

June 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.

Foreword: Two Icons

Everyone knows we live in a world of instant, total and continuous communication should we choose to tap into any number of beguiling systems. This *Instagram* world, of which I am too feckless to be a part, prompts me to think of strange (but not sinister) connections and communications that may, ultimately, have a longer lasting impact than the average e-mail or text message: with often the life span of a mayfly.

So: a journey to North Norfolk and thence to North Wales.

In Great Walsingham in Norfolk there is an austere chapel.



Non - Conformist? Well, Russian Orthodox, actually. Go inside and you see icons. One in particular catches the eye. It features Saint Seraphim, holy monk and hermit of early 19th century Russia. In the icon, his back is bent. As a hermit he was beaten up by those who

sought his wealth. He had no wealth to speak of. Only a wealth of knowledge of the ways of God.

Here is an icon to be pondered, prayed before. The creation of the icon is a long labour of love. So should be the careful reflection on its meaning. We are a long way from the world of text messages. Instead, there is an invitation into a world in which a Saint who lived in a Russian forest speaks silently a few feet away from a village green and from English thatched cottages, with roses round each door. How strange is that?



The art of the icon does not die. In an ecumenical retreat house in North Wales there stands, on a low table in a corridor that retreatants traverse a dozen times a day, an icon of the Holy Family. The icon was created in Holywell by a 'Sister Seraphim' (yes, Seraphim).



It's a recent work. I hope it lasts for ever. All is gentleness. Mary, Joseph, the boy Jesus: none clamour for our attention. There is no shouting. The nurture of the child has been peaceful and sensitive. The hands of Joseph and Mary surround the left hand of Jesus, but do not weigh heavily on his infant fingers. Joseph loves Mary. Mary and Joseph love the child whose right hand is raised to bless. His eyes do not transfix us. But they request our gaze, our attention. As the totality of our shared faith does.

One could pass the little Norfolk church in its tiny village (the title 'great' as in Walsingham is a kind of rustic joke): pass it in a hurry to somewhere or other, as the text messages accumulate on the smart phone: good messages, many of them; messages of love and care, of factual information. But there is no harm in stopping to open the chapel door to sit a while and look at the Russian saint whose holiness points not to himself but to the child – become man – who blesses all who would be blessed.

Michael Hand

Prayer for June

Dear Lord,

You know what we ask for; you know our tribulations, especially now with our current challenges that seem so massive, as indeed they are.

We ask you to bear the weight of our pain and anxiety, as only you can, and to cradle us through these difficult days.

Give us the patience, and the courage to persevere, regardless of our circumstances, so that we might build on our meaningful relationship with you.

We remember all who are fighting this invisible foe on our behalf, and we thank you for them all.

We pray that your mercy and loving kindness will see us through to wherever we are meant to be, and we are grateful for the knowledge that no enemy is too powerful for you to conquer, ever.

Help us to care for each other better, as you care for us, and to gain strength from your glorious Resurrection.

For thy name's sake,

Amen

Chris Haslam

Last month Chris wrote an article on the French philosopher, Albert Camus:

In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.

Camus - Lyrical and Critical Essays

The Front Cover

We are very grateful to Jo Rees 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.

www.winchcombeparish.org.uk

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>

MABEL

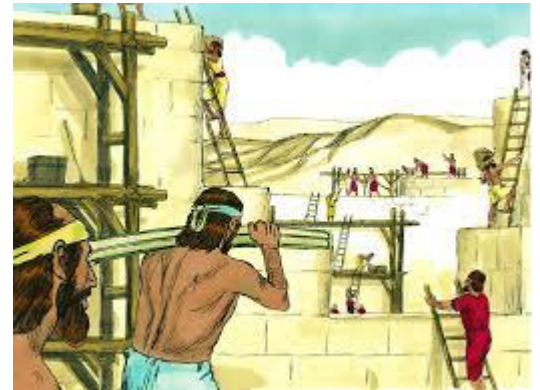


You'll all have heard of Mack and Mabel; well, after MACS, (Mike's Alphabet of Church Speak), comes MABEL, (Mike's Adventures in Bible Land!)

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

Rebuilding

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are fascinating accounts of the return from exile of the Jewish people. After 50 years, this was never going to be an easy process and the books describe great enthusiasm but also catastrophic problems. Opposition, both locally and from far away, hold up the process of rebuilding Jerusalem but, in the end, the work is completed. The walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt and, more importantly, a new temple is built. Full worship is restored and the people rejoice. But most importantly, God's promise of return is fulfilled. The people can see that God does still love and care for them.



But not all the Jewish people returned to Israel. Many had put down roots in their new land and settled there permanently. As the Persian empire became the dominant power in the region, other Jews travelled to other areas of the empire too. Some, no doubt, gave up their Jewish faith but many did not and faced the difficulties of keeping faith with God while surrounded by people with very different beliefs. The book of Esther graphically describes these problems. But God is still caring for his people wherever they are. Esther becomes a queen and is able to save many other Jews. They have discovered that God's love is not just limited to the land of Israel.

Wisdom

The books of wisdom (Job to Song of Songs) are quite varied. They are about how to live your life but the attitudes expressed seem to have no common thread at all. However, just as we found God was the most important character in previous books, we will also find that these books focus on God in what they say.

The first book, Job, is a masterpiece. It tells the story of Job when everything goes wrong for him through no fault of his own. It is a long meditation on the problem of why innocent people suffer. Job gets very angry about his situation and rails against God. He is not helped by some of his friends (Job's comforters) who come up with a whole string of platitudes to justify why Job is suffering. On the whole they just make Job angrier still.



In the end, God himself appears but doesn't actually answer the question about why Job is suffering. What does happen is that Job realises that, when faced with the power and majesty of God, his issues are

trivial. But it also becomes clear quite how wrong his friends have been. In the end we are left with a sense that it is OK to doubt and even to get angry with God.

The Hymn Book

The book of Psalms is a collection of poetry or songs put together maybe three or four hundred years before the time of Jesus – but many of the individual psalms are much older. They're clearly intended to be used in worship and they cover just about every human emotion going. There are songs of lament, songs of joy, songs of praise, songs of expectation, songs of love – you name it and it'll be here in the psalms! But the main reason we still use them is that you'll also find God

here, God in every situation, every mood and God always supporting and loving.

Now before you say it, I know they don't look like poetry but remember that they were written in Hebrew, not English and also that Hebrew poetry didn't rhyme words as we often do in poetry. They rhyme ideas, so an idea in one line is repeated or contrasted or amplified in the next. The psalms were composed; they are polished pieces, not quick jottings. We don't know who wrote them, though many have a name attached to them but that might be a dedication rather than the author. Having said that, King David was an accomplished musician, so some of them may have been written by him. And finally, no, we don't know what *selah* means!



Wiser still and wiser

The remaining three books of wisdom are very different from each other – except in that one feature we have found in every book – God! The book of Proverbs is intensely practical, being a collection of wise sayings about living as God's people, each one short and to the point. Some of them must have been old when the collection was put together, some are still current today. This is a book to dip into rather than read from end to end – why not try?

Ecclesiastes is perhaps the oddest book in the whole bible. It was written by 'the teacher' and its tone is mostly cynical and world-weary. It does have moments of beauty, though; chapter three starts with the most famous part, 'to everything there is a season.' For a Christian, it can be a worrying book to read but again you do find God here even if you have to go searching.



Then we have an absolute gem – the Song of Songs! Traditionally thought to have been written by Solomon, it is a series of love songs. Despite later attempts to find an underlying, theological theme, it is a celebration of spontaneous and physical love, quite erotic in places. It is wonderful and beautiful and, as we follow a God of love, perfectly appropriate. As physical beings, we express love physically and I'm sure God approves!

Dreams are made of this

*Walk on through the wind;
Walk on through the rain,
Though your dreams be tossed and blown;
Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone.*

(Words from the musical 'Carousel')

Soon after I had become a Christian in 1983, I had a dream one night, which was so clear and instructive that I presumed that it was from the Lord. The first part of the dream contained images, all of which I recognised as symbolic of my life as a child and as a young man up to the (then) present. However, following this came a series of images which meant nothing to me at all and I made the presumption that they must refer to parts of my life which were still to come. Included within these was an image of my looking across some misty, flat, water meadows towards a cathedral. Although everything else in the image was in shadow, a single shaft of sunlight, slanting at about forty-five degrees, lit up the cathedral building and made it stand out in brilliant vivid shining stones. I shared this with Margaret, my wife, but neither of us could really work out what was the significance of this within a dream in which everything else had clear references to the life I had lived so far. I wrote the images of the dream into my spiritual journal and left it there. Question unanswered.



Between 1996 and 1998, my professional career took a hit, in that my post as pastoral deputy head had been earmarked for redundancy in my school in London, which had experienced cumulative budget problems. I basically had until March 1998 to find another post, or the redundancy axe would fall. I was well supported in this time by several good Christian folk from the school prayer group and from church in Surrey, where we lived. On eight separate occasions, unconnected people quoted to me verses from the story of Elijah, which is, of course, one of faith under duress. I drew hope and the courage to persevere through these verses and through the prayers of those who offered them.

It was just three weeks away from the March 1998 deadline that I was successful in securing a post of head teacher in a Church of England school in Norfolk. What a relief! I frequently used to travel the three miles from our new home into Norwich to visit the headquarters of the Norfolk Education Committee and it was on one of these journeys in November 1998 that I noticed that, with the leaves now fallen from the trees, I got a wonderful view of the city itself across the water-meadows of the River Yare. Or, at least, I would have done, had not the day been cloudy and the city in shadow and a layer of mist covered the meadows. As I looked again towards the city, a shaft of sunlight struck through the clouds at about forty-five degrees and seemed to light up Norwich Cathedral and its beautiful Caen



limestone. I was already saying to the Lord in my heart and mind, 'Yes, Lord! I remember the dream!' At that very moment, just to make sure that I had fully understood what I was seeing, the car radio, tuned to 'Classic FM,' was playing an aria from a

work by Felix Mendelssohn. The aria was 'Lift thine eyes.'

The work, if you haven't guessed, or didn't know, is 'Elijah!'

How often might we miss what the Lord has to say to us through being unaware, or just unexpectant? It is always worth keeping a spiritual journal and expecting the Lord to help us fill it. Sometimes, the significance of our entries may take years to be realized, but how amazing when they are and we see the Lord's purpose revealed in a way which is beyond our imagining.

"Walk on with hope in your heart and you'll never walk alone" – He is with us; the unrecognised companion along the hardest road; the unknown stranger whom we invited in; the Lord, in whom we trust and by whom we are saved. Alleluia!

Steve Carter



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St Peter's Charitable Giving

International Partnership Bursaries

... This month John Paul Hoskins writes about the International Partnership Bursaries for Theology.

The Parish of Winchcombe is part of the Diocese of Gloucester and the Church of England, one of four Anglican churches in the British Isles and just one small part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Communion has tens of millions of members in almost every country of the world. Each national or regional church is autonomous, but all value their historic and theological links with one another and look to the Archbishop of Canterbury as their spiritual leader.

The Anglican Communion grew in parallel with the British Empire, with clergy and later bishops being sent out from this country to serve as missionaries and pastors in the new colonies overseas. After American independence, the first American bishop, Samuel Seabury, was ordained not by English bishops but by bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church. This marks the beginning of an Anglican Communion of autonomous churches rather than simply a worldwide Church of England.

Elsewhere, missionaries were sent out by organisations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Church Missionary Society. The first Lambeth Conference took place in 1867, attended by bishops from all over the world invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most of the churches planted overseas gradually developed their own indigenous leadership. They became independent of the Church of England but continue to share a broadly similar theological and liturgical tradition, as well as their common history.

Over the last twenty years, the Diocese of Gloucester has developed five mutual partnerships with other dioceses around the world: Dornakal and Karnataka Central in India; El Camino Real in the USA; Västerås in Sweden; and Western Tanganyika in Tanzania. Each of these partnerships is different, but all remind us of our interdependence and our shared mission and ministry in the world. I have personally visited four of the five partner dioceses and have got to know people from all of them.



Epiphany Cathedral, Dornakal

As part of its commitment to partnership, the Diocese of Gloucester has established two bursaries of £1,500 to support students from Dornakal and Western Tanganyika. Winchcombe is contributing to these bursaries. They enable students, lay and ordained, to access higher education that will enrich their own mission and ministry and that of the dioceses they serve.

In the parish, we pray every day for a different part of the Anglican Communion, and especially for our partner dioceses, their clergy and people. 'We are the body of Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life ...'

Music in Lockdown

Since March when Boris Johnson decreed that we should all stay at home it has been very difficult for musicians to perform and for many to practise their instruments. Churches have been closed so organists have been unable to play at all unless they are fortunate enough to possess a house organ, be it an electronic or a small pipe instrument.



Luckily there is much music to be heard on the radio or, more likely these days, the internet, and many churches and concert halls have been broadcasting archive material. Resources vary, but some have a sizeable archive of recorded music; Trinity College, Cambridge, for example, has several years of chapel services available on their website which I have found interesting and enjoyable. I was amused to note the coughing and chatter during some of the organ voluntaries – the bane of organists almost everywhere!



Lacking an organ at home, I have played our piano, and also tuned up my harpsichord and enjoyed playing some Bach and Scarlatti as well as Elizabethan keyboard music. I made the

harpsichord from a kit 40 years ago when I spent a sum almost equal to the deposit on a small flat on several boxes of what appeared to be a giant jigsaw puzzle – much to the consternation of my parents who were fostering hopes that I might afford to leave home! Fortunately, my finances recovered quite quickly so that concern was short-lived.

While some music making can be enjoyed in the confines of one's own home, much of the pleasure is derived from sharing with other people. This is especially so of choral singers who work together as a group. Singing at home is just not the same and trying to work together is fraught with problems of pitch and timing. Shelley and I have teamed up with some singers locally using "Zoom" – a video-conferencing software package – but the sound quality leaves a lot to be desired and internet delays are troublesome. However, it is the best we have at the moment and does allow some social interaction at an appropriately safe distance.

Some musicians have been quite enterprising and recorded themselves two or more times over singing or playing different



Thomas Tallis

parts. A trumpeter and his "four wives" appeared on Facebook recently, and several church choirs have recorded their singers one by one and then mixed all the voices together. A friend we sing with in cathedrals is hoping to record *Spem in alium* by Thomas Tallis using this method; that's quite a challenge as there are forty voice parts – eight choirs of five each.

As the lockdown gradually eases we might hope to hear some live music.

But singing is thought to be capable of spreading the virus very effectively so I fear it will be some time before we are back to normal. For the moment I hope that you all stay safe and well.

Andrew Horton

Heavenly Gardens

The request to take part in this BBC One two-part television broadcast over Easter came as a complete surprise – on my mobile in the car on the way home from Broadway! Anne Crow had given them my number. They wanted someone – anyone – to take the place of a missing historian in the morning – please meet at Hailes Abbey for a programme about gardening. It didn't seem a likely venue, but I didn't get much information.



It was cold and wet the next day – why were they there? But then it was all very prompt and business-like. Would I sit on the bench and have a conversation with Alexander Armstrong?* They were actually more interested when they asked if local people used

the Abbey grounds and I told them about the Good Friday Stations of the Cross and how we had been stopped. I was asked that three times – you get only a very brief bit of that later in the film.

I didn't quote John Partington's comment at the time about English Heritage taking up where Thomas Cromwell left off. Thomas Cromwell did come into the conversation very briefly as we chatted on as directed, but not much of this part of our conversation was used. We finished as it really started to rain at the end – the bit you saw at the beginning was actually filmed at the end when I wondered if the drips would show.



Thomas Cromwell

And then we were finished. I still wondered where the gardens had come in. Of course, now I've seen the programme I can see why we were there, The others had much better weather, but that wasn't the point.

Carol Harris

*Alexander Armstrong (better known to viewers as an actor, but also a former chorister) and Arit Anderson (garden designer, known to viewers of Gardeners' World) visited six British gardens imbued with faith and spirituality, including Sudeley Castle which is where Hailes Abbey came in.

LINGUISTICS IN "LOCKDOWN"

Will we look back on 2020 as the year of the "lockdown"? "Lockdown" is a word few of us will have heard, before the current pandemic. Its original usage, I believe, was in American gaols, during a prison riot...

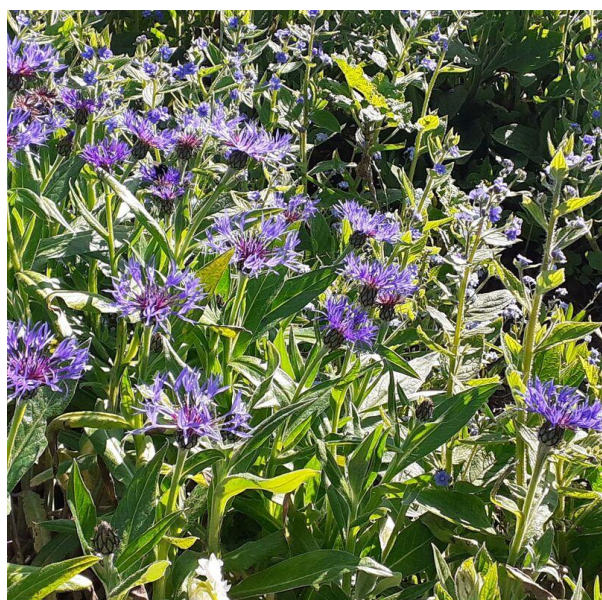
How on earth have we come to adopt it, when we had a perfectly good word in "quarantine"? It's overly dramatic, perhaps, and more appropriate to a sudden crisis, such as a bomb threat, or a renegade gunman.

"Go west, young man" was advice given long ago by a newspaper editor in the States. However, do we need to "go west" for new vocabulary, when we already have perfectly good words of our own? I don't think so!

Jo Rees

Winchcombe Open Gardens

While we are able to enjoy our own gardens at this time, all other outdoor events and shows continue to be cancelled, including the *RHS Chelsea Flower Show*. None-the-less, the RHS went ahead with a “virtual” show and the RHS website offered new videos and inspirational articles from regular Chelsea exhibitors; tours of their own private gardens by well-known garden designers, florists and gardening personalities; Q&A sessions with RHS Advisors and special guests, and behind-the-scenes tours from award-winning nurseries



So, as the RHS endorses “inspiring everyone to grow” it would be churlish not to follow their example and it is suggested that *Winchcombe’s Open Gardens* follows suit. Hopefully this will encourage everyone’s continued interest in the ethos of the *Open Gardens* events and also provide a focus for physical participation in 2021.

So here is a brief update with regard to Winchcombe’s Virtual Open Gardens, on behalf of the *Friends of St Peter’s Church*.

The VIRTUAL tour of the gardens of Winchcombe (and beyond) will be via our new website: [Open Gardens - Winchcombe](#).

You are invited to submit photographs (up to 8 in number) for display during June. Local residents, Major Tom and Mrs Rosemary Hancock, have kindly offered a £25 Garden Gift Voucher as a prize for the best garden photograph. It is hoped that Mr Mark Tsakarisianos of *Gotherington Nurseries* will be able to act as judge.

Please note that this is a competition focussed on the *garden / vegetable plot / hanging basket / flower bed* content as opposed to the quality of the photograph itself – although the winning photograph would need to be of good viewing quality, it's more to do with *gardens* rather than *photographer-of-the-year*!



- Please submit photographs from 1st to 14th June to:
winchcombegardens@gmail.com
- File format - JPEG
If prompted (via iPhone /iPad), then please send *medium* or *small* image files
- Maximum of EIGHT photographs
- Colour or black and white – it's up to you!

The photographs will be identified with your name and general location, for example: *Rosie Green or R Green, Sudeley View*.

Please see the example page set-up via this link: [Virtual Tour](#)

I look forward to receiving your photographs!

Rosie (Green)
winchcombegardens@gmail.com
rosie@rosieandpaul.co.uk
07757 667672

News from Winchcombe Museum

Well, the museum's 'grand opening' had to be postponed, and the museum just could not open! From the street there is a tantalising glimpse of the stocks behind the new glass walls, and a Peeler, a Nineteenth Century policeman is on duty, watching the street.

Is that all you can see?

No! If you can access the website at **winchcombemuseum.org.uk**, there is plenty to see! New initiatives for the lockdown include 'virtual museum' pages which showcase a different collection of exhibits every month and every week we are appealing for help to solve one of Winchcombe's mysteries. Every month, we shall be commemorating local soldiers who died in war in that month. There are also details of a Lockdown Photographic Competition and an invitation for local people to learn more about their family.



The first phase of the refurbishment is complete and paid for, so now we can turn our thoughts to improving the museum upstairs. We would appreciate your input, so, if you have an opinion on what your museum should be like and what would encourage you to visit us, please let us know at info@winchcombemuseum.org.uk.

Sadly, any improvements will cost money, so, if you can afford to support us, we will be very grateful. As you know, the museum is entirely run by volunteers, so every single penny you donate will go towards improvements.

Anne Crow

Adlestrop

*Yes, I remember Adlestrop -
The name, because, one afternoon
Of heat the express train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.*

*The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
on the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop - only the name.*

*And willows, willow herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.*

*And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.*

Edward Thomas (Poems 1917)

Submitted by Jo Rees



The story of A Rocha (‘The Rock’ in Portuguese)

As we all know, life can produce some amazing coincidences. A few months ago, I hadn’t heard of the Christian charity *A Rocha*, but within a week that name came up in three different contexts. The first was at the initial meeting of our informal Eco Church group, when the A Rocha questionnaire guided our thinking and I learnt that A Rocha had initiated the Eco Church movement. The second was a few days later, when good friends from Devon called on us and mentioned that their Methodist church had now enthusiastically adopted Eco Church principles, thanks to A Rocha. The third was when my husband was very impressed by what he read about Chris Naylor, the A Rocha International Executive Director; sadly, he learnt about Chris from his obituary in an ornithological journal as Chris had been a keen and knowledgeable bird watcher.

Spurred on by these coincidences, I wanted to learn more, and found the story of this charity intriguing and heart-warming.

History

A Rocha, a Christian organisation committed to protecting the natural world, was founded in 1983. Its name is Portuguese as its first project was the establishment of a Christian field study centre in Portugal. Before long there were also projects in Lebanon, France, Kenya and Canada – and A Rocha International was formed in 2000. Today there are national organisations in 20 countries working under the umbrella of A Rocha International.

As the organisation grew, restructuring became essential; in 2008-09 a small management team was established, based in the UK. All seemed to be going smoothly until tragedy hit

A Rocha in October 2019: Chris Naylor, his wife Susanna (who had shared in his work when they were in the Lebanon), and Miranda Harris (one of the first A Rocha project leaders in Portugal), were killed in a horrific car accident in South Africa during a visit to A Rocha colleagues. Miranda's husband, Peter, was seriously injured. Profoundly missed by A Rocha, these individuals have left a legacy in the continuing work of the charity to which they were dedicated.

Ethos

Deeply concerned about the damage we are doing to the planet, A Rocha's message is that we have a Christian duty to care for the environment. But as their website states, 'While A Rocha is distinctively Christian, we choose not to speak exclusively to Christian audiences. We are working to show God's love for ALL creation, including all people'.

Their practical approach to nature conservation shows local communities the mutual benefits for both people and nature in caring for the environment, through environmental education, teaching practical skills, monitoring and research. The charity's underlying ethos can be summed up in their stated five main commitments: Christian, Conservation, Cross-cultural, Community and Co-operation. The work of A Rocha is indeed a true example of faith in action.

International Projects

A Rocha's current wide-ranging projects include:

in Kenya – developing ecotourism and providing eco bursaries to school children

in Switzerland – producing bio-diversity surveys

in India – conserving the Asian elephant

in Ghana – developing and maintaining a forest reserve and butterfly sanctuary

in Peru – conserving forest systems

in British Columbia – conserving fish stocks

in Uganda – developing bio-sand water filters

A Rocha UK

And finally, back to A Rocha UK, committed to promoting care of the environment through UK churches – hence the Eco Church movement. In two London boroughs, the charity is also busy transforming urban sites to havens for wildlife and people through environmental education and practical conservation work.

Of course our own Eco Church plans have been on hold since Covid-19 has altered day-to-day life for us all, but we shall return to them as soon as possible. If you want to read more about this wonderful organisation, they have a very informative website <https://www.arocha.org/>

I can also thoroughly recommend a book by Chris Naylor, *Postcards from The Middle East*, which we bought online, inspired by the obituary we had read. The book is an absorbing account of his family's life in Lebanon where, with community involvement, he helped to restore an important wetland for future generations. It is personal testimony to his own faith and gives us insight into the politics, geography, history and culture of that part of the Middle East during turbulent political times.

Jennie Davies

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 have, however, wanted to bring you a magazine that continues to be varied and interesting even though we are unable to distribute printed copies at this time.

Happy reading and stay safe!

The Editorial team

Friends of St Peter's Church Winchcombe

Registered Charity 1046434

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Postcode:

Email: Telephone:

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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.*

Ann Griffiths



Ann Griffiths was a Welsh poet and writer of hymns. She wrote as a fervent evangelical Christian with a thorough knowledge of the scriptures. Born in 1776 in South Wales, her father was a tenant farmer and a churchwarden in an Anglican church. Their farmhouse was in an isolated spot set amongst hills and streams. After the death of her mother when she was just 18, she and her brothers were drawn into the

Methodist church and she joined the Calvinistic Methodist movement in 1796 where she met her future husband, a farmer and an elder of the church. Sadly, Ann died after childbirth at the tender age of 29. She left behind her writings, all in the Welsh language.

By the end of the 19th century Ann had become a national icon in Wales and a significant figure in Welsh nonconformism. A chapel is named in her honour and there are stained glass windows to her memory in several churches and chapels.

Her poem, Yr Arglwydd Jesu, *The Lord Jesus*, was translated by Rowan Williams and renamed *I Saw Him Standing*.

<http://www.tyndale.org/tsj10/williams.html>

Lynne Horton

Coronavirus

The Church of England has published national 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

William Wordsworth - A Poet for Our Time.

Taking solace in nature, we may think is a new message for our lockdown times, but in fact, it was a radical and novel idea which was discovered, lived, and promoted by one of our greatest poets, William Wordsworth, whose birth, 250 years ago, we celebrate this year.



William Wordsworth

1770-1850

Having been forced into staying at home and only being able to go out for exercise once a day, I am sure I am not the only one who has felt the healing power of nature through being outside and seeing all the wonderful spring flowers and distant views around our neighbourhood. Somehow a new perspective on life can be gained by walking in the fresh air and hearing the bird song and noticing the new life in the fields. Wordsworth observed the details of nature acutely, but went further and attributed to it a nurturing effect on his life for good. As he writes in *The Prelude*, his magnificent autobiographical poem on the development of a Poet's mind,

*Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear.*

One famous incident serves as an example of this nurturing influence. Wordsworth describes how he climbed high on the Lake District's hills, encouraged, along with other local lads, to take the eggs from nests of ravens as farmers believed them to be guilty of attacking lambs. He writes:

*While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ear! The sky seemed not a sky
Of earth – and with what motion moved the clouds!*

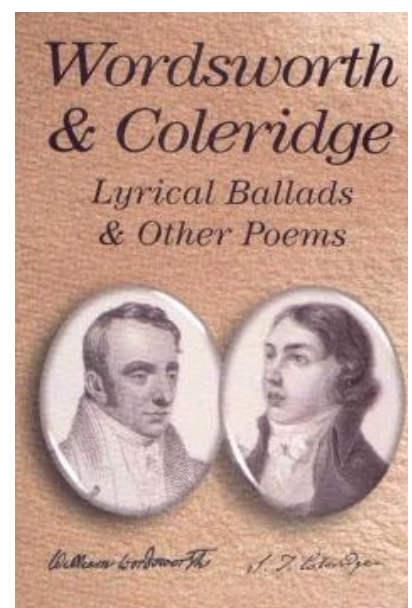
Wordsworth knew that he was out of harmony with Nature. His soul was sensitive to its disapproval of such acts. It is a lesson that we are learning today; you mess with nature at your peril.

Like many of us in Lockdown unable to see our families and friends, we now value their company and companionship more than ever. William Wordsworth treasured his dearest relations from very early on in life. By the age of 13, he had lost both his parents and his home, and was split up from his beloved sister, Dorothy. It was not until his mid-twenties, in 1795, that a legacy allowed him to work as a poet and to realise his dream of being re-united with her in his own home. Wordsworth and Dorothy spent the rest of their lives together, alongside his wife and children.

Living later on in his life with them at Dove Cottage and Rydal Mount in the Lake District, Wordsworth, as a very young man, was an explorer, early peak climber, radical thinker, and visionary poet. In 1790 he had visited Paris on a walking tour of Europe (itself breaking with tradition as young gentlemen normally did the tour in carriages), and happened upon the French Revolution, joining in the celebrations for the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. Wordsworth believed in its values of liberty, equality and fraternity and saw it as a great opportunity for the world to be freed of tyranny and poverty. In *The Prelude* he describes his feelings at this time,

*Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.*

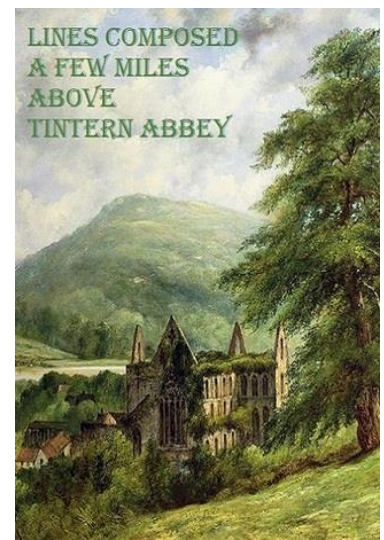
When Wordsworth returned to Paris, a few years later, the revolution had turned sour and the guillotine was the popular way to remove enemies. Wordsworth was horrified and disillusioned with the political scenes, and felt the ideals of a democratic society and freedom for all had been thwarted. He turned inward and drew on his spiritual and practical experience of people and places to



tell the tales of the poor. Through his poetry in association with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, his great friend and promoter, in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) he popularized the plight of the poor and disadvantaged. For the first time, the oppressed, the outcast, the child, and the disabled became the serious subject of the poet's imagination and the public's attention. Wordsworth tried to improve his immediate world through his poetry, where revolution had failed. Today, we are the beneficiaries and heirs of such innovation through the welfare state and NHS, but why is it that as the crisis has concentrated minds, only now has money been found to give the homeless accommodation, and, amongst other issues, the style of employment for those working in the gig economy, properly questioned? Wordsworth pleaded for change in society two centuries ago.

Whether or not to work and live in the city is another issue being given additional thought today as many enjoy the opportunity to work from home and not to have to spend valuable time commuting. Wordsworth rejected city life; he studied at Cambridge, lived and worked in London for a while and spent a few days in Bristol whilst searching for a true home for himself and Dorothy. He felt alienated in all of these environments and was continually drawn back to the countryside and the Lake District, but did experience the supremely restorative power of nature and its scenes during these times. In *Tintern Abbey* he reflects:

*But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and along the heart;
And passing into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration: feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love.*



Tintern Abbey was composed in 1798, not far away from here, at Symonds Yat as Wordsworth was walking, and written down later. Feeling at one with the world around him, feeling part of its essence and vitality and mystery, through his poetry, Wordsworth superbly articulated what, I suspect, many of us have experienced at some time or another:

*A motion and a spirit, that impels
All living things, all objects of all thought
And rolls through all things.*

Whether we do take solace in nature, listen to the questions his poetry poses about our way of living, or take tranquillity from our expeditions into difficult days, William Wordsworth is most certainly a Poet for Our Time.

Cathryn Wilcock

Buddhism and Covid 19

We all know that suffering is a part of life. From a Buddhist point of view we are born, we encounter problems, we die but then because our mind is formless and not any part of our body it continues and if it has any negativity left in it we will be reborn and continue the cycle of birth, suffering, aging and death. This is called Samsara.

Buddhists use meditation as a way to understand and overcome this suffering. By meditating on the inevitability of change, the unavailability of things happening beyond our control, we learn patience and peaceful acceptance and the ability to transform any difficulty into an opportunity to improve and progress and benefit others. Through meditation we understand that it is fruitless to grasp at things being or staying the way that we wish them to be and so we can overcome our frustration when they do not.

Through meditation we come to understand that we are the same as everyone else, doing the best we can to deal with what life (Samsara) throws at us. This generates a sense of equality with all other living beings and a deep compassion. Even when we see people who are better or worse off than ourselves meditation helps us to avoid negative minds that might arise and to see that each and every one of us has to deal with the unpredictability and suffering of life.

During this Covid-19 crisis it is clear that we all have this capability within us. Seeing the many wonderful examples of courage and selflessness, the appreciation shown to them and the many acts of kindness and generosity, we all have the potential to overcome difficult circumstances and to pull together with one another. In whatever difficult circumstances we find ourselves the only successful way to deal with it is to develop a peaceful and compassionate mind. Our mind is the only thing we have control over, the only thing we can change. Meditation helps us to see things more clearly by focusing on how things really are and developing patient acceptance towards an ever changing and challenging world and a loving heart towards others.



Ursula Cootes



Children's Society AGM

The AGM and Supper was scheduled to have taken place on May 4th, celebrating another very successful year for the Winchcombe Group, and to give our thanks to the retiring chairman, Jules Redgers, for her sterling work and leadership over many years. Sadly, it was not possible to hold an AGM this year, due to social distancing.

Thank you sincerely Jules: you have left a thriving group committed to the important work of the Society with young people who are carers, who are at risk of abuse, unaccompanied young refugees, and families in difficulty or who care for disabled children. This work very much continues, especially at this difficult time whilst we are in lockdown due to Covid 19.

Moving forward, we are delighted that Margaret Carter has agreed to take on the role of Chairman. Reports from officers were circulated by e-mail, as were the verified accounts for 2019/2020. This has been an excellent year with £12,810-28 raised from events including a Lent Lunch, Garden Teas and a Christmas event at Charingworth, a Summer Evening at Walcote House, Christingle Services and a Quiz evening.

Also included in the total were monies received from Home Boxes, individual donations and bequests.

The committee would like to thank all parishioners for their continuing support in so many ways to achieve such a remarkable sum. The group, supported by the Parish, was honoured to be nominated and subsequently received one of the Children's Society Volunteering Awards for 2019.

The new officers are as follows:

Margaret Carter - Chairman	Gill Clark - Secretary
Rosemary Arkell - Deputy Chair	Jackie Hayter - Treasurer
Gill Worthington - Box Secretary and Communications	

Horse in a field

A Short Story

It went round the village like wildfire.

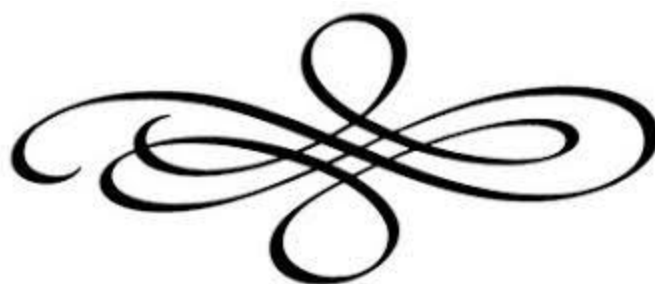
Have you seen it? Where? Whose is it? Where has it come from? Cries of amazement and disbelief. The smallest children had never seen anything like it except in picture books. Everyone, just everyone, was talking about it. There wasn't anyone big or small, young or old, who hadn't been down to Parker's Field to sneak a look. And it didn't disappoint. There it stood, a horse in a field all alone, picking idly at the scrappy grass. Regarding all the fuss with a nonchalant air it stood flicking its tail and launching now and again into a high stepping trot, a canter, or most excitingly to its gawping audience, a full speed gallop from one end of the field to the other.

In the school lessons were swiftly rearranged. The children already knew about the time the climate changed, how amongst other things the keeping of animals on the land grew less and less popular as farmers turned to arable and people reluctantly changed their habits and became vegan. It took a while. There was resistance. There was disagreement but as summers grew hotter and winter storms fiercer and more deadly, there was no doubt that action was essential, and fast. And so it was that livestock disappeared from the English landscape. No sheep safely grazing, no cattle lowing and mooing, and no horses consuming valuable resources for no economic return. Besides, riding was no longer safe even on secluded rural lanes such was the volume of whizzy electric traffic. Fake leather and wool, paper wrapping and no fossil fuels whatsoever. Yes, the population had put up with a lot over the years but were eventually persuaded of the necessity.

And now here was the horse, delivered to the village field like the answer to a maiden's prayer. Meat. The memory lingered, the lips tingled and the mouths drooled. Of course the children must never know. They adored the horse who in condescending manner allowed them to stroke it and feed it apples and sweets. There was a butcher in the village who now occupied his time creating wood carvings with the knives he still possessed. He was willing. Plans were laid over a pint or two in the village inn. The men steeled themselves for violence and the women searched out old recipe books.

It was a nervous time. A time of mouth-watering anticipation, of dreams come to reality. Truth to tell the horse was a bit on the scraggy side and not made of young flesh, but there certainly was meat to be had there. The village would feast. So very early one morning the ex butcher gathered together the tools of his ex trade and the men of the village congregated quietly, armed with ropes and sticks. Solemn faced they crept silently towards their grisly task in the field. As dawn broke they came and they saw.... nothing. The field was empty. Cries of dismay, of disbelief. Empty! Gone! As suddenly as it had appeared, the horse had departed. Did it know? Had it guessed? No, it was just a horse. Or was it?

Lynne Horton



VE DAY COMMEMORATION 2020

Stancombe View made the very best of an obligingly sunny day bearing in mind the overriding issue of obeying social isolating during this Coronavirus Pandemic.

Nothing daunted, up went the bunting, out came tables with accompanying table cloths, chairs, teapots, cups and saucers, sandwiches, cake, champagne and wine. We were determined to follow in the footsteps of those brave and rejoicing celebrants of 75 years ago.

Social isolating did mean that we were unable to Conga up and down the road but we will save that for another day. We took photographs to show future generations how we celebrated as well as keeping our distance. For a few happy hours we chatted across the road to each other and even the dogs caught the mood of the moment and were rushing around (naturally keeping 2 metres away from each other as well as the humans) obviously responding to the atmosphere. It was also an ideal time to introduce ourselves to new neighbours.



VE Day 75 proved moment for us all been an isolating A moment too for

all those souls who gave their lives during World War Two and to think of those who returned injured physically and mentally.

to be a golden during what has and unusual time. us to remember

We have discussed the next gathering once we have escaped from Covid's Clutches and are already working out the details for a street party.

Lynn Gorman

Winchcombe Shops

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

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



Here's a list of which stores can help you with deliveries:

Winchcombe Fruit & Veg
01242 609 500

Vale & Hills Butchers
01242 602 998

Winchcombe Flowers - 01242
602 920

North's Bakery - 01242 602 416

Keeling Newsagents - 01242 602 440
keelingsnewsagents@btconnect.com

Hayles Fruit Farm - 01242 602 123
info@HaylesFruitFarm.co.uk

Food Fanatics - 01242 604 466
info@food-fanatics.co.uk

Laytons Fish & Chips – 01242 652 222

Broadway Wine Company - 01242 603 463

Some other shops are also open for mail order customers and hopefully more will follow as lockdown restrictions ease.

Full marks to the lovely local hostelry, which has festooned its façade with NHS bunting and flags - have a gold star!



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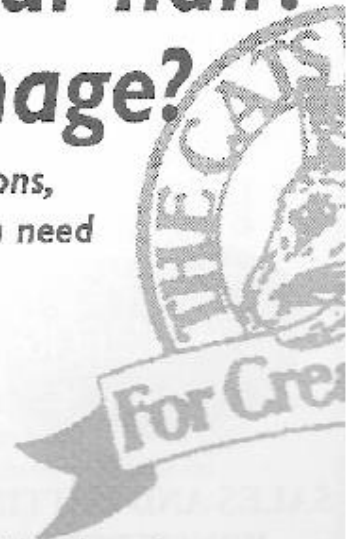
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