

May 2020

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Views expressed in the magazine are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the church leadership or other church members.

Note from the Editors

Dear Readers,

You will appreciate that we are in very strange times indeed and our magazine reflects this situation as many of our usual contributions (such as Diary Dates) are not applicable and many of the advertisers' events will have been cancelled. We do, though, have more pages than usual for you to peruse as we are unable to distribute published copies at this time.

We have, however, wanted to bring you a magazine that continues to be varied and interesting. We have a lovely article on gardening which should help those who are lucky enough to be able to take solace in their own, open space. Our poetry contributions remind us about the good things that still go on every day, and if you feel in a reflective mood, there's an article that invites you to think about how our world might change, as well as thoughts by our Rector on the wonderful response of willing neighbours in Winchcombe. Christian Aid week will take on a different stance this year but we can still support the charity from home. If lessons are to be learned from the plague and pestilence of the past, we have articles on those too, alongside another superb article of historical interest about our famous local abbot.

Happy reading and stay safe!

The Editorial team



Jo Rees

Lynne Horton

Jennie Davies

Cathy Wilcock

(most of us but not all!)

Foreward: Reflections from the Rectory

We are now in the second month of lockdown. We are unable to meet each other face-to-face. All non-essential travel has been banned. Most businesses have been closed down. Our church buildings are shut. As of late April, over 20 000 people are known to have died in UK hospitals because of coronavirus.



But there are signs of hope. Not the least of these is that we seem to have passed the peak of viral transmission and consequent deaths. Without the lockdown, an estimated 500 000 people would have died. Every death is a tragedy, and the bare statistics mask thousands of stories about beloved individuals made in the image of God.

Nevertheless, the lockdown has prevented a very bad situation from becoming far, far worse. So I want to celebrate the fact that the vast majority of us have followed the instruction to stay at home, protect the NHS, and save lives. And I want to celebrate the fact that we have done it cheerfully, in good humour and out of the desire to care for one another.

Winchcombe has been extremely impressive in the way people have rallied around and looked out for each other. Groups like the Winchcombe Help Force have shared #viralkindness with everyone in the community. We have shared books, toys and jigsaws. We have sewn gowns and masks. We have gone shopping for our neighbours. We have kept an eye on those who are self-isolating. Despite the lockdown, we have become even more of a community than we were before.

But there is still a long way to go until this is over. We do not want to run the risk of the virus getting out of control again. The media speculation in the middle of April about an imminent end to lockdown was decidedly unhelpful.

On Easter Day, Christians celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We continue to celebrate Easter for fifty days, right up until the feast of Pentecost at the end of this month. Every Sunday is a celebration of Easter.

In his Easter sermon, the Archbishop of Canterbury said this: Even in the dark days of this Easter we can feed on hope. We can dream of what our country and our world will look like after the pandemic.



*Archbishop of
Canterbury,
Justin Welby*

That means continuing to look after one another and continuing to seek the common good. 'After so much suffering, so much heroism from key workers and the NHS, we cannot be content to go back to what was before as if all is normal. There needs to be a resurrection of our common life.'

Even in the middle of uncertainty, fear, despair and isolation, Justin Welby reminded us, we are not alone. 'In the new life of the resurrection of Jesus, we dare to have faith in life before death.'

Your churches are alive and active, even though the church buildings are closed. We are continuing to worship together online. We are helping to coordinate practical care and support. We are offering prayer for the community and for the world. We are proclaiming our continuing hope in the resurrection of Jesus.

Do contact me (johnpaul@winchcombeparish.org.uk) or any of the other clergy in Winchcombe if there is anything we can do to help you.

Blessings,

JP

Coronavirus

The national Church of England has published guidance to churches about coronavirus. It is based on the official government advice from Public Health England. The Church guidance can be found at www.churchofengland.org/coronavirus

Christian Aid Prayer



Love never fails;

Love protects

Loving God, strengthen our innermost beings
with your love that bears all things,
even the weight of this global pandemic.

Watching and waiting,
help us to keep our gaze fixed on you,
as we look out for our neighbours
near and far.

Instil in our shaken souls the belief and hope
that all things are possible with your creative love:
for strangers to become friends;
for science to source solutions;
for resources to be generously shared;
so everyone, everywhere, has what they need.

May your perfect love that knows no borders
cast out the fear and selfishness that divides.

May your love that never ends
be our comfort, strength and guide
for the wellbeing of all.

From the Registers Funerals

Robert Fry
Joy Jackson

The Front Cover

We are very grateful to Jules Redgers for submitting this month's photograph for our front cover.

Please keep your photographs coming! It's lovely to have a colourful seasonal picture of Winchcombe on the cover; not necessarily of the church.



Our Parish Magazine



We welcome any contributions to our magazine but **please remember to send them to us by the 10th of each month, using "Word"**. Unfortunately, copy submitted after this date will not be able to be included until the following month.

The Editorial Team would welcome any suggestions, ideas or contributions. Contact us at magazine@winchcombeparish.org or speak to one of the team.

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Visit our website for weekly bulletin, forthcoming events, church calendar, music at St Peter's and much more.

Selected services at St Peter's can now be heard via <https://myradiostream.com/winchstpeters>

Atlas, by UA Fanthorpe

There is a kind of love called maintenance
Which stores the WD40 and knows when to use it;
Which checks the insurance, and doesn't forget
The milkman; which remembers to plant bulbs;
Which answers letters; which knows the way
The money goes; which deals with dentists
And Road Fund Tax and meeting trains,
And postcards to the lonely; which upholds
The permanently rickety elaborate
Structures of living, which is Atlas.
And maintenance is the sensible side of love,
Which knows what time and weather are doing
To my brickwork; insulates my faulty wiring;
Laughs at my dryrotten jokes; remembers
My need for gloss and grouting; which keeps
My suspect edifice upright in air,
As Atlas did the sky.

From UA Fanthorpe's Selected Poems, published by Enitharmon Press,
www.enitharmon.co.uk © Estate of UA Fanthorpe 2018

Perhaps this kind of love is especially important during the strange time we're living through. This is one of my favourite poems, by one of my favourite school teachers. UA Fanthorpe was one of my A-level English Literature teachers at Cheltenham Ladies College, which I attended just for the Sixth Form. In those far-flung days, we had no idea that she would later become a much-loved poet. After 16 years of teaching, she left to become in her words 'a middle-aged drop-out', and found her distinctive poetic voice, which led to ever increasing admiration from critics, academics and the wider public.



The Farnese Atlas

Jennie Davies

Inspiration from History

As a young lad growing up in Derbyshire's robust Peak District, we often explored neighbouring villages, usually on Bank Holidays. I remember Eyam very well.

In the summer of 1665, a flea- infested bundle of cloth arrived from London, where bubonic plague was running amok, for the tailor, George Vicars. He soon began coughing, and in a few days he was dead. Other villagers soon followed suit, until they were dying in droves.

The Rector of Eyam was newly- arrived William Mompesson, aged 27, not long out of Cambridge, and taking over from a Puritan incumbent. He realised the imminent danger, and decided the village must go into quarantine; it was no easy task to persuade his fellow villagers of this necessity, for there was still a high risk of death, but he stuck to his guns, although he agreed to his children being evacuated to nearby Sheffield. The current Rector of Eyam recently described Mompesson's determination as *...an act of courage almost beyond comprehension.*



Food was left on the barren hillside, paid for with coins sterilised with vinegar in the local well.

Over the next 14 months, a total of 273 people perished, including entire families, but the village's actions prevented the disease from moving into the surrounding areas and the cities of Manchester, Sheffield and Derby. But Mompesson paid a high price for his conviction: his wife, Catherine was one of those who succumbed to the plague. In London, 100,000 were killed by its venom.

There have been several works of literature written about Eyam, among them the novel *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks, and a fine play, *The Roses of Eyam*, by Don Taylor. I once had the good fortune to direct this play. We performed it outside, and for background we travelled to Eyam, arriving in a snow storm one dark Sunday. All round the village there are boards outside the dwellings bearing the poignant names of who lived and died there, so the kids in the play were able to trace their own character's history, which fuelled great interest. Directing such a mighty cast of sixty was like producing an epic, with white crosses growing in number as the action progressed, until they covered a huge area, rather like the final scene from *Oh, What A Lovely War!*

The legacy of those Eyam villagers is more than inspiring for us, in our current challenge with Covid 19. As Albert Camus wrote in his superb novel, "La Peste/ The Plague": "What is true of all the evils in the world is true of plague as well. It helps men rise above themselves." It shows how we can transcend a crisis with humanity.

When Eyam had finally rid itself and its brave inhabitants of the wretched plague, the church rang out its bells; it will be ready to do the selfsame when we have defeated Coronavirus. I suspect every church in the land might follow suit...



Chris Haslam

Late Spring and Early Summer Flowers

As I write, we are entering a period of virtual lockdown, but at least there is something most of us can do – get out into and enjoy our own gardens. Being outside, sowing and planting will be a welcome antidote to the relentless bad news and to near-confinement in our homes away from our friends.



May is, in my view, the loveliest month in any garden – better even than June. Part of its joy is the wonderful freshness and variety of spring foliage, with so many different layers of green. Copper beech leaves are a soft rosy-green as they unfurl, so much more attractive than their harsh purple later in the summer. Alchemilla mollis buds are an intense lime green, as is the youthful foliage of philadelphus, a perfect complement to its creamy white flowers. In a sheltered south or west-facing spot, the large and graceful Philadelphus 'Belle Etoile' will fill your garden with scent. For a smaller garden, you might prefer the more compact Philadelphus 'Manteau d'Hermine'. That looks particularly effective surrounded by the tiny blue flowers and white mottled leaves of Brunnera 'Jack Frost'.



Another shade of green through the borders is provided by the glaucous strappy leaves of late tulips and emerging alliums. One of my favourite tulips is the May-flowering 'Black Hero', which is almost as attractive in bud as in flower: dark purple stripes against grey. Other late flowerers are the blowsy pink 'Angelique' and the stripy viridiflora tulips, 'Spring Green' and scarlet flecked 'Flaming Spring Green'.

May is the key season for alliums, again offering lovely variety. Most familiar are probably 'Purple Sensation' and large-headed *A. cristophii*, but you can also make statements with a couple of towering *A. giganteum*, or the shorter *Allium schubertii*, which opens like great star bursts.

In damp, shady corners, lily-of-the-valley will be releasing their sweet fragrance, while woodlands will be carpeted by bluebells.



These are mostly our native deep blue *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, which was voted Britain's favourite flower in 2002. In gardens, however, you are increasingly likely to see the taller, paler spires of the Spanish

interloper, *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, which was introduced to Britain in 1680 as an ornamental garden plant.

Hedgerows will be awash with wild carrot or Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), but these umbellifers can also be a pleasing background to other planting in the May garden. Choose, for example, *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing'



Queen Anne's lace

(a great favourite in Chelsea Flower Show gardens), which has deep purple leaves and pink tinged flowers. *Orlaya grandiflora*, with flowerheads like paper doilies, needs to be planted in good clumps for maximum impact, as do the pinprick heads of *Ammi visnaga*. For height, plant *Ammi majus*. All these umbellifers can be sown in the autumn or early winter for a splendid May show.

Vanessa Berridge



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MABEL



You'll all have heard of Mack and Mabel; well, after MACS, (Mike's Alphabet of Church Speak), comes MABEL, (Mike's Adventures in Bible Land!)

This month Mike continues his adventures with some more characters from the Old Testament.

A Man after my own Heart

The second book of Samuel is a slight misnomer because Samuel died towards the end of the first book but it continues to tell of the process he set in motion, the rule of King David. David continues the process of making a nation and that is not an easy task at all. He faces opposition, warfare and rebellion throughout his life as documented in the pages of this book. But as well as the many battles we will read of Jerusalem becoming the capital and meet characters like his son, Solomon, and Nathan the prophet. Never a dull moment here!

David is a strong ruler without doubt but absolutely dedicated to God though he is no paragon of virtue and gets things wrong on a number of occasions but his saving grace is that he's willing to admit to these and make amends as far as he is able. We can see why it is that God chose him as king in the first place and why it is that God loves him so much. The most obvious sign of this is the covenant God makes with him; that his descendants would continue to rule his kingdom forever. For Christians, this promise means a lot too because, of course, it is through David's line that the human ancestry of Jesus comes. And the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, where David was anointed by Samuel is a reminder of this link – and the link with Ruth too!

Kings and Kings and Kings

Through the two books of Kings and the two books of Chronicles, we are treated to an almost whirlwind tour of hundreds of years of Israel's history. We start with Solomon, David's son, with his legendary wisdom and wealth, who builds



Sebastiano del Piombo (about 1485–1547)

'The Judgement of Solomon', about 1506–11

the first temple in Jerusalem but this is the end of one nation. After his death the kingdom is divided into Israel in the north and Judah in the south. David's line continues in Judah but not in Israel. And the split is only the start of the problems!

As we read of many, many kings, the refrain that keeps repeating is that X 'did what was right in the eyes of the Lord,' or, 'did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.' There are good kings and bad kings, good times and bad times but, overall, there are more bad than good and we read of a steadily declining situation in both kingdoms and even war between them at times. People are forgetting God's ways, worshipping other gods, even forgetting that these lands are God's gift to them. Prophets arise to point out what is going on but largely they are ignored or even persecuted. As you read, you become more and more aware that this cannot continue or, more correctly, that God will not allow it to continue.

Disaster!

We knew it was coming; God's prophets had been warning people for generations by now. God's people in the land he had given them are increasingly turning away from him. Their call to be a blessing for the whole world is being ignored and so God acts. First the northern kingdom, Israel, and then Judah in the south are invaded and defeated. All those who had exercised power, religious or political, are carried away into exile; from Israel to Assyria and from Judah to Babylon. Those who remain are left leaderless.

Not only this but much of the infrastructure of the nations is destroyed. In particular the walls of Jerusalem are razed and the temple destroyed. Everything that marked out these lands and these people as being special in any way is eliminated. It looks like the end of the dream. It must have seemed that God had totally abandoned the people – and even worse, they knew it was their own fault!

This is where the books of Kings and Chronicles leave the story, right at the peak of the disaster. The next book, Ezra, jumps forward many years. So what happened in the interim? What happened to the exiles in their far-off lands? To find out about this most fascinating episode we have to turn to the prophets.

Changes

The Exile was a devastating happening for the Jewish people and, initially, must have looked like the end for them as God's people. But it didn't turn out like that, well not entirely! The first thing that becomes clear is that God had not abandoned them; he still has messages for the exiles through the voices of his prophets. And the messages are not of condemnation but of patience. The time of exile became a huge learning experience through which the people began to know God in very different ways.

Jeremiah calls the people to build their lives and seek the welfare of the cities where they are in exile – certainly a new concept! With no Temple, the people find new ways of worship and we find the beginnings of synagogues, a feature of Judaism to this day. The people start to mix with and work alongside the Babylonians, many, like Daniel, rising to high office. We also start to see Babylonian names appearing among the Jews. The people are developing a much wider view of God at work in the whole world.

But the prophets continue to promise that the exile will not last for ever. And then in 538BC, King Cyrus frees the Jewish people. The people have not won their freedom, they recognise it as a gift from God but through the hands of a gentile. What a shock – the world is a different place now!

Mike Holloway



Abbot Richard Kidderminster of Winchcombe



Abbot Kidderminster, the most famous of Winchcombe's abbots, was born in 1461 (or possibly 1462) probably in Kidderminster. Like many young men destined for the monastic life, he became a novice in Winchcombe at the age of fifteen, and an acolyte and subdeacon at about eighteen.

His outstanding qualities already recognised, Abbot Twyning sent him to study in Oxford, at Gloucester College with which Winchcombe had links. He became a lifelong scholar, and even after his election as abbot at the early age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight, he continued to study and encourage learning in the Winchcombe Abbey monastery. He both arranged lectures and lectured regularly himself, not unaware of the impact his rule was having on the community. He also started to research the history of his monastery, although this research document was sadly destroyed in the Great Fire of London.

It was fine to see how the bretheren devoted themselves to sacred learning, how they made use of Latin even in their familiar conversations, and how the cloister at Winchcombe at the time, had all the appearance of a young university, though on a minute scale. Added to this, regular observance was so ardently observed among us, and brotherly charity was so honoured, that you would have said that there could not possibly be another such family so united, so harmonious, yet so small, in the whole of England. The good God alone knows what a joy it was to me to be immersed in sacred studies with my bretheren in the cloister.

Quite early in his tenure as abbot, Kidderminster was recognised as a leader and became involved in royal service and politics. In 1492, he was the general collector of a benevolence fund levied on Benedictine monasteries for the war in France, under Henry VII.

His responsibilities took him to Rome on several occasions: in 1512 with Sylvester de Giglis of Worcester, the Prior of St John and the later saint, Bishop John Fisher of Rochester for the Lateran Council. It seems he had already been to Rome some years before, since he was reported as having preached before the Pope.

In 1513 he was appointed visitor to a number of monasteries, including all those in the north of England. On a visit to the great abbey of Durham he was happy to claim the role of Winchcombe in the re-establishment of monasticism in the north east, and persuaded the abbot to check his documents and find that the claims of *little Winchcombe* were true.

Richard Kidderminster knew and corresponded with many scholars of the time with an interest in the new humanist learning. It is not clear what his views were on many of the issues of the time: he wrote against Luther's attack on indulgences, and upheld clerical privileges, but considered that the King's divorce be referred for decision in England rather than Rome.

Since he died just before the issue of the King's divorce and the dissolution of the monasteries came to the fore – the date is uncertain – he did not have to take sides in what became difficult and dangerous disputes. His reputation as the most distinguished abbot of Winchcombe remains.

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Choral Evensong

Katherine Dienes-Williams is the organist and director of music at Guildford Cathedral. As churches all over the country closed late in March as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, she posted the following on her Facebook page. Her words encapsulate what all of us church musicians strive to achieve, some of the challenges we face, and optimism that one day our places of worship will again be *decorated with song*.



The rhythm, structure and sound of our Choral Evensong has currently fallen silent. Yet the walls of our Cathedral continue to echo and hum with the notes of countless services, individuals' voices blending together, soaring upwards, amongst and between our arches, into the space where they rest in the air, circulate, live and resonate. The building is not silent. We have decorated it with song, clothed it in prayer and melody and blessed it. Its heart beats on. It is warm and glowing.

Before the closure of our Cathedral today, I stood in our empty building and reflected what this means. I remembered walking out of what I was fairly sure would be our last Choral Evensong for a while last Monday evening, only just over a week ago, one of our beautiful men's voices services. It was peaceful, idyllic and prayerful. Our community gathered in both prayer and humility, offering what we could to God. As I walked out, I took note yet again of the words I have encountered now thousands of times here, words sculpted above the south transept doorway – 'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord' – those striking words from Psalm 150. These words gave me great comfort as they always have done – to give of myself in prayer and praise and to inspire others to do the same. This beautiful structure of simple prayer we call Choral Evensong is such a

multi-faceted thing but it is always there for us. Strip away the layers – and there are many – children arriving from school whom you have rehearsed, needing refreshment, robing, choir men and women arriving from all points by all means of transport, delays, lateness, illness, safeguarding, missing music, people absent, hustle, bustle, rehearsal, line up - and finally the moment comes when as one, we move in procession into the space and offer ourselves. We 'let everything that hath breath praise the Lord'. It is achingly beautiful. A moment in time, held in time, held now inside our closed buildings, whose doors will open yet again and the internal song will once again be revealed to the world as it heals, overcomes and is filled with love and hope for the future.

As members of Christ's body, it's vital that we continue to look out for one another, particularly those who are especially vulnerable or isolated. So be kind to each other. Pick up the phone. Hold one another in prayer. The next few weeks and months will feel very strange. We might feel anxious or afraid. But Christians are always people of hope. At Easter we will celebrate the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead.

(Words of Katherine Dienes-Williams, organist and director of music at Guildford Cathedral)

Andrew Horton



Guildford Cathedral

Friends of St Peter's Church Winchcombe

Registered Charity 1046434

Tower Illumination Request

Date(s) requested

Occasion(s):

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email: Telephone:

Donation (£5 minimum per evening) £.....cash or cheque to "Friends of St Peter's Church Winchcombe". Please read below and sign and return this slip with your remittance to St Peter's Centre, Gloucester Street, Winchcombe, GL54 5LU, at least two weeks before the requested date.

Please tick as appropriate

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Signed:..... Date:

Notes:

- *In exceptional circumstances the Friends' Committee reserve the right to decline a request.*
- *Dates are not exclusive and in the event of more than one request for a particular date the later applicant will, where practicable, be informed and may be offered an alternative.*



Christian Aid week 10-16 May 2020

Our planet is changing. Some parts of the world are feeling the effects of climate change more than others. People living in poverty are on the frontline of this climate crisis.

In Kenya droughts have become more frequent and more intense. As long ago as 2017, the Kenyan Government declared a national drought emergency. There, 2.7 million people do not have enough food. Without reliable water sources, many communities are struggling to survive. Rivers are bone dry; crops wither in the fields.

Drought forces people to walk further and further to collect water. Elderly women and children are especially vulnerable: they can face robbery or conflict as people battle over scarce resources. Cows, sheep and goats become weaker, so much so that they cannot produce milk or be sold.

Rose's story Rose, a grandmother of 67, is an experienced village leader. Every morning, after nothing to eat, Rose walks for six hours to collect water. Her full jerry cans can weigh as much as 40 pounds.

When Rose was a child the rain was reliable and there was plenty of food. She tries hard to give her grandchildren the kind of life she remembers from when she was a girl, when the river was full and harvests were bountiful.

There is an earth dam just minutes away from Rose's home. With over 3,000 people in the area in dire need, every drop of water in the dam has dried up. Rose and her community need a bigger dam, to capture rainfall and provide a long-lasting source of water for their families.

Florence's story Like Rose, Florence lives in a drought-stricken part of Kenya. When she was widowed a few years ago there was no water to grow crops, and her children were hungry.

Florence is courageous, kind and a fighter. With help from Christian Aid's partner on the ground in Kenya, Florence and her community built a dam, just 30 minutes from her house.

Using water from the dam Florence can grow tomatoes, onions and chilies. Her children eat healthy, nutritious vegetables, and she has enough left to sell. Florence also uses the dam to keep honeybees. The microclimate of plants created by the dam means the bees do not need to search long distances for nectar. She sells rich, golden honey for cash at the market – 30kg every season.

Ways to mark Christian Aid Week

Despite there being no House-to-House Collection this year there are still ways we can mark Christian Aid Week:

- Look out in the press and other media for photographs of Rose and Florence and more stories of these two remarkable women.
- Please donate generously directly through the website www.christianaid.org.uk or call 020 7523 2269 to donate by 'phone.
- Have fun with friends or family by downloading a Quiz from the Christian Aid website - 30 cryptic clues about TV programmes. A minimum donation of £1 is suggested.
- Pray - perhaps using the prayer on page 5
- Watch out for events in Winchcombe later in the year - maybe a Big Brekkie or an Afternoon Tea.

Ann Sutcliffe

Notes from the March 2020 PCC Meeting

The PCC met at the back of St Peter's one week before the Covid-19 lockdown. The agenda was re-ordered to include a long discussion on the plans relating to the Coronavirus. The Parish Leadership team had spent three hours that morning discussing essential leadership (and cover), hygiene, worship and pastoral support. At this meeting it was agreed that where possible information would be disseminated by email or text; neighbours would be asked to pass on a paper copy to those without these systems [NB: This is now in place]. The Pastoral team had taken a proposal to the medical centre that, along with Winchcombe Town Council, we work together to support vulnerable people in the community.

Simon Andrews, as Deputy Chair, took over the meeting to update us on JP's sermon of 16th February - he noted that this was received with concern by some and approval by others, and that there has been a period of reconciliation, contrition and apology; JP is taking advice from the Diocese and Churchwardens. Simon noted that it needs to be recognised that those people who are still not happy should voice their concerns, but hopefully we can move on in a spirit of reconciliation; he asked the PCC to move forward in supporting the Clergy. The meeting agreed.

Geof Adlington reported that planned giving is 5% down against budget for the first two months of the year, and advertising is also down. Income will drop further while visitors and collections are down in the next few months. The PCC approved the 2019 accounts. A new hard drive has been installed in the office computer (which now works much faster) and a new laptop has been purchased for Mark Mulley.

A range of issues relating to fabric were discussed: The Friends have kindly agreed to fund new display boards and the renovation of the St Peter's porch gates. Rachel Murray and Mark Mulley have had discussions on the design of an improved

Parish website and have agreed a good quote; this has been put on hold for now. A group of five is looking at the roof and drainage work (and funding) required under the Stanley Pontlarge Quinquennial. It is hoped that work can start at the end of this year/beginning of next. New oil filled candles have been ordered, funded by donation. Rob Stone noted that a record must be kept of the state and maintenance of trees in Churchyards. The trees in St Peter's are regularly inspected (organised by the Town Council); Rob has asked for a quote for the trees at Christchurch.

It was noted that all members of the PCC need to complete online safeguarding training.

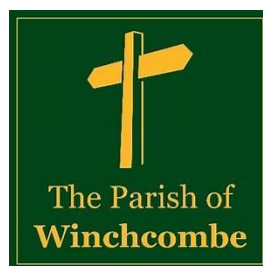
Abbie Andrews informed the meeting that she is part of a group looking at the environmental impact of the Church through the Eco Church initiative. So far, they have looked at issues such as documents from the Diocese, heating, lighting, recycling and some of the doorways. There is a plan to have an eco-garden outside.

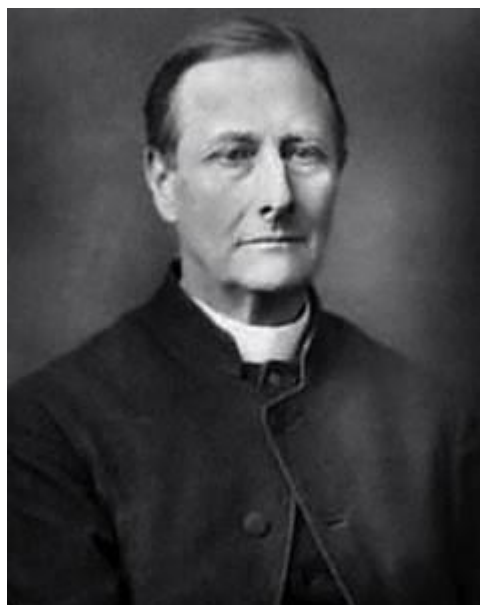
A letter has been received saying that although the majority of respondents were in favour of the increase in pupil numbers at Winchcombe Abbey School, it has been decided not to go ahead with the increase in 2021.

2020 PCC Meetings: 18th May (online), 20th July,
21st September, 16th November

2020 APCM: Post Meeting: Postponed until further notice

Sara Collins
PCC Secretary





Hymn Writer of the Month:

Sabine Baring-Gould

(1834 – 1926)

While singing hymns, you cannot help noticing the names of the writers and musicians at the top of the page. The name Sabine Baring Gould is outstanding – just as a name – and his works are as curious as his name.

First, Sabine, - he was called this after his great uncle Edward Sabine, an arctic explorer. There is a connection to the Baring banking family and his Gould ancestor descended from a crusader of 1220.

He was born just outside Exeter but his parents found life in Devon boring, and they travelled the world with young Sabine in tow, returning to England when he was fifteen. His formal education was sketchy but he spoke five languages fluently, was very bright and went to Clare College, Cambridge. Time passed, he travelled and taught and it was not until he was 34 that he became a curate in Horbury, Yorkshire, a mill town. While there he became enamoured of 16-year-old Grace Taylor, but did not take her to wife until he had sent her away for 2 years to be educated. She bore him 15 children and died in 1916. On her tombstone he had placed the Latin motto for 'half my soul'.

In 1872 his father died and he inherited estates in Lew Trenchard in Devon, where he became Squarson in 1881 and remained there until he died.

His written work is prolific – there are well over 1200 publications to his name. He wrote novels, fairy stories, books of sermons, 'Curious Myths of the Middle Ages', stories about werewolves, and about Dartmoor- he collected songs of Dartmoor, changing some of the 'rude' words for publication, but keeping the genuine in his notebooks, (Cecil Sharpe

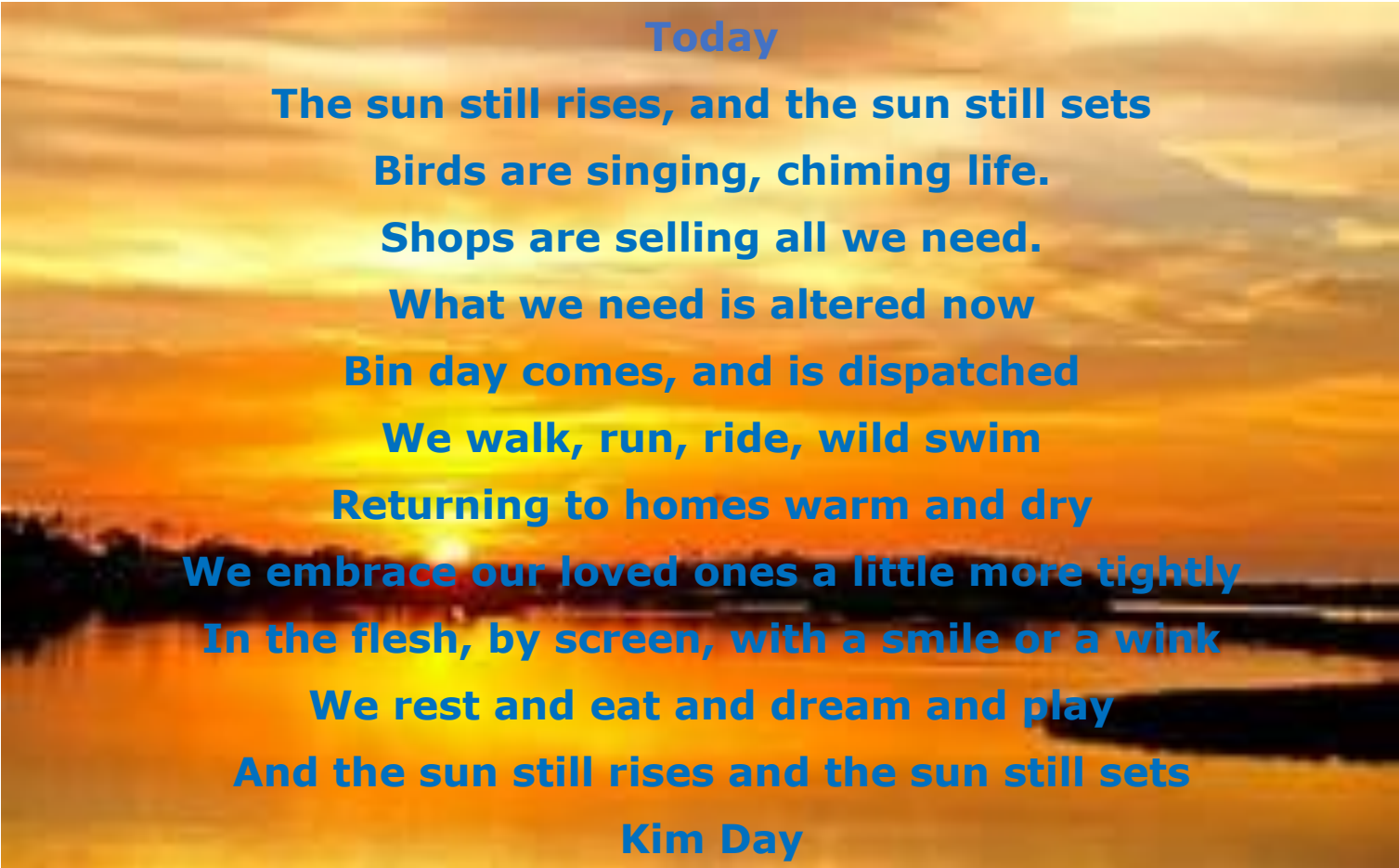
dedicated one of his own books to him), *The Lives of the Saints* -in 16 volumes - and of course hymns.

Perhaps his most famous hymn (which does not appear in our current hymn books) is *Onward Christian Soldiers*, he also wrote 'Now the Day is over', 'Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow', 'We weigh the anchor, spread the sail', and translated the Basque hymn 'Gabriel's message' into 'The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came'; popular in its time was 'On the Resurrection Morning, Soul and Body meet'. There are another 50 odd, some written in German and others translated from German and other languages.

There is a story that he inspired George Bernard Shaw to write 'Pygmalion'.

This is a very potted history. He has rather fallen out of fashion these days and the Sabine Baring Gould Society disbanded itself in traditional form in 2018 and is closed to new members.

Penelope Kain



Today

The sun still rises, and the sun still sets
Birds are singing, chiming life.
Shops are selling all we need.
What we need is altered now
Bin day comes, and is dispatched
We walk, run, ride, wild swim
Returning to homes warm and dry
We embrace our loved ones a little more tightly
In the flesh, by screen, with a smile or a wink
We rest and eat and dream and play
And the sun still rises and the sun still sets

Kim Day

Joseph Of Arimathea

Every year, when Easter comes around, it reawakens my interest in Joseph of Arimathea.

The passing of time has obscured many of the details about Joseph: we believe he was Mary's uncle, and therefore the great-uncle of Christ. He was a wealthy merchant who lived in Judea, in the town of Arimathea. The bible tells us that after the Crucifixion, he went to Pilate and requested that Christ's body should be released to him. All four gospels tell us that he then provided his own tomb, in his garden just outside Jerusalem, to receive Christ's body.

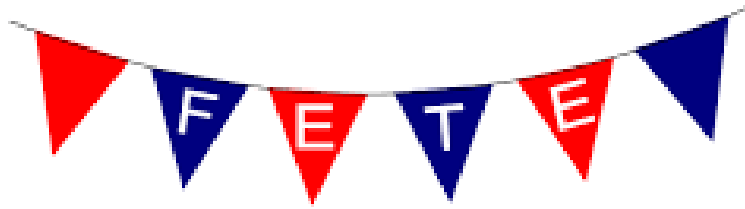
The really intriguing part of Joseph's story though, is the legend of his visit to England, and more specifically to Glastonbury in Somerset. Unlikely as it sounds, Joseph could well have travelled in pursuit of tin – there are very few places on the planet where tin is mined, and Cornwall was an important source. Ancient tin ingots of Cornish origin have been provenanced in Israel, quite recently. And Cornwall has long cherished the legend, that the young Jesus accompanied him.

So was it after a journey to Cornwall that he travelled further north, to Somerset? Other legends abound - that Joseph placed his walking stick into the ground, and it immediately took root, as the Holy Thorn. That after the Crucifixion, he brought the Holy Grail to England, where many seek it to this day – that's another story. And, of course, this is what prompted William Blake, centuries later, to ask "And did those feet, in ancient time, walk upon England's mountains green?". I would have to throw in my lot with Blake, and say yes, it's a lovely thing to believe.



Master of Delft, The Deposition: Right Hand Panel from Triptych: Scenes from the Passion of Christ, about 1510

Jo Rees



St Peter's Summer Fête

It may come as no surprise, but the decision has now been made to cancel this year's Summer fete planned for 4 July. This is another blow to the Parish primarily from the perspective of losing a fun community event, but as well the loss of income supporting wider activities in Winchcombe.

I shall be looking at re-starting planning for a 2021 fete in January next year and hope that I can look forward to the levels of support that I was getting this year, for which I offer my sincere thanks.

If you felt you would like to make a donation in lieu, then do please post an envelope (titled Fete 2020) with your offering into St Peter's Centre or via on-line banking using the following details:

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Sort Code: 30-91-87

Account Number: 69199668

Simon Andrews Organiser St Peter's Fête

fete@winchcombeparish.org.uk

07842 168451

Lost and Found

A rant for our times.

Strange times are upon us.

Has the planet done this to us on purpose? It's as if we said: No, we can't limit our activities, we don't want to use expensive renewable energy. We need choices, choices, more choices. We need to travel, it broadens the mind. We want to live at a fast pace and pack everything in. We want money. Make things on the cheap, sell dear -that's the way.



Poor people? Well that's hard luck. We'll do what we can but....Pollution? Well isn't it awful but what can we do? It's not our responsibility. The government must be frugal- we don't want to pay too much tax, we'll avoid it if we can. Public sector? Who needs it?

No planet- we can't change, we won't change!

And the planet has replied. No? Well here's a virus. Practise.

So here we are. It is a hard lesson indeed. All over the world people are ill, people are dying. Humankind is fighting back but I fear we are losing. We have no defence. Finding one is taking time and meanwhile society is slowed to a standstill. We have lost our freedom to go where we please and do as we like. We are losing our reliance on the cult of the celebrity. Deprived of an audience who exactly are they? What are they for? They have no real talent to entertain or do anything useful.

Some talk of a police state, totalitarianism but like naughty children, if we misbehave we will be punished.

And boy, is Mother Nature punishing us. We have lost our way of life. Some have lost their income. Some have lost their lives.

But consider. What have we gained? What can we say we've found?

Well I think we have found that we cannot do exactly as we please, that we must consider others. That's a hard lesson for some. Children have found the company of their parents and parents their children. Many have found a creative side. We are realising who and what is truly important to us, getting our priorities in order.

Footballers and celebs 0, NHS a million!

We have found leisure. Most of all we have found time and we have found peace.

I know that some are struggling in small flats and bedsits, with no money for food, living with unpleasant people, but we realise their plight as never before and seek to help. Our government, which will gladly spend on vanity projects, roads, but is penny pinching about the things that matter, has stepped up and is actually doing some good. Even party politicking seems to have stopped and what a relief that is! The air is noticeably cleaner in big towns and cities. Deprived of the chance to go shopping we only buy what we need.

The economy you cry, what about the economy? Well do we really need to be constantly growing? Why can't things just tick along, prices and therefore wages remain constant? Why do we have to run things for the benefit of share holders and hedge funds? It has always puzzled me why we make more and more money, pay proportionately more in tax, have so much more, yet governments claim they have less to spend and the things they used to provide are either gone or are now run for profit by private companies.

If we have found a new set of values from this catastrophe well, so much the better, a lesson hard learned. Will it endure? Who knows. The cynics would say not, the rest of us can only hope and pray. That's all we can do. And stay safe. Stay at home!

Lynne Horton

Winchcombe Shops

Some of Winchcombe's shops are still open for business - and would love to help you through this difficult time.

<http://trythehighstreet.com/tthsmap/>



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Vale & Hills Butchers
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Winchcombe Flowers
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North's Bakery 01242 602416

Keeling Newsagents 01242 602440
keelingsnewsagents@btconnect.com

Layton's Fish & Chips
01242 652 222

Hayles Fruit Farm

01242 602123 info@HaylesFruitFarm.co.uk

Food Fanatics

01242 604466 info@food-fanatics.co.uk

You can also order from Broadway Wine Company, should you need a tipples!
01242 603 463

Albert Camus and *La Peste* (The Plague)



Albert Camus was born in Algiers in 1913, and brought up in North Africa. He had a number of jobs, including goalkeeper for the Algiers soccer team. He came to France, and took up journalism. During the German Occupation he was active in the French Resistance, and became editor of the clandestine newspaper, *Combat*. He published *L'Etranger* in 1942. *La Peste*, (The Plague), his novel of a plague taking possession of the city of Oran, was written in 1947; it won the Prix des Critiques that same year. In 1957 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. In January 1960 he was killed one Sunday evening in a car accident on his way back to Paris after a weekend at the house in the country he had bought with his Prize money. He was 46.

La Peste is a compelling story, but it is also symbolic, not least of the German Occupation of France, against which he had fought so heroically during the war. Its main protagonist is a doctor, Bernard Rieux, who believes, throughout, that *l'essentiel est de bien faire son métier*, (the only thing worth doing is to do your job well). He combats the plague unceasingly, shuns any talk of hero status, and Camus shows us his thinking, his beliefs, his *raison d'être*, his humanity, his love for fellow human beings.

Around him, other characters react in different ways, as we are all doing at this moment, with optimism, with complacency, with ignorance, but slowly a spirit of dogged resistance emerges, as people who have nothing in common band together to treat the victims and fight the epidemic by improving hygiene - again, just as we are doing today. The parallels between Camus' fictitious plague and our Coronavirus are uncannily accurate; as with all great literature, his novel asks what would we do in the same situation- the very question we are being faced with at the moment. What qualities emerge in human beings, for good or

evil, in appalling circumstances we did not cause and cannot control?

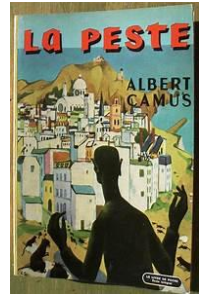
Rieux is a practical man of medicine; he works on, not through some higher ideology, but because he is a doctor: expert, undramatic, stubborn, tireless until near the end. *There was no question of him taking a day off; sick men have no holidays.* At one gentle point in the narrative, he and his friend Tarrou go for a nocturnal swim off the jetty, which affords them a few memorable moments of relief, *but now they had to set their shoulders to the wheel again.*

Camus hated labels: he has been seen as a *humanist*, an *absurdist*, an *existentialist*, and therefore, of course, a *non-Christian*. But, in my own experience, a so-called non-believer can often see through to the Christian heart of things: this is what Camus does in *La Peste*, so I would argue that his novel is a study in, and advocacy of Christian values: perseverance, compassion, understanding, and, most of all, of course, love. That love we are experiencing many times a day in our present crisis...

The Frenchman by adoption tried to speak for those with no words of their own; he was physically determined to challenge lies, believing that *when you are a writer you cannot lie*. In *La Peste* and in other works he sought to illuminate the problems of human conscience in our lives. He had a deep-seated belief in human dignity. And he was fiercely resolute in all things. When he won the Nobel Prize for Literature, at the age of 44, he was the second-youngest recipient in history to do so, (after Rudyard Kipling, who won it aged 42.) His acceptance speech was termed magnificent, as he avowed: *It is the honour and the burden of the writer to do so much more than write.*

For all the grim suffering in *La Peste*, there is much encouragement, also he shows how all trials, however cruel, work together for good to the Christian; that we have no choice but to come to terms with struggle, hardship, and, at its worst,

with death. On this earth there are pestilences, and there are victims; it is up to us, so far as is possible, not to join forces with the pestilences. Best of all, to me, is the view expressed by the priest, Pere Paneloux: *We must aspire beyond ourselves towards that high and fearful vision, and on that lofty plane all will fall into place, all discords be resolved, and truth flash forth from the dark cloud of seeming injustice.*

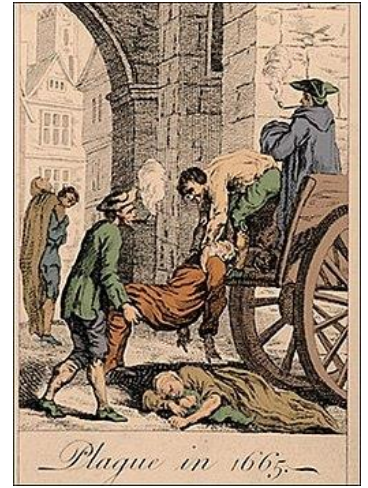


As with any life, the more we delve into it, the more there is to learn. Camus never knew his father, who was killed in the Battle of the Marne in 1914. As a footballer, especially as a goalie, Albert had *passion and courage*, but he contracted T.B. aged 17, which restricted the extent of his sporting potential, and also explained why he was not permitted to fight in The Second World War. Like so many of us, he had a teacher that inspired him; in fact, he had two: Louis Germain in Algiers, and Jean Grenier when he came to France. As a journalist he was soon spotted for his talent, becoming editor-in-chief of *Paris- Soir* in 1940. When he later edited the Resistance journal, *Combat* he used a nom de plume: like Wilfred Owen, he liked to write in codes. In December 1940 he married Francine Faure, and they had twins, Catherine and Jean, born in 1945. Catherine is now 74, living in Lourmarin, and somewhat bemused that her father's great novel, which she had read just two weeks before his death at the tender age of 14, is now having to be re-printed as it tops the list of works folk are finding helpful as we battle Covid 19.

The essence of *La Peste* is its grounded, and grounding optimism: a plague is no respecter of persons, but it gives people chances: so often a crisis brings out the best, as we see with the N.H.S. at the moment. Such a challenge may indeed pass our human understanding, but perhaps we should love what we cannot understand, (a huge ask, of course). We might even come to realise what is meant by grace...Camus feels what is true of all evils in the world is true of plague as well: it helps people rise above themselves. This is encapsulated in the line:

If there is one thing we can always yearn for, and sometimes attain, it is human love.

Not surprisingly, Camus, who bore an eye-catching resemblance to the young Humphrey Bogart, had immersed himself in the history of plagues: The Black Death in 14th century Europe, that claimed 50 million lives; The Italian Plague of 1629 that killed 280,000; The Plague in London in 1665, and plague on the eastern sea-board of China in the 18th and 19th centuries. From his research, he discerned that survival was not about heroism but about decency, a fact he is keen to stress in his novel, and very much what we are seeing today. We are encouraged, surely, to reach for a keen sense of what makes life worth living.



As his fictitious, (only in name I now realise) plague spread, each person had to divorce themselves from their individuality, unite their force with the force of others, and work for something that united them with humanity- very much like Jesus Christ. The strength of Camus' voice, spoken through his protagonist Dr. Rieux, tells us we need not suffer alone, but we need to set our sights and aspirations higher, for a better understanding of our present moment; that will give us the chance to make a unique contribution to life, and to those with whom we share that life. The best we can do is to remain faithful to those things we know to be true.

Like so many great artists, Camus died too young: in a road accident on January 4th 1960, near Sens, in Le Grand Fossard in the small town of Villeblevin. He had spent New Year with his wife and the twins at Lourmarin, in that house he had bought with his Nobel winnings. Also there were his friend and publisher, Michel Gallimard, and family. Camus' wife and children took the train back to Paris on January 2nd; he decided to return in Gallimard's luxurious sports car. I had always believed he was killed on the Peripherique, or what there was of

that busy thoroughfare in 1960, but no: the car crashed into a tree on a straight section of road.

Camus was killed instantly; Gallimard died 3 days later. It was not a busy road that Sunday evening, there was no snow or ice, the road was straight, the police found no evidence that the car had been speeding. In the author's pocket were found 144 pages of his latest work, *Le Premier Homme*, an autobiographical novel, which he had said would be his best, together with the return half of his train ticket back to Paris.



The monument to Camus built in Villeblevin, where he died in a car crash in January 1960

The last word must be with his great novel, and its sparse, haunting prose. In a wider sense, the plague represents whatever threatens to prevent the fulfilment of human life. It is a message whose resonance rings clearer every day, for us, now, as we struggle to come to terms with our mighty challenge. That is made even more relevant by Camus' final words (spoiler alert here!) *the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; it can lie dormant for years and years...it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks and bookshelves, and perhaps the day will come when, for the bane and enlightening of men, it rouses up its rats and sends them forth to die in a happy city.*

Several of my friends are reading or re- reading *La Peste* at the moment; one person expressed great surprise that I should be reading such a novel at this time! The surprise was mine: I have always found it a most encouraging and positive work; it is even more apposite in 2020 than it ever was for me. Camus knew about the human spirit, its depth of purpose, its strength at times of trial, its indefatigability, its potential for good, its pursuit of life's meaning, its charm. As he avows, through his finely drawn characters of the novel, in the last analysis, *there are more things to admire in people than to despise.*

Chris Haslam

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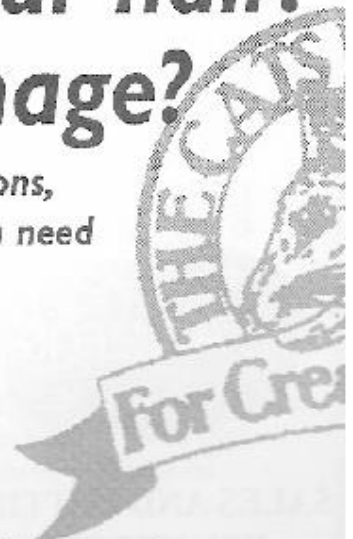
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