



# *Keeping In Touch*



*Edition 76*



*Date 29/10/21*

## ***Huge Congratulations to Jean Grabaskey!***



***Jean is certainly our oldest church member and one of the longest standing having joined in 1966! She celebrates her 100th birthday on 10th November!***



***Congratulations too to Mary and Jim Anthony who recently celebrated their Golden Wedding! Mary and Jim write....***

*“We recently celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary in France. We enjoyed a 3 day tour through the Loire Valley, visiting Orleans, Tours, & Poitiers. We visited Chateau de Chambord, the largest chateau in the Loire valley which was built as a hunting lodge for Francis I and has over 440 rooms. A magnificent renaissance building which rivals the Palace of Versailles. We also had a tour of Chateau Chenonceau, a much smaller building which spans the river Cher. Our final destination was Bordeaux where we enjoyed a 7 day river cruise visiting many lovely towns and villages and chateaux for wine tastings. A lovely way for us to celebrate our anniversary.”*



***And yet more congratulations..... this time to Andrew Riddell and Nell who will be married this coming weekend at Linlithgow Palace in Scotland with Jim's brother Revd Thom Riddell officiating! We hope the whole family has a wonderful time! And every good wish for the future!***

***And a couple of "thank yous....."***

***Firstly from Liz and Stewart.....***

- o It is with a sense of some regret that we send this article as we note the demise of the publication that has so often kept us going and lifted our spirits when cheer was in very short supply!
- o And it is to all those wonderful people that have kept KIT functioning that we send our initial thanks..... Chris and Alan, to you we owe a huge debt of gratitude for your amazing efforts over a long period of time. We came to rely on KIT appearing, and you never let us down!
- o It would be impossible to mention everybody who made contributions, so we won't even try, but feel we just have to mention Irene for her wonderful weekly poems. Sometimes funny, sometimes moving, always uplifting, and not least always there! How did you manage to do it every time with such unerring topicality and wit!

Thank you, we are very proud of you all!

***And from David Duffett.....***

**Farewell to KIT – we'll miss you!**

Who would have thought when the first edition of Keeping In Touch was sent out in April last year that we would now be at edition 76? We owe a very big "Thank You" to everyone involved in its weekly production.

Looking back at some church emails from the early days of the pandemic, it seems like another age. In early March 2020, we identified keeping people in touch as one of our biggest challenges, particularly if we had to close the building or cancel events under Government advice. We had previously been geared up to sending emails and letters from the Church Office. We had weekly newsheets and bi-monthly Inspire magazines, printed and picked up in the church building. Fortunately (led by Christine MacLeod) we had gathered and confirmed contact information as part of the GDPR exercise. Crucially this included many more email addresses than we had before, so electronic distribution was far more feasible than it would have been a year earlier.

Most importantly, I would like to thank all those gifted people within our congregation who have spent so much time and energy in keeping us informed, educated and amused in the last 18 months. This includes everyone who has contributed articles, poems, pictures, quizzes – what a variety we have had! I will really miss Irene Carter's weekly poems, which put together would make a very good commentary on the last 18 months. There are so many other people to thank – too many to mention – but none of this would have happened without the dedication of Chris & Alan Curtis. Thank you everyone for such a significant contribution to our church life. I fear we may still have some tough times ahead. However, as we cautiously revert to more familiar ways of meeting and communicating, we must find ways to keep being kind to each other and build on the good new things we've learnt as a church community.



**A postcard from the National Memorial Arboretum from Babs and John.....**



On our way back from N Wales John and I stopped by the above. We both found it very moving and stunning how many people have died in our armed and uniformed services since the end of WW2. I was particularly moved



by the area devoted to police officers who had lost their lives whilst on duty.



The trees were just starting to turn but what sticks with me are some of the statues and we share a few here.

Time to sign off from my KIT contributions but thank you so much Chris for creating it for the last 18 months and am delighted that so many people have enjoyed the photos I have shared.

Regards, Babs and John.

*Top left– Special Forces, right The Land Army, Next 1914 Christmas Day Truce and finally War Horses.*

**MUST ITEM FOR KIT from Philip**

MEGA BROWNIE POINTS TO CHRIS & ALAN CURTIS ET AL FOR EDITING 75 EDITIONS OF "KEEPING IN TOUCH" SINCE EASTER, 2020. A TRULY REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT DURING THESE TRYING TIMES. MAY THEY BE DECLARED REDUNDANT HEREAFTER!

**A note from your editor.....**

*I can honestly say this has been a joy and not a chore. A huge thank you to my patient husband for technical assistance when I wanted to throw the laptop out of the window and for ensuring KIT's timely distribution (and Gail for posting out the paper copies) and to Mary A for being a willing "back up". But none of this would have been possible without my regular contributors—you know who you are and so do we! Thank you so much! And thanks to everybody who has ever contributed—even if only once or twice. Every offering was special and precious! Let's hope it can now RIP! Chris*

*Philip is determined to be provocative to the last.....*

## **SPAM FOR CHRISTMAS?**

Kids today don't know the half of it! Ask them who Churchill was and they'll tell you he's a dog in a TV commercial for insurance.

Then ask their parents what Spam is and they'll probably tell you it's junk mail clogging up the computer.

Possibly the grandparents – people of my generation – will just about remember the Second World War when Churchill and Spam meant something else – a life-giving something else.

Ask them what was the UK duration of the Second World War? They, alongside the historians, will say : 1939 – 1945. They're all wrong.

Take it from me – your friendly, ex-St.Ivian octogenarian - it lasted from 1939 to 1954. That's a mere 15 years after a war that we were supposed to have won. And I should know; I lived through it and survived. Yes indeed, dear KIT reader, it comprised 15 years of much anxiety, deprivation, rationing and austerity. I repeat, 15 years.

I find it hard to believe how we all survived on meagre rations of one egg, two bacon rashers, a little real meat, a few ounces of cheese, butter, lard, 2oz of loose tea and sugar per week, and so on.. But we did and the nation was never healthier; what on earth was obesity? We just had to make do and muddle through. And we did.

We could perhaps supplement our diet buying foodstuffs on the Black Market from the likes of Private Walker of "Dad's Army" fame; or dig up the lawn and plant vegetables.

Thanks to the leadership of Winston Churchill and his coalition government, few people went to bed on an empty stomach. ( Unlike some eight million souls today! )Fish and chips were never rationed; three old pence would buy a portion anywhere. In the cities there were also government-backed cafeterias where sixpence would buy a satisfying meal.

But there were other ways of putting food on the table to supplement the frugal weekly ration.

During the war, our family lived in a large house at 2 West Street (now the site of a public toilet) which then also housed up to a dozen relatives, sheltering from the London bombing. We fared well. Why? Immediately opposite was "The Three Tuns" public house. Not only did it provide good cheer and liquid refreshment, but was the source of good, sustaining foods to help stock up the larder.

A regular pub patron was a local gamekeeper. He would arrive laden with rabbits, dangling from a broomstick over his shoulder. A rabbit stew was often on our menu. Then there were the two butchers who worked in the slaughterhouse around the corner in North Road. Their regular perk was the scrapings of meat, stripped from the bones of the slaughtered animals. Cottage and Sheppard's Pie was the result in our house. But the most popular patrons, from 1943, were the American servicemen – the delightful GI Yanks – who had absolutely no idea what rationing was.

One of them courted my Londoner, teenage, Aunt Peggy, who spent her war driving a four-ton truck for the Army's Auxilliary Transport Service. Private First Class, Charles Frederick Van Nest's GI uniform looked like that of a general when he was invited to tea to meet the family. He arrived with a kit bag laden with treasure. Tins of Spam, peaches, pineapple, Crisco cooking lard, and bags of sweetcorn abounded. What on earth was a peach or pineapple? And what did one do with a bag of raw sweetcorn? We were soon to find out when he skilfully fried it in a little Crisco on the gas stove and converted it into a small mountain of popcorn. The kit bag also produced bags of boiled sweets, chocolate bars and packs of chewing gum. Yes indeed, dear KIT reader, the Simpson household feasted when "Uncle Van" was around. He was destined to marry my Aunt Peggy, making her one of the town's first GI Brides.

**Cont'd....**

So what exactly is Spam? In both world wars, British and Commonwealth troops main meat staple was canned corned or bully beef. American troops main meat staple was a canned conglomeration of much spiced, pulverised, ham and pork. Spam either stands for Spiced Ham or, more likely, Special Processed American Meat. This was developed in America in 1937. Believe me, Spam really was a life saver for people struggling on the wartime ration.

Now, let me ruin your day a tad and give you food for thought. Suddenly I'm smitten with déjà vue.

Why is it that we are now being bombarded with television commercials for good old American Spam? Its labelling does not seem to have changed in 80 years or so. And these commercials also graphically show us how to cook it. Why, one asks? Spam might have been a life-saver during and after World War II. But surely not in this day and age.

Again, this begs the question : Why is it being promoted today? DOES SOMEONE KNOW SOMETHING THAT WE DON'T KNOW? Is Spam destined to be a life-saver again? For years to come! I won't be here to see it. But you will be. Let us pray to the Almighty that you also will be able to make do and struggle throughout the Pandemic and going it alone in Europe.

Meanwhile, there will be a dearth of turkeys for sale this Christmas, so stock up on Spam. You may need to!

*Philip Simpson*

*A letter from Norfolk*

*Many thanks -*

Firstly, to Chris and the team, and all the contributors who have **Kept us all In Touch** for the past 18 months. We're sure you'll receive many other, well deserved, messages of appreciation.

Earlier this year we felt it was time to make some decisions about the future, whilst we still had capacity and some energy, and move to accommodation more suited to our needs. We did not anticipate that, having approved the sale brochure details and clicked 'send' to the Estate Agent to market our home, our buyer would be on our doorstep 2 hours later! The process certainly took on a momentum we hadn't expected. And so, we found that, with the COVID-19 pandemic ordering and dis-ordering our lives, we were not able to properly say 'farewell' to many of our friends and acquaintances. Our departure, after 49 years as members of the Free Church family, has been gentled by the weekly contact and news of you all through KIT, and the weekly newsletter from Catherine and Alan.

Happily, we're able to report that we are already feeling quite settled in our new home in Wymondham. We absolutely know we have made the right move. We love our new home and we're really enjoying being so close to Ruth, Oly and the children. We have the challenge of turning a bare patch of earth into a (bee-friendly and knee-friendly) garden, and much to plan and look forward to in the future. We've already enjoyed visits from quite a few friends and would always be pleased to find more friendly faces on our doorstep.

Our second big Thank You is to everyone who has sent cards, kind messages and emails wishing us well, over the past few months, including the lovely cards we received on our 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary in June.

Together we have shared so much with so many of you in St Ives; together we have wept, and laughed, and rejoiced. We will miss you, and all that you have meant to us.

Wishing you every blessing as you look to the future.

Lin and Andy

🍁🍂🌿🌻🍁 End of October Nature Notes 🍁🍂🌿🌻🍁 from Char

A good October and a good blast  
To blow the hog, acorn and mast.



Not too many hogs feed on acorn and mast now, but I wish they did, we wouldn't be in the pickle we are in now .



Not good to hear from my grandchildren that there were no nature tables in their schoolrooms so we made wormeries.

Perhaps one day they will read Charles Darwin's "Formation of Vegetable Mould Through the Action of Worms".



I hope so.



Have you planted any bulbs ?.

Something to dream about in those short dark days before Christmas, it's a bit of an effort but so worthwhile. And what about a bird table , do you remember years ago we used to have flocks of starlings in October, last week I was thrilled to have four visit the garden and one seemed tame.....walked right up to me, what a treat.

Did you forget St. Denis' Day on the 9th ?.

"A hard winter follows a fine St Denis."

Um , it was fine !.

Last Quiz....

What is He the patron saint of?

Answer

Strive, frenzy and headaches!

(He was French)

CHEERIO KIT, IT'S BEEN GREAT KNOWING YOU AND ALL YOUR LOVELY PALS.

Hopefully one day we will meet again.

Lots of love

Char xxxx





## ***A message from Pete Davies.....***

***Like most churches we face many challenges but are also presented with opportunities. As a church, we consider it is vital to bring these challenges and opportunities to God in communal prayer. We hope to have regular opportunities to do this over the coming months. The first of these times will take place this coming Sunday 31st October from 9:45—10:45 in our porch chapel. All you would need to do is come along and join in mainly silent prayer for half an hour.***

***If we are too many for the space we will relocate.***

***Hope to see you then,***

***With thanks, Pete.***

## **Childhood Prayers.....**

I'm sure I'm not alone in remembering being instructed as a young child to say my prayers before bedtime each night?

So every night I would (fairly hastily) chant the allotted prayer. I remember it clearly.....

***Jesus, tender shepherd, hear me,***

***Bless this little lamb tonight.***

***Through the darkness, be Thou near  
me,***

***Keep me safe till morning light.***

***Amen***

## ***And the last word has to go to dear Irene.....***

**SIGNING OUT**

They say all things must come to an end,  
And this is sad, but true,  
I've tried in my small way to send  
My love to all of you.

Some of my rhymes were zany, mad  
Came easily to mind,  
While others centred on the sad,  
The News, the facts combined.

What was happening in our lives  
The chaos and the mess,  
How we coped, and cried and hoped  
To ease our Covid stress.

How, when all is falling down  
And future's looking bleak,  
A bit of kindness bucks you up  
And helps your faith to peak!

And yes, I'm daft, but I don't care  
I'm here to entertain,  
To make you laugh or think or pray  
With friendship in the main.

It's time to thank the team of KIT,  
Catherine and Elders too,  
Who've worked so hard to help us cope  
And really pulled us through.

Our Church is special full of love  
Enfolding old with new,  
On-line, Eco in the Park  
Traditions kept though too.

Thank you one and thank you all  
I'm grateful for your time,  
I'll sign off now, your poetess  
The lady of the rhyme!

cc IRENE CARTER