

St John's and St Katharine's MID-MONTH EXTRA Monday 15th February 2021



*'From Woodlands to Frome to Wells
the first signs of Spring,
and love is in the air ...'*



*Gabriel & Grace with their St Valentine's Day message ...
Our thanks to Pam C, Lois B and Moira A for these photographs*



Today's edition sees a spread on the Panama Canal – regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World. Various other 'wonders' lists exist – Wales has a one but not the rest of the UK – and as our travels abroad may be curtailed for a while, we thought we might look at what we would nominate for the UK's Seven Wonders. These could be natural or manmade, ancient or modern – so a few contenders could be the Giants Causeway in Northern Ireland (and extending under the Irish Sea to Fingal's Cave on the isle of Staffa in Scotland), Stonehenge in England, Portmeirion in Wales. Please send us your favourites with photos (if you have any) and anything you specifically want us to mention - and we'll do the rest.

Elaine and Mandy elainegilburt@live.co.uk amandacrook@blueyonder.co.uk

NEWS from our churches and congregations

- A bumper list of birthdays this month! Happy Birthday to Josie G, Sam A, Tom A-C, Christian C, Judith D, David D, Valerie H and Margaret V, who all have their birthdays within the next month.
- We are pleased to report yet more members of our congregations have been called for vaccination. Hearing that some waiting around was part of the process, Neil McC went to his book shelves to look for something to read while waiting. His choice: *A Journal of the Plague Year* by Daniel Defoe! What would your choice be?
- Congratulations to Alice McC, who has been offered a place to read History at Cambridge, to start in Autumn 2022.
- Congratulations, too, to Eileen W, who was 100 years old on the 13th February. She would like to thank everyone for the very many good wishes, cards and gifts that she received.

Last year's 'Swan updates' from the Bishop's Palace Moat are set to continue this year, and they have already provided us with part of our front page. Next month we hope to see nest building – and in the meantime Gabriel is 'robustly' encouraging last year's cygnets to leave home – so watch this space!



An 'Extra' thought: Coping in a Crisis

Have you found a strategy for coping with the present limitations to life? Some I talk to say they have just about given up looking for light at the end of the tunnel; others are keeping their heads below the parapet; and the obstreperous ones are living life regardless of lockdowns. Somehow, though, we all have to try and find a balance between hope and frustration.

For example, it came as a blow when, three days before my second COVID vaccine, I received a letter telling me it had been postponed for 12 weeks. I was getting ready to travel back to Shepton Mallet for my 7pm evening appointment and actually looking forward to seeing all those helpful stewards again. Shopping has lost much of its appeal too: now it is just a necessity – get to the shop, get the food for the week, go home as soon as possible and batten down the hatches. As for hairdressing, the less said the better – bunches tied up with ribbons are not appropriate for every age group!

However, there is another side to the present situation. Feeding the birds daily means that I have acquired a semi-tame robin and blue tit who don't even bother to wait for me to finish putting out their breakfast before they are down on the patio chirping for joy. I also had a golden crocus blooming in the garden – until someone trod on it – but there are other signs of spring. I have daffodils in bud and snowdrops opening. For the Victorians with their 'language' of flowers, the snowdrop represented hope – surely very apt for us today.

Also, I find that on my daily walk – when I look like an overdressed Tellytubby in the cold – the people I meet nearly always stop for a chat – socially distanced of course.

Yes, it is a long haul trying to keep positive, especially for those in poor health, or losing their income, or without enough to eat. But there are indications that life is renewing itself, not necessarily as it used to be but from a different perspective. Hopefully, we are beginning to look forward, to meeting again and especially to singing together in church.

Pat L

PS I wrote this in January when the outlook and weather were bleak and vaccinations were not properly under way. Now there does seem to be light at the end of the tunnel!



The Stations of The Cross at St John's

Eds: Our thanks to Janet for the back story to these beautiful plaques. John and Jill Huggins were great supporters of our services, traditions and fund-raisers.

The Stations of the Cross are usually put in place on or near Ash Wednesday each year and remain on the columns until some point after Easter. The fact that they are not in place all year (as they are in many churches) has always seemed to me to give them greater impact: they are somehow made more arresting by their sudden appearance.

It might seem that they've always been in St John's, but they are a comparatively recent addition to our treasures. I remember Peter Belham, the greatly loved Reader at St John's, presenting one of the panels to the PCC for our approval, at a meeting in the Vicarage sometime during the 1990s.

The artist was the Revd John Huggins, a retired priest who had recently moved into Willow Vale, with his wife Jill. John also produced the art work for a Well Dressing in 1997 when, taking the theme of the Trinity, he produced a central image of the Son based on Holman Hunt's The Light of the World. Looking at the intricate sketches I'm amazed that the well dressers were able to complete them!

Janet C

These photos show John at work on the 1997 Well Dressing





Everything is going to be all right

by Derek Mahon

Eds: Our thanks to Valerie for sending in this poem. It was sent to her in a Christmas card from a friend in France and was written by Derek Mahon, one of Ireland's leading poets. It has brought comfort to many during lockdown, especially for the words 'The sun rises in spite of everything'.

This poem is included in Bloodaxe Books's 'Being Alive' anthology and in Mahon's own latest book 'New and Selected Poems', published by Faber. The poet can be seen and heard reading it at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNGU11IK_5E

 Everything is going to be all right
How should I not be glad to contemplate
the clouds clearing beyond the dormer windows
and a high tide reflected on the ceiling?
There will be dying. There will be dying.
But there is no need to go into that.
The lines flow from my pen unbidden 
and the hidden source is the watchful heart.
The sun rises in spite of everything,
and the far cities are beautiful and bright.
I lie here in a river of sunlight
watching the day break and the clouds flying.
Everything is going to be all right.



Derek Mahon (1942 - 2020)

... and some things are positively thriving

The National Trust has urged the public to stay away from certain areas during breeding season this spring. It hopes to mimic the effects of lockdown last year, which helped more vulnerable species.

The call follows the discovery last year that lockdown did our peregrine falcons, grey partridges and other species a real favour.

The tern colony at Blakeney Point in Norfolk had a bumper season, with more than 200 tern chicks fledged, the most in 25 years. The Peak District saw more curlew, and the Llyn Peninsula saw more stoats, weasels and rabbits emerging from the woodlands of Plas yn Rhiw.

Meanwhile, the ruins of Corfe Castle in Dorset became home to peregrine falcons, and a cuckoo arrived in Osterley, west London. Even Dartford warblers were on the move, some to as far as Shropshire. More news on what's thriving in Frome next month

Grey partridge



Corfe Castle with peregrine falcon (inset)



Blakeney Point and seals with terns inset



Dartford warbler



Anniversaries in 2021

WILLIAM TEMPLE: THE ARCHBISHOP WHO DIED TOO YOUNG

Eds: Our thanks to Chris L for bringing this incredible man to our attention.

2021 is the 100th anniversary of the ordination as Bishop of Manchester of William Temple, who will be forever remembered as the Archbishop of Canterbury who died too young – after only two years in office.

Temple was the son of a previous archbishop, Frederick Temple (1896-1902), and was born when his father was 59 years old. William was given a traditional upbringing of prep and public school (Rugby) and then Balliol College Oxford, where he took a double first in classics and stayed on as lecturer in philosophy.



Portrait by Philip de László, 1934

He was ordained when he was 28, having spent his time both absorbing continental ideas in philosophy as well as taking a practical interest in making education available for all. As part of this, in 1908 he became the president of the Workers' Educational Association. In 1910 he published his first book *The Faith and Modern Thought*, trying to reconcile his beliefs with new ways of thinking.

After a short period as headmaster of Repton School and vicar of St James Piccadilly, he became a Canon of Westminster Abbey, but spent most of his time involved in national issues, including attempting to renew Christian faith nationwide, editing a church newspaper and lobbying for more independence for the Church of England. His preaching filled Westminster Abbey, and he became the most famous priest in the country. When he was appointed Bishop of Manchester in 1921 it was regarded as an excellent appointment, although some wished that he would concentrate on the job in hand rather than 'taking on a 100 and 1 other activities'.

In fact he was an excellent bishop, and he played a national role as a calming influence in the 1926 General Strike and taking an interest in improving industrial relations and other social needs. He also played a significant role in improving relations with other churches and conducted missions throughout the country. It was no surprise that he

was appointed Archbishop of York in 1930.

He spent 13 years at York, carrying out more than expected of church duties, preaching, lecturing, writing books, conducting missions, working with the new BBC, promoting ecumenism. He also made great contributions to the social field, including work on unemployment and in setting up human rights for individuals, including the right to decent housing, education, work and income, leisure, influence on working conditions and freedom of speech. For much of his early adulthood he had also been an active member of the Labour Party, although he resigned when more prominent in church affairs.

In 1942 Lang retired as Archbishop of Canterbury, and, despite worries by some that he was 'too political' Temple was appointed the post. Churchill, then prime minister, knew there was no alternative and described him as 'the only half-a-crown in a twopenny bazaar'. At 61, in the middle of a World War, with the country needing strong moral leadership, most felt that Temple would be able to dominate religious and social thinking to balance the strong military influence throughout government thinking. In fact, it was not to be. Although he spoke out against Nazi atrocities and made great advances in improving primary education, then much dominated by the church, the strain brought on by many decades of overwork meant that he was not able to survive the war and make the contribution to the post-war settlement that many hoped for.

Temple died, exhausted, in October 1944. Bishop Bell of Chichester spoke of him as '*not only one of the greatest men of his day, but also one of the greatest teachers who has ever filled the Archbishopric of Canterbury. His influence on the British people, in the field of social justice, on the Christian Church as a whole, and in international relations, was of a kind to which it would be very difficult to find a parallel in the history of England.*'

Chris L



Temple conducts a service in the cinema on Orkney during his visit to the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow, in 1942

Places we love to visit

The Panama Canal

Eds: A big 'thank you' to Judith for treating us to this fascinating trip along a very unusual 50 miles of canal.

The Panama isthmus is the narrow strip of land that joins North America to South America. It is only 50 miles wide at its narrowest part but was mountainous, swampy and thickly forested. As long ago as the 16th century seafarers knew that if they could construct a way across, it would save them sailing around the southern tip of South America to get from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific – a journey of 20,000 miles that took three weeks.

In 1904 the canal was eventually opened after a huge financial cost and with thousands of lives lost. It is thought to be one of the biggest constructions in history. There are three huge locks to lift ships up to the level of the massive lake in the middle of the crossing, then another three at the other end to lower them to the level of the Caribbean and Pacific. Peter and I wanted to see it for ourselves and decided to visit and sail through it in 2018. Our first impression was how narrow it was – which limits the size of ship that can go through and also means that ships are not allowed to use their own engines to pass through – they are manoeuvred by tugs into the locks, then pulled through by engines – “mules” – which run on railway lines alongside.



Once through the locks and a short length of canal you reach the large man-made Gatun Lake, which is where ships queue up to go into the locks. The lake is also the supply of water for the locks.



There are three road bridges that connect North and South America, all built high enough for all ships to sail under – The Bridge of the Americas, the Centennial Bridge and the Atlantic Bridge – but so much traffic is using them that a new bridge is under construction near the Pacific end of the canal.



The whole transit takes about 8 hours – an amazing short cut between two huge oceans.

Judith D

Amazing facts surrounding the Panama Canal

- As you can see from the map underlying the text, because of the way Panama twists, the entrance from the Pacific Ocean is farther east than the entrance from the Caribbean Sea (Atlantic Ocean)!
- Because the oceans are one continuous body of water, the surface tends to seek the same level throughout the world. However, winds, ocean currents, river discharges, and variations in gravity and temperature prevent 'sea level' from being truly level, and the Pacific Ocean is actually 20cm (8") higher than the Atlantic.

St Valentine's Day Quiz

Eds: Once again we are indebted to Chris L for coming up with a quiz for us.

(Answers in the March edition of MME.)

Origins

1. In what century did St Valentine live?
2. What occupation is he the patron saint of?
3. What city did he live in?
4. What are the origins of St Valentine's Day?
5. What is the oldest surviving Valentine card?
6. What was the Valentine Day's massacre?
7. What did Alexander Fleming discover on the same day as this?
8. St Valentine's Day was first associated with romance in a 13th century play the *Parliament of Fowls*. Who wrote this?
9. Who was Valentina Tereshkova?
10. Which famous explorer was killed in a fight with natives of Hawaii on Valentine's Day 1779?

Popular culture

11. In which Marilyn Monroe film do two characters go on the run after witnessing the Valentine's Day massacre?
12. Who played these two characters?
13. In Japan, what do women give men on Valentine's Day?
14. Who played the title role in the film *Shirley Valentine*?
15. (For older readers) What was Valentine Dyll best known for?
16. Which Shakespeare play features Valentine and Proteus?
17. Which manufacturer first introduced a heart-shaped box of chocolates for Valentines Day in 1861?
18. What is the star sign for Valentine's Day?
19. What is Valentines at Aintree?
20. Who wrote the song *My Funny Valentine*?



lion dance competitions and plays which continue to the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the year.

Elaine G

Chinese New Year – the Year of the Ox from 12th February 2021

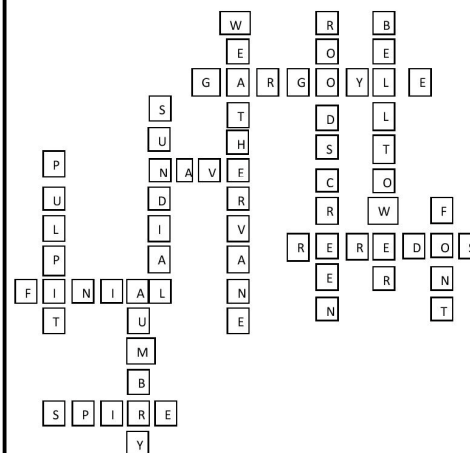
We visited Singapore in January 2014 and saw all the displays being prepared for the Year of the Horse – they were incredible. This year, the displays are still there for the Year of the Ox – but much pared back.

Chinese New Year is the festival that marks the end of winter and the beginning of the spring season. The first day of Chinese New Year begins with the new moon that appears between 21st January and 20th February. Celebrations start with New Year's Eve fireworks and include parades, exhibitions,



Part of a 100m tableau of life-size oxen in Singapore

Answers to Church features quiz



This week's SUDOKU

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Fancy a calorie-filled snack with a difference?

See how to make a bread-tin-sized Snickers bar at
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=248840283323596>