

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



*Purple crocuses at the Bishop's Palace in Wells – to remind us of Bishop Peter who sadly announced his early retirement this week.
Thanks to Teresa C from Doultling for this lovely photo.*



On the one hand, it's been a very sad couple of weeks – the loss of Bob Caudwell has touched us all, and then the decision of Bishop Peter of Bath & Wells to step down from his duties on medical grounds. Whilst we are very grateful for his recovery, the loss to our diocese is immense. He has been an inspirational presence, and our front page is a gentle acknowledgement of that.

On the other hand, the signs of spring, the vaccination successes and a life which will be less restrictive beckon to us ...

We've included details of a local walk in this issue – and hope to follow this up with others. So, if you have any favourite walks which we could feature, please do let us know.

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

NEWS from our churches and congregations

- Happy Birthday to John H, Karolyn C, Pam F, Jane B, Aileen L, Peter B, Leo H and Chris L, who all have their birthdays within the next month.
- We are pleased to report that after a brief spell in a special unit in Yeovil, Ross is back at home. Do read her article a few pages on.
- Gerry R is in the RUH following a fall. We send him our very best wishes.
- You can read Bishop Peter's retirement message on the Diocesan website, www.bathandwells.org.uk. The Diocese also plans to set up a Thanksgiving wall on the website for people to send messages.
- St John's is now at silver level in the Eco Church audit in four of the five categories, but we still need help completing our flora and fauna survey of the churchyards. Please contact Elaine or Mandy if you can offer assistance.
- Our annual meetings are approaching, St John's on 20th May and St Katharine's provisionally on 30th May after the morning service. Both churches are always looking for new PCC members, so if you are interested, please get in touch with Mandy H, SK PCC secretary (tel: 461941, mhulme2909@aol.com) or Mandy C, SJ PCC secretary (tel: 467828; amandacrook@blueyonder.co.uk)

An 'Extra' thought:

'No furniture is so charming as books'

So wrote the Somerset clergyman and essayist, Sidney Smith. He is also quoted as saying "I never read a book before reviewing it, it prejudices a man so". As a former bookseller I agree with the former sentiment, but as an occasional reviewer I have to dissent from the latter.



Having been asked to provide occasional pieces for St. John's publications I was reflecting on themes that might link them in a sequence. Some time ago I was asked to list ten books that have been significant in my life. Putting to one side the Bible and Shakespeare, as is traditional practice, I have looked up my little list. I will share titles with you from time to time, but in the meantime I would commend the exercise to you. It is revelatory to compare, if you can remember them, the books of one's childhood and youth with titles that have been discovered later in life. I will go through them in no order of precedence.

My first author is the monastic writer, Thomas Merton. English by birth, he lived and worked in the Cistercian Abbey of Gethsemane, in Kentucky. He wrote many books, but one that I found most illuminating was *New Seeds of Contemplation*. It is a collection of thirty-nine essays on the spiritual life. The following extract seems to me appropriate to a time when fear is widespread and we live under many restraints.

A door opens in the centre of our being and we seem to fall through it into immense depths which, although they are infinite, are all accessible to us; all eternity seems to have become ours in this one placid and breathless contact.

God touches us with touch that is emptiness and empties us. He moves us with a simplicity that simplifies us. All variety, all complexity, all paradox, all multiplicity cease. Our mind swims in the air of an understanding, a reality that is dark and serene and includes in itself everything. Nothing more is desired. Nothing more is wanting.

Kevin T

Eds: Thank you, Kevin – we look forward to further articles in the series.

Anniversaries in 2021

SIR RICHARD BURTON – born 19th March 1821

Eds: Our thanks to Chris for bringing to our attention this Victorian notable who was as famous in his day as his namesake actor is today!

Richard Burton, the Victorian explorer, diplomat and translator, was born 200 years ago this month. He is best known today for his translation of *The Arabian Nights*, but in his time he was better known as an army officer, an explorer and a diplomat.

He spoke more than twenty languages, travelled throughout Africa, South America and the Middle/Far East, absorbed a vast amount of non-Christian culture, argued with everyone he met and introduced much foreign literature to Britain. He was well enough known to have his cartoon in *Punch*, shown here dressed as an Arab, bedecked with swords and smoking something unspeakable.



Burton was thrown out of Oxford University for his plain speaking and thereafter was mostly self-educated. He joined the East India Company Army and produced ground-breaking studies of India. Then he completed the Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca, disguised as a Pathan; served in the Crimean War and led the expedition to East Africa that discovered Lake Tanganyika and the headwaters of the Nile, Lake Victoria. He climbed the Cameroon mountains, led a mission to the King of Dahomey and rafted down the River San Francisco in Brazil. His extensive published work covered exploration, anthropology, archaeology, ethnology, poetry and Eastern literature: he translated Portuguese poetry, Arabic and Indian traditional stories. Probably his most well-known work was his translation of *The Arabian Nights*.



However, he made no friends by including in his translation all the gruesome details he found in the original, making his version almost unreadable. Later editors brought to life the amazing stories that thrilled children when I was young: Aladdin, Sinbad the Sailor, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. Burton's last and finest memorial is his Carrera Marble Arab tent in Mortlake cemetery where he and his wife are buried.

Chris L

ST KATHARINE'S DAFFODIL SERVICE

Eds: Our thanks to Terry W and Michael J for their assistance here.

The Daffodil Service takes place either in early March or on the first Sunday in April depending on the season. At the preceding service a fortnight beforehand Janet reminds the St Katharine's congregation of the imminent, much loved event and gives an analysis/forecast/hopeful wish on the likely condition of the daffodil crop by the appointed date. With the vagaries of early spring weather and climate change effects on seasons, much can go amiss in two weeks – will the daffs be out? Will they be past their best? Will the flowering all be over and gone? Some nervous expectation, therefore, on the day as one turns into Church Walk and drives over the first small rise in the lane... Somehow Janet's choice of date very often works out, and the vista is one of both golden verges rich with literally hundreds of, in Janet's own description, 'cheerful, faithful' daffodils.

Looking back over previous years elicits the following:

2015 The Daffodil Service was beautifully constructed and conducted, and a token vase of daffodils was blessed in the absence of flowers in the lane. The service was well attended, and we look forward to a golden-edged lane for Easter.



Photo: Pam C

2016 The early display of snowdrops has now faded, to be slowly replaced by bright, cheerful daffodils. Those who were not able to attend the blessing of the daffodils on Mothering Sunday missed a treat. After the service Janet gave posies of daffodils and greenery to all the congregation. Our thanks go to Sue for the hard work involved in preparing and making the posies.

2017 Daffodil Sunday, 19th March, was very aptly named. The lane was 'a host of golden daffodils' lining the lane between two lovely displays of delicate pink blossom at either end. *God in Nature in seriously beautiful action.* The service was conducted by Janet and Ross, and we had a vase of daffodils displayed at the foot of

the pulpit. These were then distributed among the congregation to bring more focus to our prayers. It was a lovely service – thanks to Ross and Janet.

2018 Janet said in the March magazine: 'We all get a bit twitchy about not having any flowers in church during Lent. However, daffodils inevitably make their appearance in St John's for the Mothering Day service, while St Katharine's has special dispensation for a vase of daffodils in church on the following Sunday. Terry reported in the April magazine: Well, the weather certainly has not contributed favourably to our services, as both of our Sunday services in March, including the daffodil service, were cancelled due to snow and wind causing drifts.'

2019 The first Sunday of March was our Holy Communion Service and celebration of daffodils. Although the daffodils along the lane were struggling to appear for the day, Janet had managed to find enough to provide everyone with a bloom. The service was conducted by Janet with Colin presiding over the Altar.

2020 Appropriately, the daffodil service was the last service held in St Katharine's before lockdown.

2021 Sadly no daffodil service or accompanying coffee morning, but here's hoping we have a bumper crop of flowers next year!

Janet and Ross usually like to include a daffodil poem in the service, such as the last verse of William Wordsworth's classic:

***For oft, when on my couch I lie, In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills, and dances with the daffodils.***

It is customary for the Daffodil Service to be accompanied by a Daffodil Coffee Morning, complete with small displays of the flowers on each table, and a stall selling homemade cakes and biscuits, especially Joy's shortbread. Sometimes homemade jams, marmalades and chutneys appeared, as well as the books and June's beautiful cards. This event was one of Thelma's babies, and, as she had lists of contacts, they were usually well attended.



Lockdown Blues

Author unknown

Eds: Our thanks to Betty S for sending in this present-day take on classic poems

**I won't arise and go now, and go to Innisfree
I'll sanitise the doorknob and make a cup of tea.**

**I won't go down to the sea again; I won't go out at all,
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.**

**There's a green-eyed yellow monster to the North of Kathmandu
But I shan't be seeing him just yet, and nor, I think, will you.**

**While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay
I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.**

**I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye,
Or take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.**

**About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go
To see the Keep Out posters or the cherry hung with snow.**

**And no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold,
Or get me to Milford Haven. All that's been put on hold.**

**'Give me your hands', I shan't request, albeit we are friends
Nor come within a mile of you, until this virus ends.**



Walks around Frome

Town centre to Rodden Church

Eds: We're still being asked to 'keep it local', so we thought a reminder of the lovely walks close by wouldn't go amiss. Our thanks to Sue K from Frome Community Education for this one. (Photos: Mandy C.)

Start at Millennium Green or Willow Vale and follow the footpath to Wallbridge. When you reach the footbridge, turn left opposite it to walk through the new houses (River Walk and Ellworthy Court) and go straight across Rodden Rd in front of the railway bridge to climb the hill and turn left to join Styles Hill towards Chapmanslade. Cross the bridge over the railway and bypass, and shortly after bear right down the Rodden Farm lane and arrive at the church. Take a rest on the benches in the churchyard.

If the mud allows (it can be bad at the two kissing gates), you can return by crossing a small bridge and then turning right onto a footpath next to Rodden Brook that leads past Rodden Manor. It's a lovely route through to the Manor and then out along the drive to the main road. Turn right towards Asda and the town (lots of traffic so take care, but worth it for the walk). Rejoin the Willow Vale footpath and return to the centre of town.

Eds: Rodden Nature Reserve is only a small detour off this route: it's just beyond the Asda entrance, mostly on the right hand side of the road. It's closed from 1st February to 1st August to protect breeding wildlife, but we could still enjoy the view and see ducks, moorhens and a heron from the road, when we visited a week ago.





How a 'halfway house' and a book saved me

Eds: Our heartfelt thanks to Ross for sharing her story with us – and the wonderful quotes to uplift us.

Some of you will have noticed that my contribution to our church in the last nine months has been limited to stewarding at private prayer sessions – no contributions to thought for the week, reflections or the like. I have been in a place where

I was unable to read or write – not even brief daily Bible readings or magazine articles. My love of sewing and art was lost to the depths of depression. I could not remember the Lord's Prayer. All I could do was hold my holding cross.

I reached a point where I could see no way forward and planned my suicide. I have taken small overdoses of Paracetamol and was ready to take 200 plus!

So I was taken to Hendford Court in Yeovil, a halfway house, so called because it is halfway between hospital and home. It felt like I was entering a retreat house, with *en suite* facilities for a maximum of eight clients and a large number of caring carers. We were allowed to stay for up to one week only. It is a safe house.

In the lounge I saw a book: *The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse*'. It looked like a children's book (children make me tick) so I picked it up but was unable to go further than looking at a page of script and closing the book.

Next day one of the care assistants asked me if I would like to read anything with her. I went and got the book, and together we read it aloud to each other one page at a time. Like a young child, having read the book I wanted to read it again and again. I could read it.

In the introduction it says it is a book for those age eight to eighty ... so more than just a children's book. It is a book with amazing messages such as :

"being kind to yourself is one of the greatest kindnesses."

"life is difficult – but you are loved"

"when the big things feel out of control ... focus on what you love right under your nose."

"sometimes just getting up and carrying on is brave and magnificent."

I found that this book which didn't mention God was truly God given and uplifting. I lost count of how many times I read it, but each time I felt stronger and the messages clearer.

A young Christian girl came to stay, she gave me a card that read: *The greater the storm the brighter the rainbow.*

I was able to share with her the lifeline in a holding cross.

My gratitude goes to my GP, my mental health team, the Mendip home treatment team, all the staff at Hendford Court, and to God who helped me be in the right place at the right time.

Ross F

PS: I need to go slowly, so don't expect a sermon for a while!

Garden snapshots ...

Our local squirrel has wintered well – indeed he is looking decidedly portly. For weeks past, the bird feeder has been the food source of choice – and on several occasions we've stopped the enterprising rodent from gnawing off the branch from which the feeder hangs. But the other morning we woke to find one rather smug looking squirrel feasting on our front lawn ...

The feeder has since been re-hung, so this was a fleeting moment of triumph!



Wonders of the UK: Amazing canals

Moving on from Panama Canal in last month's *Extra*, I thought we'd continue with the theme of canals in the UK – Frome has an old canal structure (the remains can be seen near Spring Gardens) which was to form part of the Dorset and Somerset Canal, but the canal, never completed, was abandoned in 1803.

It was meant to link Poole with the Kennet and Avon Canal – which neatly brings us to our first nomination: the Caen Hill Locks at Devizes. I expect several of us have visited them, and Lois and Terry grew up close by. During their childhoods, the locks on the hill were dry, and only the top locks had water in them – one had a swimming area. Terry used to fish in the canal – as did Lois's brothers, and Lois would go blackberrying in the lock beds with her mother, taking their own children on nature trips there years later. This flight of locks was John Rennie the Elder's solution to climbing a steep hill, and, in 1810, it was the last part of the 87-mile (140km) Bristol to Reading route of the Kennet and Avon navigation to be opened.

The 29 locks have a rise of 237ft in 2 miles (72m in 3.2km), and they come in three groups: the lower seven locks, Foxhangers Wharf Lock to



Foxhangers Bridge Lock, are spread over $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (1.2km); the next 16 locks form a steep flight in a straight line up the hillside and are designated as a scheduled monument. Because of the steepness of the terrain, the pounds between these locks are very short. As a result 15 of them have

unusually large sideways-extended pounds to store the water needed to operate them. A final six locks take the canal into Devizes. The locks take 5–6 hours to traverse in a boat. Four of the highest locks are currently dry once again as repair works are carried out. The Canal & River Trust website (www.canalrivertrust.org.uk) offers further insights: click on 'Enjoy the waterways' then 'Events' and 'Virtual Open Days'.

Our second canal feature is in Wales, and Mandy and I and our husbands traversed it some years ago as part of our 177-mile trek along Offa's Dyke. The canal in question is the Llangollen Canal, and the Pontcysyllte

Aqueduct is a navigable aqueduct that carries the Llangollen Canal across the River Dee in the Vale of Llangollen in north-east Wales. The 18-arched stone and cast iron structure was completed in 1805, having taken ten years to design and build. It is 12ft (3.7m) wide and is the longest aqueduct in Great Britain and the highest canal aqueduct in the world. The structure is 336yd (307m) long, and the trough carrying the water is 5ft 3in (1.60m) deep. As you can see, the watercourse goes right up to the edge on one side and there is a 1½ metre-wide walkway with a metre-high railing on the other – I'm not a lover of heights from man-made structures, and with the 38m drop to the river below, I seriously looked at clambering down the valley one side and climbing up the other!



The aqueduct was designed by civil engineers Thomas Telford and William Jessop and was one of the first major feats of civil engineering undertaken by Telford. The aqueduct was inscribed by UNESCO on the World Heritage List on 27 June 2009.

The third canal feature is one I would love to see: the Falkirk Wheel is a rotating boat lift in central Scotland, connecting the Forth and Clyde Canal with the Union Canal, and named after the town in which it is located. It opened in 2002 as part of the Millennium Link project and reconnected the two canals for the first time since the 1930s. Planners decided early on to create a dramatic 21st-century landmark structure to reconnect the canals, instead of simply recreating the historic lock flight.



The wheel raises boats by 79ft (24m), but the Union Canal is still 36ft (11m) higher than the aqueduct which meets the wheel. Boats must also pass through a pair of locks between the top of the wheel and the Union Canal. The Falkirk Wheel is the only rotating boat lift of its kind in the world.

Elaine G

QUIZZES:

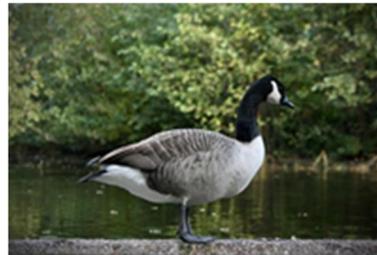
Our thanks to Frome 3A for permission to use the quizzes on this page.



BIRDDAGRAMS

Rearrange the letters to find the names of birds. (The pictures are ours and clues to two of them.)

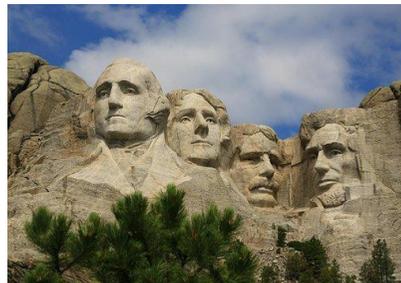
1. red bat edit
2. lone aged leg
3. do ocean saga
4. lame low rhyme
5. tilt tree leg
6. true old vet
7. toy ponies gage
8. secret ragged beret
9. love cord deal
10. kinda damn cur



'YOU CANNOT BE SERIES'

What are the next two terms in each series? (The picture is a clue to one of them.)

1. 23 29 31 37 _____
2. GB BC GB BO _____
3. B C N O _____
4. 1 3 7 15 _____
5. S M H D _____
6. V I B G _____
7. 3.14 12.57 28.28 50.27 _____
8. Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune _____
9. Bath Weston-super-Mare Taunton Yeovil _____
10. A E F H _____



Which London landmark celebrates its 150th anniversary this month?

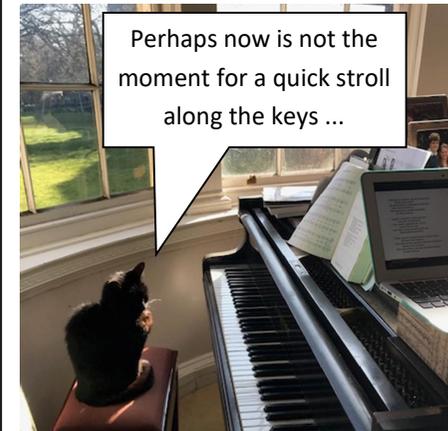
As a clue:

Three lady choristers: Misses Clissold, Truss and Trembley
 Loved to sing oratorios in a place 10 miles from Wembley
 Joyce Grenfell penned its joys
 In a work called Joyful Noise
 And the ladies with conviction
 Sang this rather weird description:
 'It may be like a gasworks with a greenhouse roof above it,
 and it may lack convenience, but all the same we love it.'

What is it? [Answer at the bottom of the page]

Behind the scenes at Zoom services

Sunday morning activity in the McCormick household that we don't see!



This week's SUDOKU

2				3	4	1	
	1		8				5
		6		9			
5						6	
	2	4		7		8	3
	6						2
				8		6	
6					4		2
	4	1	9				8

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Answers to Valentine's Day quiz: 1. 3rd. 2. Bee Keepers. 3. Rome. 4. It comes from a Roman festival to celebrate the coming of spring. In the 5th century; the Pope replaced this by St. Valentine's Day. 5. Written to his wife in 1415 by the Duke of Orleans, in prison after the Battle of Agincourt. 6. The 1929 murder of 7 gang members in Chicago. 7. Penicillin. 8. Chaucer. 9. The first woman in space. 10. Captain Cook. 11. Some Like it Hot. 12. Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis. 13. Chocolates. 14. Pauline Collins. 15. He was an actor best known as 'The Man in Black' in the 1960s. 16. Two Gentlemen of Verona. 17. Cadburys. 18. Aquarius. 19. A water jump in the Grand National. 20. Rogers and Hart