

'KEEP IN TOUCH', Spring 2023

Copy by, but, if possible, before 1st February 2023

All contributions welcome. Maximum preferred length: 500 words!

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



***Icy Water, Birstall Lock
Peter Watson***

'Keep In Touch'



***Teasels, John Merrick's Lake, Watermead Park, Birstall
Peter Watson***

KEEPING YOU 'IN TOUCH' IS

Name

Address

Tel. No.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THEM

WINTER 2022 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 doing OK. The days I will be in the church office have changed from 1st December to Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9am and 1pm.

If you have a notice you would like putting in our weekly Information Sheet please email it to stjames.birstall@btconnect.com, 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 could you leave your notice 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. (Contact details on page 2)

I will continue to send the weekly sheets out digitally, please consider not picking up a paper copy when you come to church, if you are able to receive it via email. Thanks.

I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Love, Sheryl

FUNERALS

Died	Funeral		
1.08.22	13.09.22	Ruth Wright	L Crem
4.10.22	17.10.22	Jennifer (Jenny) Michael	St James/L Crem
24.09.22	24.10.22	Beryl Boden	L Crem
15.09.22	27.10.22	Linda Ward	St James/B Cemetery
13.10.22	07.11.22	Madge Nutting	Wanlip/L Crem
18.10.22	17.11.22	Denis Bonshor	L Crem
22.10.22	21.11.22	Bernard (Joe) Scott	St James/B Cemetery
	16.11.22	Joan Barnett	L Crem
5.11.22	30.11.22	Josephine Garner	St James/B Cemetery

REST ETERNAL

**Grant unto them, O Lord.
And let light perpetual shine upon them.
Amen.**

ANGLICANS UNITED

On Friday evening October 14 a team of four calling themselves the *Anglicans United* met with others at St Theresa's Church for an evening Quiz. This turned out to be a thoroughly enjoyable evening, and the intrepid four, Rita Richards, Canon Anne, David and Tricia Owen pitted their wits against other teams under the incredible quizmaster Daphne Stephenson.

There was laughter, incredulity and both 'yes' and 'yes I know it' from each and every member. But alas we gained neither the wooden spoon or the winners' trophy. However, the evening was such fun and we learnt a number of useless, never to come into conversation again items of knowledge, such as - there is a cheese made with maggots with the real name of Pink.

We enjoyed ourselves so much that we have pledged to try again in January. So come on, get a team of four and come and have some fun. Don't forget to bring a little toddy and some nibbles if you want or just wait and enjoy simple refreshments in the interval. See you there!

Tricia Owen

SCHOOLS WORK

Schools work continues to be fruitful and ecumenical.

Experience Harvest in St James Church saw around 120 children come through to learn about harvest. Thanks to all who volunteered. Amanda and I also took this to Hallam Fields School.

The Riverside School Harvest Service at the Methodist Church was able to have parents attend for the first time since 2019.

Amanda and I have also taken workshops into the schools. This ministry is varied and enjoyable and we are grateful for the support we receive.

COMING, LORD?

We missed you
- the first time - Christmas.

We looked in the wrong places -
for the wrong person -
amongst the powerful,
The rich, the respectable -
and look what happened.
So sorry - a big mistake.

You promised you'd come again.

Where are we looking?
Only In familiar places, locked in church,
with people just like us?

Open our eyes - let us look at our world
in case we miss you again -
amongst the poor, the powerless.
'So sorry, haven't got change' - 'No time'
'Their own fault' - 'Bring it on themselves'.
'Nothing I can do, it's the Government's job'.

You are always coming.

Open our eyes this Christmas
to look in unlikely places -
not just with us,
but amongst unlikely people.
Not in tinsel-clad manger,
but on our streets. Unlikely places.

Make us ready, coming Lord.

Lesley Walton

RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS



A few weeks ago, I had the immense privilege of being invited to stay at St George's House in the grounds of Windsor Castle, almost next to St George's Chapel, which I could see from my window. I had to use my passport to be allowed to drive onto the estate but only once the guard had checked I was on the list! In fact, I used my MOD pass, which I have as a Sea Cadet Chaplain – he was very impressed 'despite it being Navy and not Army'. If only I had been quick enough to respond 'Ah, but the Navy is the senior service'. It was quite awesome driving up past where those impressive soldiers had carried her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II up those steep steps only a few weeks before.

The reason for the trip was to take part in a Clergy Consultation entitled 'A Grammar of Obedience – Christian Ethics in a Postliberal Age.' At the first session, they did that awful thing where we had to say our name, where we came from and why we were there! As I still didn't really understand the title at that point, it was a little tricky. The participant list included some intimidating titles: Canon Chancellor; Director of Formation; a couple of Area Deans; someone on the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church; 2 Rev'd Prebendaries (I don't even know what they are!); 5 PhDs and 3 Canons. But of course, everyone was lovely (I should think so too!)

Over the four days, we listened, studied, and debated some pretty tricky issues – care of older people; euthanasia; whistleblowing; the common good; to list a few. We also considered the idea that we are now in a post liberal age, a liberal age being one where everyone is an individual and should be able to have total freedom to be who they

HELPING OUR COMMUNITY

The LE4 Helping our Community has been thinking about how we can help people in these difficult times. Many people will be concerned about the rising energy costs and the prospect of a long cold winter. We would like to offer anyone who would otherwise go without Christmas dinner (whether it be cost, illness, or simply not bothering as it's only for one, a Christmas meal delivered on Christmas Eve, ready to reheat. This is something the group have done for the last three years. It's called #payitforward. Someone in the position to do so pays for a meal for someone who would otherwise go without. It's been very successful and we deliver around 100 home cooked meals.

A "warm hug pack" is also available free of charge to anyone feeling the chill. It contains items to keep you warm and some treats. Please during this season of goodwill think about yourself, friends and neighbours, or the person in the house on your road you don't very often see. If you would like to nominate anyone or yourself for either of the above please get in touch with Rosie Rollings 07894995164 or Canon Anne.

Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas

Rosie Rollings

WINTER

snow-bringer
finger-freezer
icicle-maker
frost-sprinkler
wind-guster
earth-chiller
sky-darkener
a Christmas-giver

June Crebbin

ONE THING TO LIFT OUR SPIRITS



One thing to lift our spirits at the end of November is the Children in Need appeal on TV.

It has been characterized by generosity, enthusiasm, a sense of fun plus a great variety of fund-raising ideas.

People young and old strive to provide a better quality of life for disadvantaged children all over the country. Such as a Mayor doing a sponsored abseil from the Town Hall tower; famous sportsmen offering a morning's especial tuition, choirs singing to raise monies.

Such a variety of talents given to help others in many ways. Perhaps on these events our role is to be supportive, in any way of our choice.

I'm sure we all know someone for whom our time is priceless.

Anon.

Submitted by Chris Greaves

want to be and do what they want to do (to quote a song – a clap for anyone who can name it!). A post liberal age being one where we (hopefully) understand again that actually society can't work like that. We are made by God, to live in community and support each other. Sometimes I need help and sometimes you need help. I can do some things you can't do and there are plenty of things I can't do! We can't act alone because others might be hurt in the process – we usually need to make ethical decisions based on the common good – what is best for most people.

As Christians, we already know that, of course, but in which ways can we challenge ourselves about our own decision making, based on what is the common good, rather than just what is best for “myself”? Perhaps as we head into Advent, we can use this time to reflect on this as each of us are members of various communities:

Our church community: how can we be sacrificial and work for the greater good in church? The wider community: how can we, as a church community, seek the greater good of Birstall and Wanlip? How can we help people know God's love and care for them? How can we show it? The national community: How should we vote? What can we write to our MP about? What charities can we support? Our world: What can we do for those who are our long-distance neighbours? What can we do (or stop doing) to protect our planet? But, as we reflect on these things, it's still important to remember that God loves and cares for us too – sometimes we are the people that need the help. Please ask if you need help and please offer if you can help!

God bless you all – I'm looking forward to a wonderful Advent and Christmas with you.

Amanda

A PRAYER OF COMMEMORATION FOR THE FALLEN

Father of all, remember your holy promise,
and look with love on all your people, living and departed.

On this day we especially ask that you would hold forever
all who have suffered during war, those who returned scarred by
warfare, those who waited anxiously at home,
and those who returned wounded, and disillusioned;
those who mourned, and those communities that were diminished
and suffered loss.

Remember too those who acted with kindly compassion,
those who bravely risked their own lives for their comrades,
and those who in the aftermath of war, worked tirelessly for a
more peaceful world.

And as you remember them, remember us, O Lord;
grant us peace in our time and a longing for the day when people
of every language, race, and nation will be brought into the unity of
Christ's kingdom.

This we ask in the name of the same Jesus Christ our
Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer for World Peace

O God of the nations,
as we look to that day when you will gather people
from north and south, east and west,
into the unity of your peaceable Kingdom,
guide with your just and gentle wisdom all who take counsel
for the nations of the world,
that all your people may spend their days
in security, freedom, and peace,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

I wish I could have been there
On that first Christmas night,
To hear the angels singing
And to see the new star's light.

To find Mary watching Jesus
With a mother's tender care.
To look upon his radiant face
with God's love shining there.

To worship in the stable
A Lord born common man,
Who came to earth to save us
According to God's plan.

I wish I could have been there
to celebrate his birth.
But I can feel his love today
And his Spirit here on earth.

Amanda Bradley.

Praying God's blessings for a peaceful and happy Christmas for us all.

Jane Scott



KEEPING IN TOUCH

It is good to keep in touch with friends and family, yet so easy to lose touch. I am very fortunate to have many good friends, and I thank God for them every day. Some of my friends live nearby, and some live miles away. But even if we cannot meet very frequently, we keep in touch by telephone or cards.

A lot of my friends have known me for years, and we have shared happy times and sad times. Some of you will remember my friend Beryl McHugh, who moved to Maxwell Lodge in Market Harborough to be near to her youngest son and daughter in law. Beryl was an active member of St James' and Wanlip Church. We sang in the choir together, and organised, produced and took part in many concerts, Passion Plays and Musicals. Beryl has an outstanding voice, which I know some of you will remember.

As I am unable to drive, I rely on my lovely family and friends to take me to places. Two of my dear friends, Joan and Raymond, suggested a visit to Beryl, together with our friend Brenda. On a lovely sunny day Raymond drove us through beautiful countryside to the delightful town of Market Harborough. As I have visited Beryl several times, I knew she would be waiting outside the apartments to meet us.

Raymond kindly took a photograph of us which I thought you might like to see. A lovely day was had by all, we even sat in the sunshine on Beryl's balcony. Friendship is a gift to treasure.

As the special time of Advent and Christmas approach, I am looking forward to sending, despite the postal costs, and looking forward to receiving, messages from loved ones far and near to keep in touch. One of my friends, with whom I worked, is no longer here but I think of her often. She sent me this poem on a Christmas card several years ago. I love it.

And I thought you might enjoy it too.

THE SOMME

Remember, Remember the men that fell
Your country needs you, Kitchener would tell.
They left behind wives, children, fathers and mothers.
Please don't forget, you must tell others.

On 1st July the Somme valley ran red
Would you have served the same, or just stayed in bed.
Their voices can still be heard in Flanders fields
Calling their mates to come home.



The following is an extract from the *Footprints of the 1/4th Leicestershire Regiment* by John Milne.

The Staffords relieve the battalion on June 30th.
Gommecourt is attacked on July 1st. The attack fails.
The 4th Leicesters are reserve battalion of the reserve brigade.
They are not sent to the slaughter.
The Staffords and Sherwoods lose heavily.
The taps of the Somme blood bath are full on.

My Grandfather John Charles Lucas served with the 1/4th Leicestershire Regiment.

Peter Lucas

BECOMING A FRANCISCAN

It began with a half-page photograph on the weekly air-mail Guardian newspaper. I sat on my third-floor balcony, a wild white cockatoo shouting at me from a tree, and I could not take my eyes off this nostalgic view of Trafalgar Square. There were circles of dancers, ordinary people, beaming at me! The photographer was standing in one of the circles, and opposite him was a London policeman with his distinctive helmet, next to a Franciscan friar and then a Franciscan sister. All three were laughing and smiling, so enjoying the fellowship. Wow!

For Holy Week 1972 St. John's Cathedral in Hong Kong brought in Brother Geoffrey, the English Minister General of the Anglican Society, to lead evening worship, culminating with his leading Easter Sunday worship. Usually the Catholic and Anglican bishops swapped places at Easter, (literally crossing the road from the two cathedrals, one then walking uphill, the other walking downhill). Filipino visitors often mistook them and we were all alerted to advise any lady in a mantilla that she was welcome, but she was in the wrong cathedral.

The Monday evening was well attended, and all the government ladies wore their best hats. We ordinary English never wore hats because all American ladies did, ostentatiously. Anyway Geoffrey had brought pages of new cheerful hymns; we sang them very seriously. 'No, no, no', said the robed Franciscan, 'let me demonstrate'. The organist played again, and Geoffrey danced up and down the aisle singing boisterously. The government ladies took their hats off, and we all began again. Geoffrey stayed on for Easter week, and my husband and I were asked to join a small think-tank to help Geoffrey explore what the Franciscans could do in Hong Kong.

'We need Chinese-speaking brothers if they want to work with the poor' we told him. But there was much to do for the western people who had a multitude of reasons for coming here, and some of their motives were for undesirable, non-Christian, even criminal reasons.

I still needed laser treatment for a perforated and detached retina on the same day and surgery on my left eye the following day. Unbeknown to me, I had a cataract which needed removing; I needed a new lens.

I also had a partially detached retina that needed repairing.

I am ashamed to say that it was only when I sat in the waiting room of the LRI Eye Clinic waiting for my treatment, that I remembered the documentary I had seen many years ago about the amazing Flying Eye Hospital ORBIS, which flies missions around the globe to fight avoidable blindness. It is also a state of the art teaching hospital. ORBIS operates with the help of donations, with some government subsidies and many volunteers, from the volunteer pilot, anaesthetist to surgeons and nurses, who complement employed staff. How lucky was I that my prayers had been heard and that I did not have to walk through the African heat, for example for hours, in the hope for the Flying Eye Hospital to arrive.

There were only so many times I felt I could say thank you to the staff at the LRI Eye Clinic, before thinking what could I do to help others with sight problems and raise awareness of ORBIS. I am not a wealthy person, but the answer was simple.

I now had practically perfect eyesight and no longer needed to buy glasses and contact lenses. I therefore pledged to give ORBIS this amount saved each year. Finding a cheaper hairdresser and having fewer haircuts, not having my nails done, meant I could give that little bit extra. ORBIS brings light into peoples' lives and a chance to see, learn and work.

I also did not need a guide dog, so I have sponsored the guide dog training of Lexi, Una, Zac, Fifi, Ginger, Sprout and Comet to date. The holy Madonna herself gave me a nudge when it came to the 'what could I do question', but that is another story.

Christa Freer

MIRACLES DO HAPPEN

For some people having a cataract removed during eye surgery is a miracle. For me the real miracle was that the blackness (blindness) disappeared after my heartfelt prayers.

“Winter is coming”. There is no doubt about that after clock changes and darker afternoons on the way. The countdown to Christmas has started and we are heading towards the time of lighting candles, as we await to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ once more.

Christmas is my most favourite time of the year, because I enjoy the festive period, memories of hustle and bustle at home in preparation for Christmas, celebrating my birthday, getting together with friends and family and the prospect of a few presents. For me the biggest present, apart from the gift of my life, my family, my education and not having had to live through a war or a storm flood, was when my sight was saved.

It all came a bit of a shock.

All was well on Monday morning (18.1.16). Black worm like shapes appeared in my right eye in the afternoon. It was as if someone was scribbling out my sight. I started to lose my sight come bedtime. It was like looking through a glass filled with black ink, bubbling from the bottom, higher and higher. What to do? I sat for a while saying heartfelt prayers. ‘Please Lord don’t let me lose my sight.’ The thought of not being able to see the faces of my loved ones again was too painful to bear. After a while I noticed that the blackness (blindness) was not getting worse and thought perhaps a good night’s sleep and some more heartfelt prayers would do my eyes some good. In the morning the blackness had gone. The worm-like shapes were still there and staff at the Eye Clinic of the LRI (Leicester Royal Infirmary) asked me to come in straight away. Was the blackness (blindness) still there, was their first question. I explained the above.

Much of western society was corrupted by its exploitative freedoms. Before Geoffrey left he admitted most of the think-tank into the Companions of the Society of St Francis and when he reached his next port of call, Australia, he persuaded two Third Order members, a husband and wife, to come to Hong Kong to lead us and encourage locals to join the Third Order. So a group of university and school teachers, a government minister’s wife, together with their small children began to meet three times a year for a day of learning, worship, sharing meals and fun. That night we took on a simple Rule, daily prayer, Bible reading, a religious book at hand, weekly Communion and a simplified life-style. Nervously the government wife asked ‘Should I stop buying nice clothes and hats?’ Geoffrey said ‘I think that you are required to buy them in your role as the agricultural minister’s wife. It is your uniform.’

And then we returned to England.

I remained a Companion for twenty-nine years, though my husband left to become a Benedictine Oblate.

Noreen Talbot

A PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

CISTERCIAN SPIRITUALITY

I think the best way of 'talking' to you about Cistercian spirituality is to write about the different sections of our spirituality under their headings, Hopefully as I do so you will come to understand what has attracted me towards the Cistercians. But where to start? Let's start with something our founders, Robert, Albraic & Stephen did when they built their New Monastery at Cîteaux.

The Abbey of Molesme from which they came was dedicated to St Mary, and so they dedicated their new monastery at Cîteaux to the Virgin Mary, which practice has continued since, with every Cistercian Abbey being dedicated to an aspect of Mary. Of course, being an un-cloistered diffused order, the Anglican Order of Cistercians doesn't have an abbey, so our whole order is dedicated to Mary. At Mount St. Bernard they have a statue of Mary with the child Jesus that was found buried at the Abbey of Hailes and so our founders decided to dedicate our order to Our Lady of Hailes, putting us under Mary's patronage.

This devotion to Mary stems from the early Cistercians seeing certain traits in Mary that reflect aspects peculiar to their way of life. The most obvious is the centrality of contemplation for us and how Mary 'kept all these things and meditated them in her heart'.

When Mary was visited by Gabriel she accepted his message with the response: 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' So, because Mary listened to God's word from Gabriel and accepted and welcomed it, it she gave birth to God's Word whom she welcomed into the world. Her action not only changed Mary but also changed the world. Cistercians are likewise called to listen to God's Word, whether that be within the daily offices, lectio divina, or within their hearts during contemplation. As Cistercians listen to God's Word, they are called to learn from it and let it change them, drawing them closer to God.

Just as God leaned down to Mary and planted his Word in Mary, so he leans down to the Cistercians who open their hearts to God's

ST. THOMAS BECKET

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Feast Day 29th December

I was born and brought up in Kent, and Canterbury was our cathedral church. We frequently visited and for me the special place was where St Thomas Becket was brutally murdered. I always got on my knees and prayed there, giving thanks for St Thomas and for our Cathedral Church and its continuing ministry.

Thomas was born in London in 1118, of a family of merchants. After a good education he entered the service of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. Thomas proved himself an excellent administrator and skilled diplomat. In 1155 he was appointed chancellor by King Henry II. For several years king and chancellor worked harmoniously together in mutual admiration and personal friendship. As a result, the king nominated Thomas as Archbishop of Canterbury to succeed Theobald in 1161. From the start, however, there was friction, with Thomas insisting on every privilege of the Church. The conflict worsened until 1164 when Thomas fled to France. Encouraged by the Pope he pursued his arguments from exile, sending letters and pronouncing excommunications. Three efforts at mediation failed before an apparent reconciliation brought him back triumphant to Canterbury in 1170. But the nobility still opposed him, and words of anger at court led four knights to journey to Canterbury, where they finally chased Thomas into the cathedral, where they murdered him on 29th December 1170, on the steps of an altar.

Thomas was undoubtedly a proud and stubborn man, for all his gifts, and his personal austerities as archbishop were probably an attempt at self-discipline after years of ostentatious luxury. His conflict with King Henry stemmed from their equal personal ambitions, exacerbated by the increasingly international claims of the papacy, played out in the inevitable tension between Church and State.

Canon Anne

INDUCTION MASS FOR FATHER TED

Father Ted Mullen took over the running of the joint Roman Catholic parishes of St Theresa's, Birstall and Sacred Heart, Rothley in early September, following the departure of Fr Tom Thomas to a new parish in London.

His Induction as Parish Priest took place during a special Mass on Friday October 21st.

Fr Edward Jarosz, who is Vicar General for this part of the Nottingham Diocese, conducted the Rite of Induction on behalf of Bishop Patrick.

During the service, special prayers were said and Fr Ted undertook to perform the duties required of him as parish priest, both spiritually and pastorally. He was then presented with the Bible, the Roman Missal and the keys of the church and presented to the congregation as their Minister.

Parishioners representing each of the different functions of parish life welcomed him in turn on behalf of their group. Also welcoming Fr Ted on behalf of the wider community were Debbie Shephard (St James' Church), Andy Biggins (Birstall Methodist Church) and Ann Marshall (Parish Council).

It was a joyful service and everyone had a chance to mingle over a delicious reception in the hall afterwards.

Maura Jelley

word and Word. In them God plants a seed which carries within it a spark of life, which, as it grows, transforms all things in the universe. It is a seed not of the Cistercian, who is merely the willing carrier, but of God.

The Cistercians dedicated all their monasteries, abbeys and churches to Mary with thoughts of the mystery of the Assumption, for they saw, within the Assumption and within Mary, the pinnacle of God's love for humanity. It is through Mary that all of humanity has been brought within the Incarnate Word, leading to the inauguration of the new Temple in the heart of the Trinity, where praise and thanksgiving will always be sung. The heavenly liturgy is shared by the Church.

Good liturgy leads to the opening of a door into heaven through which something of God's beauty and love is reflected. It is opened in the community and in the individual's heart. And it has made a difference to my life.

As an Anglo Catholic I was already dedicated to Mary, and so changes to my life have not been large. For my daily offices on Saturdays, along with my fellow Cistercians, I use the common of Mary instead of the Saturday antiphons and readings. Also I have treated myself to a plain blue chasuble to wear on Marian feasts.

Michael/Brother Aidan.

A WORD FROM ST. ANSELM

Come now, turn aside for a while from your daily employment, escape for a moment from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside your weighty cares, let your burdensome distractions wait, free yourself for a while for God and rest awhile in him. Enter the inner chamber of your soul, shut out everything except God and that which can help you in seeking him, and when you have shut the door, seek him. Now, my soul, say to God, 'I seek your face; Lord it is your face that I seek.' Amen.

THE VIRTUES OF UNTIDINESS

Tidiness is in fashion at the moment. It seems to be regarded as a moral virtue. Marie Kondo and her book 'The Life-changing Magic of Tidying' has been very much in fashion. From the 17th century cleanliness was next to godliness, but no longer. Tidiness is now next to godliness. I am not a tidy person except for very important things like purse, passport, financial documents. My theological books were all in category and alphabetical order. The rest of them are mostly organised by size wherever they fit on the bookshelves. That has its frustrations but also the pleasure sometimes of rediscovering a book one I have forgotten about and will enjoy again.

More importantly, the passion for tidiness has extended to the natural world including our gardens, and that is where it is sometimes not so much a virtue but something which can cause damage to the environment and our fellow creatures. If you watch some of the garden make-over programmes there is a fashion for gardens to become just entertainment spaces. Lawns have been taken up and replaced with decking, gravel, paving, etc, leaving no, or hardly any, space for wildlife, causing rain run-off into the drains, rather than soaking into flowerbeds or grass. Grass gets replaced with artificial grass, which cannot be recycled at the end of its useful life and is a sterile wilderness for wildlife. No 'weeds,' including some of our native wildflowers and grasses, can be allowed if we have a lawn. There are firms that offer a service to keep garden lawns free of wild plants or weeds. Cutting off seed heads as soon as they form can prevent some animals and birds from having a source of food. We don't need to reduce the garden to a jungle but not over-tidying them gives food and shelter to creatures of all kinds.

Fences are often invasion proof. Hedgehogs, which need space to roam and feed, are trapped and in decline. Thankfully, Hedgehog Street initiative has reversed that in some places by encouraging people to cut a cd-size hole in fences so hedgehogs can gain access. Farmers often slash hedges in the autumn, reducing them to bare branches, denying birds shelter.

SHOEBOX APPEAL 2022

A RECORD!

This year surpassed all our expectations as we were able to send 70 shoeboxes, a record number, to *Link to Hope*. A lot of these will be going to Ukraine this year and we will keep you updated when we hear how many were delivered overall.

A huge thank you to Christa Freer and Sheila Alcock who assembled the shoeboxes, and to all the people who so generously gave goods and/or donations. Wonderful Wendy Nye from Queniborough donated so much that we couldn't get it all in the car boot and Sylvia Simes' neighbour not only donated bags full of items, but also had a whip round at her church who gave £80 towards the carriage.

Link to Hope has been operating for over 25 years and, when delivering the boxes, gives practical help such as food and firewood. Also, they run homework clubs so the children can study, because that can be difficult in overcrowded conditions. They also help individuals: they gave a bed and covers to an old lady who had been sleeping on a dirt floor, and they helped to rehouse a family who had lost a baby because of extreme cold. Goodness knows what they will find this year!

The conditions under which a lot of these people live would appal us, so it is wonderful to think that we can give a tiny amount of cheer to their lives. One old man said that he had never received a present in his whole life and thought he never would until he got to heaven!

On Christmas Day, when we unwrap our presents, we always think of these elderly people and the families opening their boxes and what pleasure a few gifts can give. So, once again, our heartfelt thanks to all of you who contributed in any way.

Sylvia Simes and Doreen Wilson

RECYCLING FOR CHARITY

DID YOU KNOW?

300 million inkjet cartridges are sold in Europe per year
Only 15% of all inkjets sold are re-manufactured
45 million cartridges end up in landfill in the UK
Cartridges can take up to 1000 years to decompose
The lifespan of ink cartridges can be optimised by reusing and recycling them as many times as possible
Recycling plastic takes 88% less energy than making plastic from raw materials
A recycled product can be back on the shelves again within a single month
Recycling creates 6 times more jobs than landfilling and 36 times more than incinerating.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

St James Church, Birstall is registered with Recycle4Charity. We collect ink jet cartridges which are sent to Recycle4Charity when there is a full box .In return they give money back to our Church. The last box sent raised £36.
For each HP301 Original we receive £1, for HP301 Remanufactured 25p. Not all cartridges have a value but they are disposed of responsibly by Recycle4Charity.

There is a box at the back of St James and one at Wanlip for your donations (if you can't locate please ask). Please make use of them to dispose of your used cartridges.

Every little donation helps church funds
Every little donation helps to save the environment.

Gill Pope

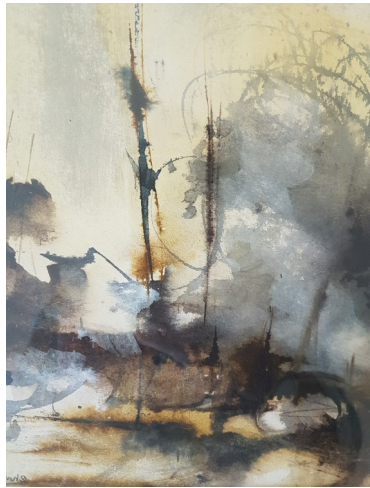
Our winter visitors, like redwings and fieldfares, lose the berries they rely on. But there are hopeful signs. Some farmers now leave field edges to grow wild, and there are plant mixes of seeds which provide food for birds as well as produce commercial crops.

Local authorities, which used to leave road verges to become wildlife havens, took to mowing them in spring. The verges on the A6 were full of dandelions but suddenly a few years ago they began to be mowed just as they were in full flower. Thankfully, many local authorities seem to have relented, realising that mowing strips adjacent to roads and corners thus protecting sightlines is enough and saves them money. Our motorway verges are now wildlife havens.

Bees need nectar-rich plants to feed on. Garden flowers are quite often poor sources of nectar or are inaccessible to some creatures, especially to short-tongued wild bees, so our verges are important. But there are signs of hope. In our own village our parish council has planted the roundabout on Sibson Road and various other places with wildflower mixes rather than the usual regimented garden plants.

It is so easy to damage our environment and harm our fellow creatures, often unintentionally, but maybe the tide is turning. Christians are called to care for God's creation so we should be thankful for this. Last year's 'No-Mow May' helped us to discover the unexpected plants growing in our lawns if we gave them the chance. I found a meadow buttercup and, very unexpectedly, lady's smock, which usually grows in damp meadows. People seem to be becoming more aware of needing to care for the bit of creation we've been entrusted with, in our gardens as well as the wider environment. I think more people feed the birds. Most of the things we need to do are easy and not expensive. We need to learn to see our gardens and local environment as the bits of creation that God has entrusted to our care, just as he entrusted it to Adam in the beginning. If we see it in that light, it can become a joyful task rather than an imposition or just another boring chore.

Lesley Walton



OCTOBER STORM

I had to paint it, the road to Diabaig
on that October day.

The weather was unrelenting,
turning the landscape both beautiful
and sinister.

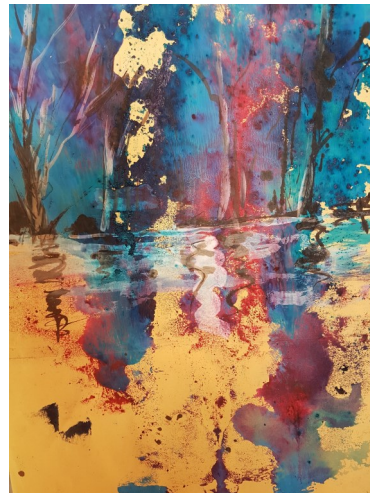
Marvellous in its power and showing
no mercy. It was exhilarating and
inspiring.

OCTOBER TREES

The trees by the Loch on a windless
October morning, .

Shades of orange and blue seem to be
a botanical miracle.

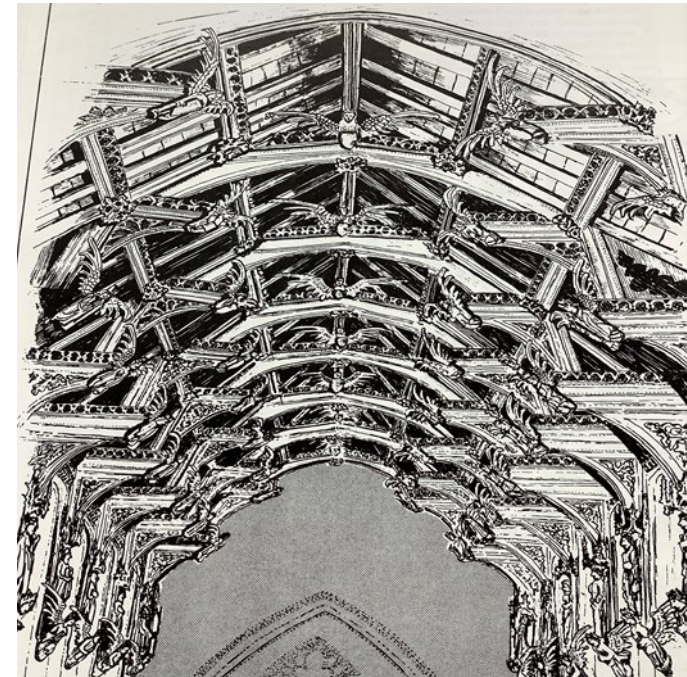
Later on the Highland cattle may come
and scratch their backs on the trunks.



Charlotte Stephenson

St Wendreda's Church in March, Cambridgeshire.

The Angel Roof



The roof of St Wendreda's Church in March has 120 oak angels
dating back to the early 16th century, carved by two brothers from
Norfolk.

The poet Sir John Betjeman once said it was worth cycling 40 miles
in a head wind to see them.

John Simes