santa Claus and Christmas trees are totally pagan. *Arguably Santa Claus owes his origin, in part, to the legendary generosity of Saint Nicholas, the 4th century Bishop of Myra.*

Myth 8. Christmas is a good time to hear about Jesus. *Not necessarily. But not everyone who hears understands, and may miss what Christianity is all about.*

Myth 9. The Wise Men came at Christmas. *According to biblical stories (Matthew 2:1-12) they came during the reign of Herod, when Jesus would have been 2 years old or younger.*

Myth 10. Jesus was born in a stable. *According to Matthew 2:11, it was 'a house'.*

Myth 11. His lowly birth was in December. *No proof. More likely early October, say some! On the Jewish feast of Tabernacles!*

Myth 12. Jesus isn't relevant in today's world. *For the past two thousand years, Christian believers living in a world of pain (not comfort and joy) have affirmed that God himself entered our world in the form of a human being, Jesus, who in every aspect of his life showed us and still shows us what God is like. That he loves us so much that he died on a cross for us, and rose from the dead, and now comes to each of us offering the free gift of forgiveness and love.*

The ice had started to melt as they got there and only food for horses and people could stay on the cart to cross the lake. My uncle had to hide on their journey to the West, as there was a desperate last ditch attempt by the Nazis to win the war by enlisting children as soldiers. One of my aunts hid the morning sickness caused by her pregnancy on their travels, saying it was to do with the dried food they were eating. I still remember seeing the old cart as a child on my grandparents' farm in West Germany.

My mother met my wounded father in the war; she was a nurse and was bringing wounded soldiers home from the front. My parents spoke Polish in front of us children when they did not want us to understand what they were saying. Those who did not flee at the time, when they had the chance, were prevented from travelling to the West by Russia, and only allowed to leave when they had reached retirement age.



A later picture of me as a child on the back of one of our farm horses

Christa Freer

12 MYTHS OF CHRISTMAS

Myth 1. Christmas has always been celebrated. *In Roman times around the time of Jesus, there was a feast called Saturnalia. It was a feast set aside to worship the god of the planet Saturn who the Romans believed to be the god of everything that grows.*

Myth 2. Christmas is a time of reconciliation. *Christmas can be a stressful time for families, which is arguably why the divorce rate is so high after Christmas.*

Myth 3. Christmas is a time of giving. *For some it may be a time of thinking about 'what am I going to get for Christmas'.*

We started off ten rows from the front, but halfway through the show we found ourselves in the second row watching the dancers waltz to the music.

On leaving the theatre, we found the rain had increased from showers to a full blown torrential monsoon. The forecast was spot on! We made our way to Covent Garden to see the shops and the street artists. Watching artists stand still dressed in their costumes always amazes me, another form of theatre for sure. Time was now getting on, so we made our way back to St Pancras to catch the train back to Leicester. Another enjoyable day in the capital, but this time a very wet one.

Peter Lucas

JULIE'S BANANA CAKE

I have recently tried out this recipe which uses ripe bananas.

140 gm margarine
140 gm caster sugar
2 eggs, beaten
140 gm self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
2 very ripe bananas, mashed
50 gm icing sugar.

Heat oven 180°C / Gas 4

Grease a 2 lb loaf tin, and line with greaseproof paper.

Cream margarine and sugar together until light and fluffy.

Then slowly add eggs, with a little of the flour.

Fold in remaining flour, baking powder and bananas.

Pour mixture into the prepared tin, and bake for about 45-50 minutes. Check it is cooked by inserting a skewer until it comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then remove to a wire cooling tray. Mix icing sugar with 2-3 tsp water to make a runny icing, and drizzle over the cooled cake.

I will now see what the mixture is like when baked as muffins!

Julie Ward

MEET YOURSELF ON SUNDAY 1949

This ditty was written by Bill Williams and Rawle Knox, two British prisoners of war in Changi Gaol, Singapore.

*Sunday morning feeling,
Not a thing to do,
We can't get special tickets to admit us to the Zoo.
So shall we do the crossword?
Or take a bus to Kew?
It's Sunday in London today.
Sitting by the fireside, in an easy chair,
There's scandal in the papers and there's Handel on the air,
Salvation Army trumpets are blowing in the Square,
It's Sunday in London today.
There's nobody in the Strand,
And even Picadilly looks deserted for the day,
But please don't misunderstand,
It may seem rather funny,
But we like it that way.
No-one brings the letters,
No-one brings the bread,
The pictures haven't opened,
So what shall we do instead?
We ought to call on father,
But let's go back to bed,
It's Sunday in London today.*

'Mass Observation' of Sunday habits made it clear that most people spent not only Sunday mornings but the entire day either in or around the home. Sunday generally emerged as a day for aimlessness, often pleasant, but also, as in the song, often reluctant, restless and dull.

I found the interesting little booklet 'Mass Observation. Meet Yourself on Sunday' lurking on my bookshelves during the first lockdown. It was interesting to discover how things used to be when I was five!

Canon Anne

Auton, hailed as a friend of Poland, is thought to have been the last British member of the Warsaw Air Bridge, in which the RAF flew sorties from Italy to drop supplies into burning Warsaw (Nazi occupied Poland) for Polish Resistance fighters. Russia in the meantime stopped its advance on Poland, as if to see who would win. Warsaw was burning so much, that it was hard for the planes to see where to drop supplies. The signal for the 'Air Drops' was in the shape of a burning cross created by women and children, who would come out at night at a given time with candles or burning torches to form a human cross. Jim had a reputation for never letting the plane return until he had made the drop of supplies. Auton flew 37 missions with 178 Squadron, which included dropping vital weapons for Britain's Polish allies during the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. He was 20 years old. Their attempt to liberate the Polish capital from Nazi occupation lasted 63 days was unsuccessful. It cost the lives of 150,000 civilians, and destroyed large parts of the city.

The Polish Ambassador Arkady Rzegocki, who attended the funeral, said about Jim: 'Mr. Auton was a brave and determined man who not only risked his own life to aid Polish resistance, but also worked tirelessly to commemorate all those who died in the effort to liberate the country. For all this, the Polish people are eternally grateful. He really is an example to follow for future generations. Poland will never forget Jim.'

I cannot help but think about the generation of my parents in World War II, and Auton's young age. He was fighting for the freedom we enjoy today, which perhaps we take for granted. It was at the point when Russia stopped its advance and the Nazis were indiscriminately lining up people in the streets of Warsaw by the thousands and shooting them where they stood, that my paternal family fled to safety from Poland to Bremerhaven by the North Sea in Germany, where I was born. Bremerhaven was 'safe'. It was first bombed by the Americans, who landed in Bremerhaven to establish a base.

My grandparents, who were farmers, loaded some possessions, family members and food onto a cart pulled by their farm horses Max and Gretel. The most direct route was over a frozen lake.

Remembering Francis James Auton MBE

13th April 1924 - 18th January 2020

I suppose not many people would think of someone who was born in Germany by the North Sea as coming from a family of refugees. As we remember every year without fail the fallen of World War II and other wars who did not return from the horrors of war, my thoughts inevitably turn also to those who came home with mental and physical scars, injured and traumatised by what they had seen and been through, and who had literally gone that extra mile to save the lives of others.

One of those men took on a special significance for me as I attended his service on 6th February 2020 at St. Mary Magdalene Church in Newark. The RAF had made an appeal for people to attend the service of a remarkable man, known as Jim, to hear his story and to lay him to rest next to Peggy, his wife of 70 years, close to the Warsaw Air Bridge Memorial, for which he helped to campaign and helped to plan in 1989. Seeing the name Magdalene in the name of the church, reminded me of my mother, also named Magdalene, who was Polish as was my father. How could I not go? Around three hundred people attended this World War II veteran's funeral, as he had no living relatives.



Jim Auton died on 18 January 2020 aged 95. He had been awarded twenty medals by six different countries, and had a great sense of humour. He spoke six languages and was an entrepreneur with offices in several cities and owned twenty-three race horses. Our Secret Service apparently tried to recruit Jim as he was well travelled. He was a bomb aimer and was said to have been glad not to have had to bomb cities, but military targets instead.

I'M TIRED

Yes, I'm tired.

For several years I've been blaming it on old age, iron deficiency, lack of vitamins, air pollution, obesity, dieting, and a dozen other maladies that make you wonder if life is really worth living.

But now I find out it ain't that.
I'm tired because I'm over-worked.

The population of this country is sixty million. Twenty million are retired. That leaves forty million to do the work. There are twelve million in school, which leaves twenty-eight million to do the work.

Of this total, there are six million employed by the government, and there are four million unemployed.

That leaves eighteen million to do the work.

Three million are in the Armed Forces, which leaves fifteen million to do the work.

Take from that total the 14,800,000 people who work for the County and City Councils, and that leaves 200,000 to do the work.

There are 188,000 people in hospitals. So that leaves 12,000 to do the work.

Now there are 11,988 people in prisons. That leaves just two people to do the work. You and me.

And you are sitting there reading this.

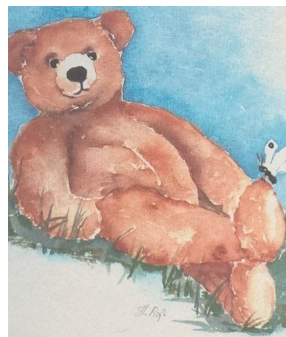
No wonder I'm tired!!

Anon

Submitted by Chris Greaves

JAMES BEAR'S NEWS

We all look forward to birthdays. When younger we always make ourselves a little older, like Adrian Mole, 13 and three-quarters. When older, we say 21+ or a number we like. I do 'Bear Counting', which includes something extra for the leap years.



My first birthday was in 2013. I found a magazine talking about my first celebration - on 'back to church Sunday' in 2011. So, according to Rose, when I said I 'thought' I was 10, it's just that I like the number and I'm sticking with it.

I keep my birthday every year on Harvest Sunday. This year I was joined by thirty bears, soft toys, Roland Rat and Tigger from Father Michael, and the Paw Patrol dogs from Holly and Chloe J. Together we all completed the Captain Tom Challenge of getting 101 Bears (or more) and raising money for Save the Children in Afghanistan.



We lined all the Bears along the Communion Rail and the Revd Amanda blessed them all.

Some were orphans and found new homes, both near and far. Some went in Shoe Boxes to Eastern Europe.

Pudsey was holding the tissues and face masks. And Big Brown Bear, (Lawrence Llewellyn Bowen) with his fancy bow, was looking after the Poppy Box and the Tin for Remembrance.

I have lots of Aunties who do lovely things: Mary (Bruce) made me a wonderful birthday cake. She gave me a new waistcoat decorated with Smarties for the buttons.

In the picture the Warren girls are helping me cut the cake, for Sarah to give out pieces to all my friends. Janet made some lovely chocolate brownies and, with sweets from Kate and Clive Mobbs, we had a real feast.



I must remember to wipe my sticky paws with a flannel and not to lick them!

The Life of a Church Bear is an exciting journey. Last Sunday I went to Holy Communion and met up with Cyril, Nicholas, Jacob and Esau. I then watched Songs of Praise in my special Chair, with Matron Florence Care Bear, who I tell all about what I have learnt and been doing.

Yesterday I went on a Canal Boat trip on Halcyon Days, with the Baldwin Trust and the Baldwin Bears. The Sunday School Helpers had a lovely cruise, with tea and yummy biscuits, before going to the Hope & Anchor for lunch.

I am hoping that, as on my birthday, I will see all my friends again at the Christingle and the Crib Services. Christmas is all that not far off, so I had better think about writing my cards..

I am very tired, so

*Lots of Love
from
James Bear*