

St John's and St Katharine's

MID-MONTH EXTRA

Wednesday 14th April 2021



'We are an Easter people ...'

(St Augustine)



So much has happened since our last Mid-Month Extra – most importantly for us the celebration of Easter and the return of in-person services. And amid the lifting of spirits following Easter and the partial lifting of lockdown restrictions comes news of the death of Prince Philip, longest serving consort to our longest serving sovereign– his funeral will come just a few days ahead of our queen's 95th birthday. Her birthday celebrations were always intended to be muted in deference to her husband's 100th birthday, but we'd planned an article to recognise it and have decided to go ahead and include it, albeit with some modifications – it is still a magnificent milestone in a momentous year.

The Wonders of the UK series has focussed on man-made wonders in the March and April issues, but will look at natural wonders in the next. We're thinking in terms of landforms and waterfalls – if you have any natural wonders which inspire or have a place in your memory, please let us know.

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NEWS from our churches and congregations

- Happy Birthday to Chris L, Peter D, Jen A-C, Celia McC, George E, Brian E and Ferenc S, whose birthdays all fall within the next month.
- Many congratulations to Gill F, who has won the Mayor's Civic Award, made to those whose service to the community has 'gone above and beyond'. She has, of course, played a major role in the life of St John's as a PCC member, a sidesperson and a governor of the school, but she has also played an important part in many other organisations, not least the Talking Newspaper in Frome, which she has run for the past 40 years and is only now stepping down from the committee. Well deserved recognition, Gill!
- More signs of things returning to some normality are that plans are afoot to decorate St John's with birch branches at Pentecost (23 May); also that we will have a 'real' well dressing (as opposed to the virtual version we had to have last year), though continuing restrictions mean that we won't be able to gather for the usual service around it.

An 'Extra' thought ...

The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today

This title was given to a series of addresses given in Oxford in 1921 and published in book form the year after. It was one amongst several dozen books written or translated by Evelyn Underhill. She is one of the few 20th century English Anglicans who have been included in the calendar of the Church of England. She is honoured on June 15th. She lived from 1875 to 1941 and was in demand as a retreat conductor and spiritual guide in the years between the wars. Some of you will have come across one or other of her books.

Her most enduring title was *Mysticism*; it was first published in 1911, revised by her in 1930, and remains in print to this day. It is a comprehensive survey of the traditions of contemplative prayer, and what is now often described as mindfulness. It is a book of five hundred pages and is not a light read, but it is worth having sight of for its appendix which summarises the themes of the book and names the many saints and sages who embodied and expressed a direct experience of divine grace. The overview which this gives was a spur to me to take the topic seriously and in more detail.

Her other large book, first published in 1936, was *Worship*, another comprehensive examination of its subject, and providing much to help us understand the principles that underlie Christian worship, both corporate and individual.

Underhill also translated a number of the classical texts of mysticism. She sought to make accessible to the contemporary Christian some of the textual treasures of the past. She always had in mind the difficulties that arose amongst ordinary churchgoers. Many of her retreat addresses were published in smaller volumes than her *magnum opus*, and have been reprinted over the years. Newly edited anthologies have appeared over the years since her death.

Though written many years ago her theme of the life of the spirit and the life of today still has a relevance to contemporary society and to the life of the church. She was also a poet who explored the depths of Divine love and how we might open ourselves to its mystery and express it in our lives. She describes prayer as 'The commerce of love'.

In the triumph of prayer

Twofold is the spell.

With the folding of hands

There's a spreading of wings

And the soul's lifted up to invisible lands

And ineffable peace. Yet it knows, being there

That it's close to the heart of all pitiful things;

And it loses and finds, and it gives and demands;

For its life is divine, it must love, it must share

In the triumph of prayer.



Though she departed this world shortly before I came into it, Evelyn Underhill has been a companion on my spiritual journey, as she has for many others. You can find information online as to the current availability of her writing, and second-hand searches may reveal older editions.

Kevin T

Eds. Our thanks to Kevin for not only our 'Extra thought' but also, within it, our 'Poem of the Week'.

SWAN NEWS from the Bishop's Palace in Wells

Grace and Gabriel, the Palace swans are about to be parents once again! On 5 April, the Palace reported: Grace is on the nest all the time now, leaving once or twice a day, briefly to have a wash and a little food. There are at least 6 eggs in the nest, though you can only see 4 – the rest are covered. The last cygnet from last year is still on the moat –



though it is spending most of its time on the bank or on Palace Green. Gabriel is doing a mixture of patrolling the moat, guarding the nest and trying to chase off the last cygnet.



... and nests in other places ...

Eds: Our thanks to Lois and Terry for other nest news – their dining room is well known to a number of us (in 'normal times') as a venue for church meetings. The jackdaws are trying to build a nest in the dining room chimney, the only one without a cowl on it. We do not use it very often as it has an open effect gas fire in the grate. We have cleared and rodded it twice and still the jackdaws keep dropping more sticks down! Sometimes there are four birds up there, whether they are youngsters from last year or maybe two pairs fighting over the chimney pot.



Meanwhile, in the back garden, the blue tits have started to build their nest, but then stopped over a week ago – maybe it is too cold. She will not lay the first egg until 22nd April

– this date has been consistent over the past four years! They usually lay about 8 eggs, laying one per day, and she does not sit on them until all are laid. A fortnight later they will start to hatch. This brings it into May when it is getting warmer and more food is about. So watch this space! ...



And finally, out on the patio, the hedgehogs are back!

Anniversaries in 2021

QUEEN ELIZABETH II – 95th birthday 21st April 2021



After a year like no other, a reign like no other ... Born in 1926, Elizabeth was the daughter of King George V's second son and therefore had little expectation of succeeding to the throne until her uncle, King Edward VIII, abdicated in 1936. After the death of her father, King George VI, the 25-year-old Princess Elizabeth became queen in 1952. At her coronation speech on

2nd June 1953, she said, *'As this day draws to its close, I know that my abiding memory of it will be not only the solemnity and beauty of the ceremony but also the inspiration of your loyalty and affection.'*

From a young queen, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, her unwavering commitment to her role at home, in the Commonwealth and in the wider world, the first royal walkabouts, her speeches at times of crises and her down-to earth approach have won the admiration of the nation. Throughout it all, Prince Philip was her strength and stay. and it was his 100th birthday in June rather than her 95th which she particularly wished to celebrate this year. Sadly, with his death on 9th April and impending funeral, that is now is out of the question . There will however be some commemorations: coins from the Royal Mint in



Wales; tea towels from Northern Ireland; Scottish shortbread and a tea set from the Stoke-on-Trent potteries.

During her Golden Jubilee year, with Prince Philip at her side, she travelled more than 40,000 miles, including visits to Commonwealth countries; they also visited 70 cities and towns in the UK. In 2012, her Diamond Jubilee included the spectacle of the Thames Pageant. Next year, 2022, marks her Platinum Jubilee – the 70th anniversary of her accession – though what form that will take, we wait to see.

Walks around Frome

Town centre to Spring Gardens

Eds: Our thanks to Angela for this walk, starting from St John's – she suggests allowing at least an hour and wearing waterproof boots!

1 - Walk down Church Steps, Cheap Street, through Market Place to Cheese and Grain, across the car park.

2 - Follow the narrow riverside path on the left of the Cheese and Grain, beside the Canoe Club (on the right of the river) along to Welshmill (skate park).

3 - Cross the road (Welshmill Lane) and follow the river on its left-hand side (beside Gracewell Care home) (maybe see treecreepers on the tall trees by the river) to Weylands, and follow the tarmac path in front of a row of houses; if you take the muddy loop on the right down by the river, look out for otters and goosanders.

4 - The path turns left at the end of the houses, then right into Whatcombe Fields, through a metal gate. Beware of cattle arriving soon. Look out for house sparrows, wrens, robins and long-tailed tits in hedges.

5 - When the tarmac runs out, head across the field to the gate in the fence (not the metal one by the river) and keep heading north roughly in line with the river, through an open stone gateway to a muddy path heading up to Spring Gardens. You'll see Whatcombe Farm on the left and the wall of Selwood Manor (Cooper Hall). Lovely trees on right (see photo, which is looking back south). A bit of scrambling next, uphill towards the railway line.



6 - Cross the freight railway line carefully and go through the gate on other side.

7 - Follow the grass path downhill through the field (horse normally present) to a metal gate; huge deep puddle here at gate - need waterproof boots!

8 - After the gate, turn right onto Coalash Lane through

the little parking area and very soon turn right off it onto the road labelled Spring Gardens back towards Frome.

9 - Follow the road (no pavement) past sheep in field, onto Innox Hill and then either go left up Innox Hill (prettier) past St Mary's church, or the flatter route along Lower Innox.

10 - Turn right, back to the river at Welshmill and cross Welshmill Lane again; then left onto the riverside path on the other side (right of river) and walk back to the Cheese and Grain (up wooden boardwalk near the old Singer site), and back through Westway shopping centre to Market Place.

11 - Walk up Cheap Street and get tea/cake at La Strada perhaps.

Eds: You'll be glad to know that when we walked this last week, there had been a few dry days so the large puddle was nowhere to be seen. We were also interested to learn that the high wall on your left as you leave Whatcombe Fields and enter the trees just before the railway line is the 'Whatcombe Wall', part of the Dorset and Somerset Canal that was never completed.



Gardeners needed!

I am sure everyone has noticed that the four tubs in front of church are looking very cheerful with spring flowers. These were set up by Maurice several years ago and have been cared for recently by Peter and Pam, and by Judith and Peter.

We would like to keep them looking good through the summer. Are there a few keen gardeners among the congregation who could take responsibility for one tub each? It is not a time-consuming task keeping the tubs weed-free and watered, and any colourful plants or small shrubs could be planted.

If you feel able to help, please contact Judith (465312) or Mandy (467828).



A Cat called Rover

Eds: Rover has become a regular attendee at Zoom meetings – and one of four felines gracing our screens. She has also provided us with a variety of lockdown photos – and seems to find computer keyboards particularly comfortable ... and endearingly, she mourned Bob in the touching way that much-loved animals do.

Some of you have become aware of my cat called Rover. She has been known to feature in the *Extra*; she regularly leaps on to the table during Sunday's coffee and chat via Zoom; she made an unscheduled appearance at the final Lent course. I had to shut the door firmly because she fully intended to attend the Stations of the Cross, but I thought that was too much, because she is a distraction, strolling across the screen, wafting her tail in front of my face.

But, you see, she is the centre of the universe.

I ought to explain her name. About fourteen years ago, we became aware of a terrible presence in our garden in Marston Mead. I say terrible, because this cat was truly terrible: half of her body was completely bald, revealing horrific scars; her tail appeared to have been broken.



Rover reclining on the laptop with the screensaver displaying her in her lustrous youth (plus 'A Home without a Cat is just a House')

In those days I automatically shooed cats out of the garden in defence of the birds we fed. So I shooed her away whenever I saw her.

Then one day, my husband, Bob, said casually, 'I've made friends with that cat in the garden.' I was cross, because of the birds, and because I thought it was unfair to this poor wretched creature if she was getting mixed messages from the inhabitants of Number 3.

The next time I saw her, I said, rather feebly, 'You shouldn't really be here', and she looked up at me and miaowed silently and I fell in love.

For the rest of that year she drifted in and out of the garden, terrified, at first, if we went too close to her, never wanting food (so we knew she wasn't a desperate stray), gradually consenting to play with a long piece of asparagus grass which she would chase for hours, in circles, eventually coming into the house but scrabbling frantically if the door was closed.

So, you see, she wandered – she roved – around the gardens of Marston Mead for a year. Hence her name – a typical Bob joke.

An eventual search round the houses behind us revealed her home, which she shared with two enormous cats who bullied her (hence the baldness – cat lovers among you will know about over-grooming as a reaction to stress). Her owners told me that the vet, having treated her with anti-depressants, had declared that the only solution would be to re-home her. Rover had re-homed herself.

She became sleek and fat. She is now very old. I was struck by this description of an elderly nun in the book* I am reading at the moment:

...she seemed to have grown smaller and shabbier like a dying cat.

And I thought oh dear.

At various times while I was writing this, Rover jumped up and plonked herself firmly in front of the keyboard, completely blocking the screen. And of course I stopped writing until she decided to leap off the table.

She is, after all, the centre of the universe.

Janet C

**The Corner that Held Them by Sylvia Townsend Warner – another book for Rosemary.*

Wonders of the UK

Walls ... if only they could talk!

Whatever purpose they serve – defensive or decorative – humans have built walls which have made their mark on our landscapes and history – perhaps as symbols of oppression and control or perhaps as sites of devotion and pilgrimage. They date from the Bronze Age (e.g. in Troy) onwards, and some are, of course, still being built. The Great Wall of China at 21,196km (13,171 miles) dwarfs them all.



*Stopping for a proper coffee
(complete with chocolate sprinkles)*

The UK's most famous wall – **Hadrian's Wall** – features in several 'Wonders' lists and the walk alongside it was the first long-distance walk that Mandy and I and our husbands did together. Sadly, there were not too many pubs *en route* but there was plenty to see! In AD 122 Emperor Hadrian ordered a wall to be built between the



Solway and the Tyne to guard the north-west boundary of the Roman Empire. It took six years and was 120km long, separating the Romans from the Caledonian tribes further north. Much of the wall still exists and is open to all. You can see it here trailing off into the distance. There were originally sixteen forts to defend the wall – some are now buried beneath later settlements or reduced to earthworks, but others can be visited by road. The forts at Housesteads and Corbridge stand out in our minds – but they were all so good and with amazing finds that by the time we got to Birdoswald Fort we were 'Romaned' out!

The UK has several city and town walls – including Londonderry in Northern Ireland, Conwy, Caernarfon and Tenby in Wales, Stirling and Edinburgh in Scotland, York (which I've walked many times), Berwick-upon-Tweed, Carlisle, Canterbury and Chichester in England.

One of the nominees for 'wonders of the UK' is **Chester City Walls**, which surround what was the extent of the city in the medieval period. They were started between AD 70 and 90 as a defensive structure for the fortress of Deva Victrix during the Roman occupation of Britain and consisted of earth

ramparts surmounted by wooden palisades. These were later reconstructed in sandstone with four major gates into the city: Eastgate, with the clock in the photo; Bridgegate; Watergate; and Northgate, with its associated gaol. Chester was refortified in 907 by Æthelflæd, and the full circuit of the walls as they are today was



completed by the end of the 12th century. By the 18th century the walls had outlived their purpose as a defensive structure, but they became popular as a promenade route and still are today. The walls, tower, gates and posterns of the City of Chester are recognised as a scheduled monument. The circuit of the walls extends for 3km, rises to 12.2m, and is the most complete circuit of Roman and medieval defensive wall in Britain.

Moving on to other walls, famous decorated walls around the world include the Audrey Hepburn Wall in New York; the Love Wall on the outside of the Capulet house in Verona (the setting for Romeo and Juliet); the John Lennon wall in Prague. Back in the UK, climbing walls are a fairly recent innovation and Brighouse in Yorkshire boasts the highest in the UK at a lofty 36m. Bristol's Banksy murals deserve a mention, but I was particularly taken with the walls of Old Hardwick Hall – a ruin next to the newer Hardwick Hall (built on the instructions of Bess of Hardwick). The old hall is open to the elements but the decorative plasterwork in its unique setting is amazing to see. Last but not least – and we may take it for granted – the



Via Crucis (Way of the Cross) at St John's is a unique feature in a UK churchyard. This processional entrance route to the church was formed during the mid-19th century restoration of the church by Revd W J E Bennett and is a major architectural feature of Frome.

Elaine G



QUIZ: MISSING WORDS IN POETRY

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

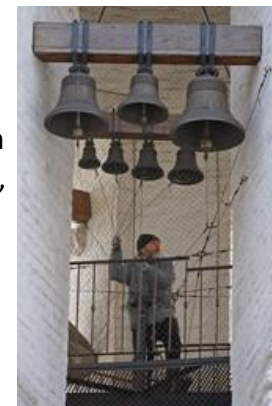
What are the two missing words in each quotation?

- 1 & 2. A robin redbreast in a cage puts all heaven in a rage. A dove-house fill'd with doves and pigeons shudders _____ thro' all its _____ (*Blake*)
- 3 & 4. I think that I shall never see, a _____ lovely as a _____ (*Kilmer*)
- 5 & 6. And all the men and women merely players; They have their _____ and their _____ (*Shakespeare*)
- 7 & 8. Come _____ bombs, and fall on _____ It isn't fit for humans now. (*Betjeman*)
- 9 & 10. My friend, you would not tell with such high zest to children ardent for some desperate glory, the old Lie: _____ et _____ est (*Owen*)
- 11 & 12. There's a _____ yellow idol to the _____ of Kathmandu (*Hayes*)
- 13 & 14. A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, _____ and _____ in the breeze. (*Wordsworth*)
- 15 & 16. If you can meet with _____ and _____ and treat those two impostors just the same; (*Kipling*)
- 17 & 18. The kiss of the sun for pardon, the song of the birds for mirth, one is nearer _____ in a garden, than anywhere else on earth. (*Gurney*)
- 19 & 20. There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, there is a rapture on the _____ (*Byron*)

Muffling bells

We have been hearing lately about bells being rung muffled or half-muffled – but what does this mean? Muffles are leather pads fitted to a bell's clapper to reduce the volume. They attenuate the bell's strike note whilst retaining the hum. By only muffling the clapper on one side you get an 'echo' effect as blows are alternately loud and soft. Bells fitted with muffles in this way are said to be half-muffled. Bells are usually muffled on the backstroke as the handstroke gap emphasises the echo effect. Two muffles can be fitted, one on each side of the clapper, to fully muffle the bell.

Bells are often rung half-muffled at funerals and on Remembrance Sunday as it gives a mournful effect, especially on heavy mellow bells. Bells may also ring this way on New Year's Eve to mark the passing of the old year, removing the muffles at midnight to welcome the New Year. Bells are rung fully muffled only for the death of the sovereign, the incumbent vicar or the bishop of the diocese.



Quiz answers from March edition:

Birdagrams: 1. Bearded tit. 2. Golden eagle. 3. Canada goose. 4. Yellowhammer. 5. Little egret. 6. Turtle dove. 7. Egyptian goose. 8. Great crested grebe. 9. Collared dove. 10. Mandarin duck.

You cannot be series: 1. 41, 43 (prime numbers). 2. DT, JB (US presidents. 3. F, Ne (elements in Periodic Table). 4. 31, 63 (X2+1). 5. W, M (units of time). 6. Y, O (rainbow backwards). 7. 78.55, 113.11 (area of a circle radius 1, 2, 3 etc). 8 Earth, Venus (planets decreasing size). 9. Bridgwater, Frome (Somerset conurbations largest first). 10. I, K (alphabet capital letters no curves).

This week's SUDOKU

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