

Old Malden News



The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist, Malden

June 2020

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Old Malden News

**The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist Parish Church Malden**
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Vicar's Letter June 2020

Peggy Jackson, my Training Incumbent when I was a curate in Mortlake, never wears black clerical shirts because black clergy shirts have long been the province of the Forward in Faith brigade opposed to women's ordination. She wore all different pastel shades of clergy shirts and cut a colourful dash at clergy gatherings. Try as she might she couldn't convince me to experiment sartorially. I'm a Mirfield man through and through and black it was, partially because I refused to give up black just because the bigoted had made it a "badge" for themselves, and also because as a young curate black was a uniform and carried more gravitas than my, then, meagre frame could, especially when trying to visit hospital outside visiting hours. Today it's a case of a one load wash more than anything. But I will let you into a secret.

My shirts have to be specially made as I hate any collar too tight around my neck, but Marks and Sparks has always made black trousers that fit the bill. In my wardrobe hang a dozen pairs, all slightly different around the waist. They are hung in waist size order, the more recent innovation of "Active Waist" with its elastic waistband a welcome and more forgiving addition. I can tell pretty much whether I've gained or lost weight by what I put on in the morning, far more accurate than the "faulty" bathroom scale any day.

With our physical health we are often given signs when things aren't quite as they should be. Little aches and pains that send us consulting our GP. But when it comes to our mental health, our day to day sense of wellbeing, how good are we at gauging how we are feeling? The lockdown is challenging for all of us. Some of you may be managing just fine while others struggle with every new day. Whether you live alone or with the demands and distractions of family life, our mental health is just as important as our physical health, and there are many useful things we can do to take care of ourselves. I have personally found it harder these past couple of weeks as the novelty of isolation has well and truly worn off, and there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel just yet. I want to share some resources from the NHS that I have found helpful.

1. Plan practical things like food shopping, household supplies, and prescriptions. Ask for help if you need it and keep on top of any medical treatment or support you are undergoing.
2. Stay connected with friends and family. Nothing is as good as meeting face to face, but we can still keep in touch with those we care about through phone calls, social media, and email. All contact has the ability to lift not only our spirits, but also those we care about. Talking helps minimise the sense of isolation.
3. Talk about your worries and concerns. As they say, a trouble shared is a trouble halved, so don't be reticent about sharing your feelings. We're all in this together!
4. Look after your body. We all need to keep on top of our physical health, and eating healthy food and getting enough exercise helps improve our sense of wellbeing.
5. Stay on top of any difficult feelings. It is an anxious time for all of us, but don't let anxiety get the better of you. Try to focus on what you can control, such as how you act, who you talk to,

and where you get your information from. Don't stay glued to the television or internet news. Stick to trusted sources of information, not the negativity and "fake" news being spread to create panic and mistrust.

6. Keep doing the things that you enjoy as much as possible. Reading, creative writing, gardening and art are all good to let our minds engage with positive activities and feelings. Bored? Well try learning something new. If you are online, there is a wealth of concerts and videos to keep you interested. Pick up the crossword or Suduko puzzles. The important thing is to keep our minds active.
7. Plan your new daily routine and stick to it. Getting up in the morning and having things mapped out gives structure to the day and enables us to look back on all that we've managed to do with the day. We have a sense of accomplishment and feel better about ourselves.
8. Make time to relax and unwind, and make sure you maintain a regular sleep pattern to feel your best. Relaxation and a decent night's sleep helps our bodies and minds cope with the stress we are under.
9. Make plans for something you look forward to. No need to make a specific date as that can be counterproductive, but use this time to plan something you really want to do. I've been planning a seaside holiday back home when I can see my family again, as well as mull over what I want to plant in the garden of our retirement home.
10. Pray. Talk to God, ask for quiet confidence and strength. Share your feelings, and not just the good ones. Feel free to express any fear or anger. God's got very broad shoulders and he understands how we feel.

Do try to look after your health at this uncertain time. This will pass in time and life will resume, hopefully a more positive way of living with a kinder society. Let us take care of ourselves and each other as we wait for that day because we will make it. In the meantime we may discover that life is still full of love and joy even in lockdown that will remind us that each and every day is a gift and precious in and of itself.

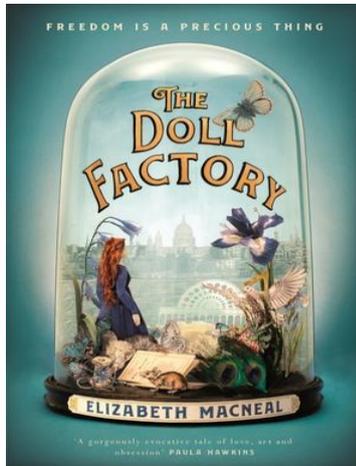
Wishing you God's good blessing, Michael.

St John's Reading Group

June 2020

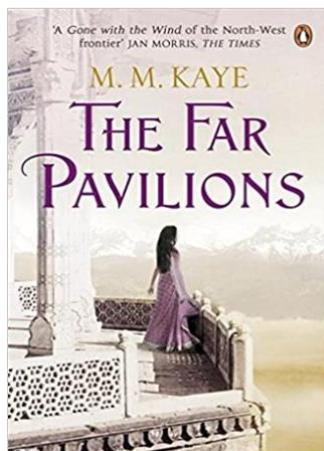
We held our second 'virtual' Reading Group meeting on 7th May and welcomed everyone who wished to join us – with the technology of 'Skype'. We agreed on sound only (so that we didn't have to get all dressed up!). Still only virtual cake though.

We discussed 'The Doll Factory' by Elizabeth Macneal which received some very mixed



reviews. It was given several scores of 6/10 and a few at 7 & 8/10. This historical-thriller novel is set in 1850s London with references to the Pre-Raphaelites and The Great Exhibition. The heroine, Iris is desperate to leave the Doll Factory where she works with her sister. A chance meeting with an artist gives her the opportunity to become independent, leave home and learn how to paint until the tutelage of a member of the group of pre-Raphaelite artists. It gives us a glimpse into the life of a young woman who wishes to be creative and follow her own path.

However, Iris encounters Silas Reed, a taxidermist who follows her and indeed, becomes so obsessed with her that he goes to great lengths to 'have her' as his own. Some of the group were not too happy about Silas' gruesome hobby with the stuffing of mice and puppies but there were also several murders which could be attributed to him. It verges on being a 'gothic' novel: some of the group found it to be very gripping and a good read whilst others found it a struggle. A good escapist novel for staying at home!



Our next 'Virtual' meeting will be on Thursday 4th June – but I welcome all your comments which will be shared with the group even if you are not into Skype

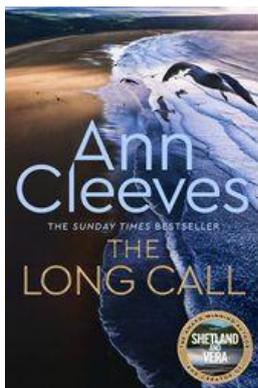
So for June: **The Far Pavilions by M M Kaye** (published in 1978, this is an epic novel of British-Indian history telling the story of an English officer during British rule in India). This is quite a long novel but easy to read. (I would have liked a map at the beginning.)

For July: **Persuasion by Jane Austen** – her last fully completed novel, published in 1817 after her death. I am looking forward to reading more Austen this summer – and of course, the celebrated *Pride and Prejudice* TV series is being broadcast at the moment with the lovely Colin Firth.

For August: **The Long Call by Anne Cleeves** – the first in a new series of novels set in North Devon. So we leave Vera and Jimmy Perez to embark on a new venture. I'm sure it will not disappoint.

I have finished reading 'The Mirror and The Light' by Hilary Mantel – a long read but brilliantly written. No mercy for 'Cremuel' then.





Turbulent times indeed. I am looking forward to Alison Weir's fifth novel in the Tudor wives series – this one will be about Catherine Howard who also met a bad end. I think I shall re-read Jerome K Jerome's Three Men in a Boat for a bit of light reading.

I am hoping for the return of the warmer weather so reading can take place in the garden – after all the gardening of course. I hope you are enjoying the quiet time to read all those books which you have been waiting to read.

Happy Reading – stay safe!

Marilyn Burkett



St John's Knitting & Crochet Group

Sadly, we are unable to hold our monthly get-togethers at the moment but hopefully that does not mean that you haven't been able to continue with all your knitting and crochet projects. Indeed, you may have been enabling even more creativity during 'lockdown'.

I have recently received the latest newsletter from the Romanian Aid Foundation: many of its activities in the UK have been put on hold during lockdown pending the lifting of the restrictions on the movement of older people (affecting most of the volunteers). All activities involving person-to-person contact including packing and transport have been suspended during the present crisis. However – we look forward to better times when warehouse activities and lorry departures can resume.

However, the work in Romania has not stopped; it has just changed its way of doing things. Fewer people are going to the centre but there is still a huge focus on food availability at the moment. We continue to pray for good harvests this year.

In the meantime – let's carry on making our blankets, knitting children's and baby clothes, gloves and mittens. Use your imagination and start to use some of your 'stash'. I look forward to the resumption of our monthly meetings – John will have plenty of tea bags and cakes ready for us. Keep busy and keep safe.

Marilyn Burkett

**POEM WRITTEN IN 1869 during the cholera pandemic
REPRINTED IN 1919 during the Spanish 'flu pandemic
VALID IN 2020 during the Covid 19 pandemic**

And people stayed at home
And read books
And listened
And they rested
And did exercises
And made art and played
And learned new ways of being
And stopped and listened
More deeply
Someone meditated, someone prayed
Someone met their shadow
And people began to think differently
And people healed.
And in the absence of people who
Lived in ignorant ways
Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
The earth also began to heal
And when the danger ended and
People found themselves
They grieved for the dead
And made new choices
And dreamed of new visions
And created new ways of living
And completely healed the earth
Just as they were healed.

Kathleen O'Mara



Dad is in the fields

Your shirt; this clover;
The field I walk over
Teams with the things that you wore -
The vetch of magenta;
The woods that I enter
In greens from canopy to floor.

The blue of your eyes
In balmy spring skies
Looks on me with peace and embrace,
While I walk the same mile
In the breath of your smile
And with every heartbeat, your face.

In buttercups bright
I will see your delight
In the splendours flung forth in Creation.
As I traverse the field,
To the sea I will yield
As the grasses blow round in elation.

Affirmed touch of this oak -
Perhaps it spoke
Of the life that you revered within.
This branch - so long! -
Inconceivably strong
In the architecture it spins.

In this river, the water
You gave to your daughter
As plaything and holder and friend.
It flows to the ocean,
Itself a devotion
To being that has no end.

So your spirit is free
And you haven't left me.
Like the deer as it flies to the trees,
It is hidden, yet real,
And my loss cannot steal
The knowing the hope in me sees.

There's all time to rely on -
This full dandelion
I blow till the soft seeds take flight
And they leave my hands.
Where your memory lands
Will spring up, where'er they alight...

...One more act of kindness,
Abundant reminders
Of love that flourished, renewed.



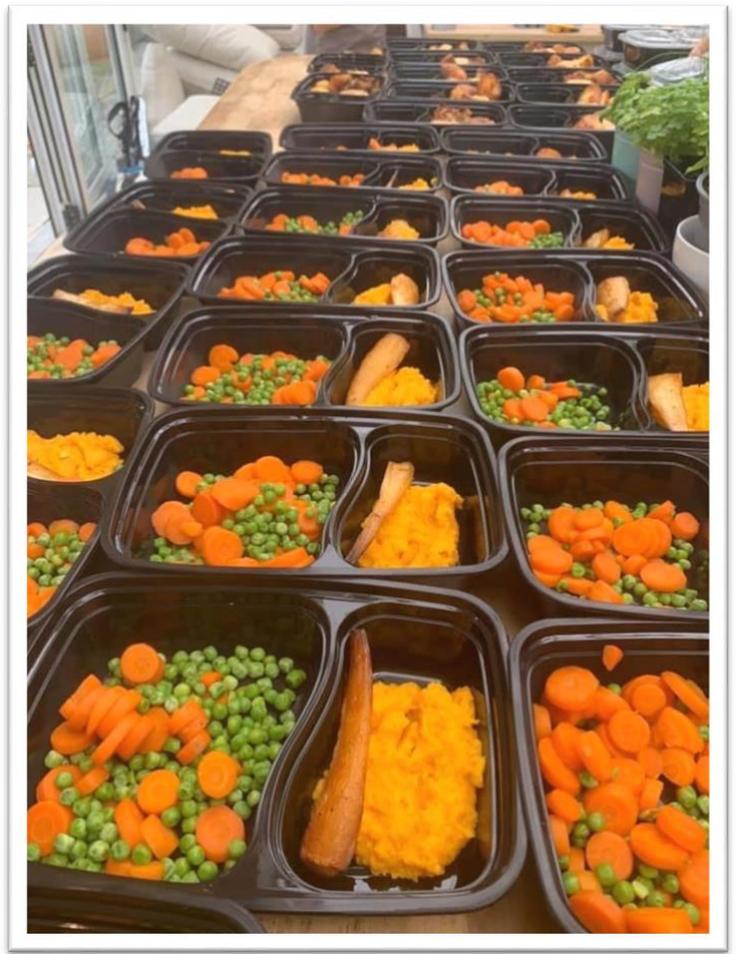
Sunday Lunch Club continues in Lockdown

It was fantastic to see that the team behind the Sunday Lunch club continued to be able to cook and deliver a full roast dinner with home made scones, clotted cream and Jam, rocky road and a goody bag full of treats and home made cards. Thanks go to Illuska Beaton and her friend Kathryn and their families for making sure this vital part of the outreach of St John's can still carry on during lockdown. Thank you to everyone who donated, it was very much appreciated.





Thank you



A second note on the Seychelles

A few points about the islands and their history.

Back in the 17th/18th century, The Seychelles were a French colony. Then during the various Napoleonic and subsequent wars, it became a British Colony, then reverted to France and finally became British. So, a good deal of the culture and language are French, overlain with old fashioned British Colonialism. In fact, at this time – 1960's -the colonials were leaving our old East African colonies and found the Seychelles well suited to their old life styles. However, during the 1860's, an earlier precursor to the current Beira patrols was set in motion to stop the slave trade. So, our warships sailed up and down the Indian Ocean, looking for slavers. If they found any, they could hardly take the slaves back to “somewhere in Africa”, so the solution was to set them free in the Seychelles. There are still collections of photographs of these unfortunates when they were released there. So, a further thread of culture was overlain over previous cultures, that of the displaced African. The local language became a mixture of corrupted patois with some English thrown in. Because of their displacement, they had lost all their religious and cultural roots and became a very fruitful ground for the establishment of a voodoo culture.

On arrival, we were told that we had been booked into a local hotel. One needs to remember that at this time, prior to the Seychelles becoming a popular tourist resort, there were very few hotels. The only way there was by sea, so there was little call for hotels. There were 2 hotels, the Beau Vallon – a beach front hotel with individual thatched cottages on the sea front – and then there was the Northolme. It was the Northolme into which we had been booked. It had an interesting history. The owner, a massive, authoritarian type called Mrs Broomhead, had inherited it from her husband, who had won it in a game of cards. It was in an idyllic location, perched on a rocky promontory, jutting out into the Indian Ocean. From the veranda, a coral reef could be seen in the distance and just outside was a private beach. On one occasion, from the veranda, we saw what looked like an oil slick in the water below. On closer inspection, it was apparent that it was a shoal of small fish, chased inshore by something larger and this was confirmed when the cook waded in with a bucket and brought out a pile of sardines.

The building itself had a large veranda, with a corrugated iron roof. So, whenever it rained, you heard a dreadful drumming noise. At night, we had no air-conditioning, but we did have a fan. This was about 5 foot in diameter and made a constant “whirring” noise whenever it was on. The veranda had a lovely polished wood floor and we soon realised why it was so well polished. The maids used to dance around the floor holding coconut husks between their toes. I can recommend it as a way of keeping fit and keeping the floor polished.

A last point. There was a bookcase on the veranda with a selection of books to read. Nothing very exciting, apart from one volume. Graham Greene had stayed there for a period after the war and he had written a book there and, once published, he had presented the hotel with a signed first edition. It often occurred to me that, were I to have been light fingered, I could have purloined that book – nobody would have noticed – and it would be now, on the Antiques Road Show, have been worth a fortune.

Malcolm Sutton

Keeping Busy during lockdown

During the first part of lockdown I did a lot of knitting for Romania (the Crochet Group knits garments for a charity in a very poor part of Romania). Unfortunately, this brought back a neck injury and I had to stop knitting. Instead I returned to a craft I used to love – cross stitch. I cannot remember why I stopped stitching some years ago but thought it would be good to start again. As with most crafters, I had unfinished projects and found this one which had just a few stitches left to do and then the backstitching (the outlining). Here it is! The frame is just the one on which I stitched it and will have it framed properly when I can get to the framers.

Janet Jeal



Recognise this tomb?

It intrigued me for years so during lockdown I have been putting the finishing touches to its history – and that of some of the family who lie in this vault and several other tombs in the churchyard and in the tower porch.

There is an astonishing number of the Bowry family connected with St John's: 29 were baptised, 2 were married, 39 (possibly more) were buried and 3 of them were church wardens.



Francis Bowry came to live in the Manor house in about 1742 and died in 1772. He was the first of 6 generations of the family to live in Old Malden to be buried at St John's, though the first of the whole family was his daughter Elizabeth who died in 1760. The last to be buried was his great grandson Francis, in 1901, though some of his great great, and great great grandchildren are also lying in the churchyard. The original Francis' only son – yet another Francis – had 13 children all of whom survived childhood and many of them lie in the churchyard. In this large vault alone there are six Bowry grandchildren, one great grandchild and three of their wives.

The whole story covers nineteen pages, and will be added to the church archive when we are at last allowed into our beloved St John's again.

Liz Pullen

A visit to South Africa

In 1998 we spent a few weeks in South Africa. It was only four years after the first elections in which all South Africans could vote, and the new government was eager to bring the country into the late twentieth century. Their priorities were to provide mains water, drainage, and electricity supply to every household as soon as possible. As an historian of electric power myself I had studied the development of electricity supply in Britain, which took about fifty years. I was eager to see how they set about achieving it in a much shorter time.

Through professional contacts I was put in touch with the engineers responsible for the new supply in Khyalitsa, a suburb of Cape Town, and Inanda, a township near Durban. Both were keen to show me the distribution arrangements in the streets and the installation in a house. The street arrangements reminded me of my childhood in Buckinghamshire, where almost every street had a line of poles with wires fixed on porcelain insulators high out of reach. The domestic arrangements, however, were quite different. The mains input was brought to a 'ready-board', a pre-fabricated unit with a meter, a main switch, fuses, and several sockets. Everything electrical in the rather small house, including the lights, was plugged in to one of the sockets. One lady, particularly pleased with her new installation, enthusiastically showed me her most recent acquisition - a refrigerator.

Both engineers were proud of what they had achieved, especially how they had trained local workers to do a good job with modern technology. In Cape Town I was told 'we are fortunate here - our staff are all good hard working Xhosa, not like those lazy Zulus up north.' In Durban I was told 'we are fortunate here - our staff are all good hard working Zulus, not like those lazy Xhosa down south'!

While in the country we also went to two very different churches. We stayed a few days with cousins in Johannesburg and worshipped one Sunday at their church, which included a few non-whites and would not have seemed out of place in London. For another Sunday we had asked a local black leader if we could worship with one of his churches. Once convinced we were serious he arranged for a minister to come to our hotel and take us to his church in a township some fifteen miles from central Durban. The service was in Zulu, but the hymn tunes were all familiar to us. Men sat on one side of the church and women on the other. A couple who spoke good English (most of the people spoke Zulu and Afrikaans) were ready to interpret for us, and others were eager to prompt them. After the service the whole congregation danced out of the building in a sort of holy conga. We were told afterwards that, except for a visiting missionary, we were the first white people who had ever been to that church. The people were proud of their church building, a simple structure but superior to many of the cardboard and corrugated iron homes nearby. There were pictures of Bible stories on the walls, and through the week they provided all-day child care for working parents.

Brian Bowers

What I am doing in Lock Down

Building my GWR Castle G1 Live Steam Engine



I have been building this steam engine for many years now, and have often joked that it will be done by Easter, but I never said which one, and far too many Easters have now passed!

It is a GWR Castle engine for Gauge 1 which is 2.5 times larger than 00. I have kept a diary, and this shockingly revealed that I started this in October 2010, but over the years have run into various problems. If assembled properly, then it will be a magnificent engine which will use meths to turn water into steam and so drive it around the track. I have seen one like this running quite beautifully, and so look forward to getting mine in motion. The kit comprises a good few hundred parts, many of which are surprisingly small, and these are all held together by well over a thousand nuts, bolts, washers and gaskets. And there are a few springs which can easily disappear anywhere. I assembled the tender quite quickly, but then discovered in 2013 that I had omitted some important detail transfers. In 2016 I assembled the boiler and steam fittings, and most of the chassis, as shown above, and this was pressure tested and certified. An important milestone. A few days ago I completely dismantled the tender, put on the transfers and am now in the process of re-assembly, so I am almost back where I was in 2010! I am determined to finish it this year, at least well before next Easter. I hope that the rest of the assembly proves easy!

Richard Burkett

Imagine ...

you are a young woman having a good time on holiday abroad. Your confidence is boosted by a presentable man who seems to fancy you. You say 'yes' twice too often and find yourself back at Heathrow, arrested for carrying drugs and later discover that you are pregnant. Your baby is delivered inside HMP Holloway and you are unable to care for your child properly. This is where Mothers' Union members step in. They bring with them all the clothes, equipment and toys you need to keep your baby with you in prison, and continue to do so over the length of time you are inside. They will also take the baby for an airing in a pram outside the walls.

Imagine ...

you are a remand prisoner inside HMP Belmarsh, one of the most notorious prisons in the country. You know yourself to be not guilty of the crime of which you are accused (about a third of those on remand have not committed any crime), but nevertheless you are awaiting your trial for months on end. While you are there, your family who live at the other end of the country come on public transport to visit you, tired out and anxious, bearing the stigma of having their husband/father inside. This too is where the Mothers' Union steps in. Members provide toys and play partners in the family room, and Christmas



gifts for the children, cups of tea and a listening ear for the women, parenting classes for the prisoners themselves for when they return to normality and a video camera so that the prisoners can see their children who cannot meet them directly.

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