

St John's and St Katharine's WEEKLY EXTRA Monday 13th July 2020



The gardens and grotto at
Stourhead



National Trust 125th anniversary year

**Happy Birthday to Derek Hobbs, Zachary Pitman and Neil McCormick
this week**

Thought for the week: Going the extra mile

During a conversation with one of our congregation with whom I have been keeping in touch (I realise now that he actually phoned me) I heard the following anecdote.

A trip to a local supermarket for bags of compost proved rather difficult. First he struggled to get the heavy bags into his trolley. Someone, spotting his struggles, helped him to get them in his trolley. When he reached the checkout, a similar scene evolved: his struggles to get one heavy bag within reach of the checkout person were seen by someone else who quickly stepped in to assist. When he reached his car, yes you've guessed right, someone noticed his difficulty in getting the bags into his car and helped him. Each of these people, as I understand it, were members of the public unknown to our friend.

Tiny examples, perhaps, of everyday life in Frome, but nevertheless cherished examples of the kindness which we have all been privileged to witness, and perhaps value even more, in these past dark days, weeks and months.

A member of our family living in Cornwall has sent us a copy of the article in the *Telegraph Magazine* with the headline 'The town that cured loneliness', and of course it's about Compassionate Frome, and the many community organisations set up to combat isolation before this year's major event, but which are flourishing and giving even more support at the moment.

In addition to these organised efforts – the Town Council's 'Let's get Frome covered' initiative early in the lockdown was brilliant – there have been small but significant acts of kindness, such as those with which I began this piece.

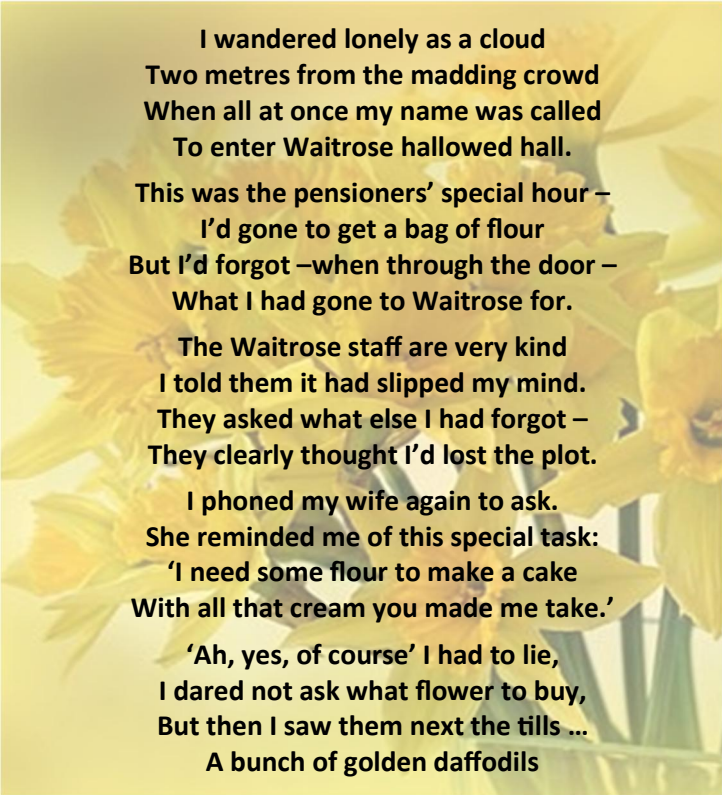
When I went into St John's last week, for the first time since the day before Mothering Sunday(!), I was astonished at the amount of work which has gone into making that sacred space ready for prayer and worship – pews have been moved, direction signs are everywhere, there are hand sanitisers. It's still the place we know and love, but the care and dedication which have gone into making it a safe place are particularly

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impressive when you pause to reflect that these measures, which we have got used to seeing in shops and medical centres and places of hospitality, have been carried out mainly by volunteers (not the army of professionals which I saw on the national news preparing one of our great cathedrals). I deliberately called this piece 'Going the extra mile' because I believe we can all call to mind examples of unexpected generosity which have really cheered us when things have seemed bleak. Thank you to all those who have kept St John's and St Katharine's communities together with all those emails, telephone calls, Zoom meetings, YouTube services, the pew sheets, the *Weekly Extra*, the Parish Magazine (some posted, some hand delivered) and now, slowly perhaps, personal contact in individual meetings, welcoming in church, gathering for worship.

Janet Caudwell

... And with supermarkets in mind and apologies to Wordsworth, imagine this spoken in the dulcet tones of Gyles Brandreth ...



**I wandered lonely as a cloud
Two metres from the madding crowd
When all at once my name was called
To enter Waitrose hallowed hall.**

**This was the pensioners' special hour –
I'd gone to get a bag of flour
But I'd forgot –when through the door –
What I had gone to Waitrose for.**

**The Waitrose staff are very kind
I told them it had slipped my mind.
They asked what else I had forgot –
They clearly thought I'd lost the plot.**

**I phoned my wife again to ask.
She reminded me of this special task:
'I need some flour to make a cake
With all that cream you made me take.'**

**'Ah, yes, of course' I had to lie,
I dared not ask what flower to buy,
But then I saw them next the tills ...
A bunch of golden daffodils**

Days out near Frome:

THE GARDENS, STOURHEAD HOUSE

Eds: Our thanks to Angela for these photos of her recent day out.

Next door is another National Trust property – King Alfred's Tower (see page 10)



Stourhead is a 1,072-hectare (2,650-acre) estate at the source of the River Stour about 2½ miles (4 km) NW of Mere and includes a Grade I listed 18th-century Palladian mansion (currently closed to the public), the village of Stourton, landscaped gardens, farmland and woodland. It has been part-owned by the National Trust since 1946.



The gardens, laid out by the Hoare family between 1741 and 1780, have a separate entrance and are open to the public. Their centrepiece is a lake and bridge with classical temples, mystical grottoes, and rare and exotic trees. The route around the garden is currently a one-way circular route. Angela reports, 'There are some narrow sections of path where you have to be careful passing people if you need to overtake, but it's quieter than a normal summer. On the lake were swans with cygnets, coots with juvenile cooties and a great crested grebe with a large

juvenile grebe with its distinctive humbug-striped head.'

The gardens and car park are open from 9.30am to 5pm daily, but you need to book a slot to visit in advance (tickets are released each Friday) – Google 'Stourhead'. The toilets, kiosks (for teas/coffees/ice creams) and the shops are all open, both at the main entrance and in the Spread Eagle Courtyard (the kiosks are open 10am-4pm), but the NT main café is not.

A land without music – a summer without Music Camp

Eds: Our thanks to Rosemary for her remembrances of summers past.

One of the strangest aspects of ‘these unprecedented times’ has been a summer at home without any visits to our favourite place in the Chilterns. Music Camp started back in 1927 when a physics graduate student at Cambridge, Bernard Robinson, decided to take a group of friends (including Neil’s uncle and aunt) to the country to make music. Neil’s father, Michael, went the following year, meeting his future wife there in 1935. Neil and I

met at camp in 1986, so our children are true Camp grandchildren.

The joys of Camp are three-fold:

The place: I am going to be deliberately vague about the location: we meet at the top of a hill in the Chilterns, surrounded by beech woods. Since 1964 it has been the home of the Wheeler Robinson family, and everyone who goes to Camp is personally invited. The present-day organisers work hard to keep it off social media – you won’t find a website or even pictures on Google.

The music runs from morning to night: everything from Mahler symphonies to Beethoven chamber music; operas and musicals, sometimes fully staged; swing

bands, close-harmony singing, late-night jazz. Some are carefully planned in advance, others more ad-hoc items. The musical standard is very high; being late to rehearsal is frowned upon, and if there is a particularly challenging work on the programme people can be found in strange corners, practising diligently.

The people: There are families like ours, spanning several generations, with numerous cousins who have been Campers all their lives, but every year there are new people, always invited on the recommendation of Campers. At a Main Camp there will be about 140 people: a full symphony orchestra, a chorus, a team of cooks and (usually) three conductors. The amateur ethos (no one gets paid and everybody contributes) means that in addition to making music everyone helps with the day-to-day chores: 24 hours of ‘Orderly Duty’ requires everyone to take a turn preparing vegetables, setting and clearing tables, serving tea and coffee and getting up early to play Reveillé. There are no auditions, but there is an expectation that everyone will be competent and will participate fully. Free afternoons are often spent relaxing in the arboretum, but the more energetic might do some gardening or mend a broken window! We may not be able to go Up The Hill this summer, but the wonders of Zoom have brought many of our friends together, and we are all hoping to be back there next year.

Rosemary McCormick



Harp practice al fresco

The path into the woods



View from the kitchen door



Tuning up: the Junior Camp Orchestra in the main barn



A rare family moment in the courtyard

PLACES WE LOVE TO VISIT

Thailand – part 1

Eds: Many thanks to Chris Lewis for this insight into a country he has visited very many times

I first visited Thailand with my wife in 2558 (Buddhist era), and we spend either one or two months each year there. My wife comes from Yang Talat ('Market for Rubber Trees') a village of 4,000 people, 600 kilometres NE of the capital, Bangkok. She has relations and friends in all parts of the country, who invite us to stay with them. To show you how big the country is, a friend who visited us in Frome recently comes from a small Thai town over 800 kilometres SW from us. Thailand, previously called Siam, stretches from the mountainous NW borders with Burma to the far SW border with Malaya. Singapore, where more relatives live, is not far away. Cambodia lies to the east. Thailand/Siam was never colonised by the Europeans.

In Thailand you can find all types of terrain: our area has hundreds of square miles of flat fertile plains, where rice, sugar and rubber trees grow in abundance. 40km away is one of the largest sites in Asia for dinosaur remains, with a modern museum of exhibits: 100 km away is the mighty river Mekong which forms the border with Laos: we've enjoyed many a meal on its banks. The main religion is Buddhism so they have many temples, of all shapes and sizes – four in our small village – a parallel situation to the numbers of churches, chapels, and cathedrals we have in

England. They don't count their years from the birth of Christ but from when Buddha achieved



Mekong River



The real Bridge over the River Kwai

enlightenment. This year is 2563 in the Buddhist calendar. There are also some mosques and catholic churches.

There are far more monks in their saffron garments than you would see clergy in England. Buddhism permeates society. Most shops, banks and homes have a picture of a famous monk, often the old king dressed in monks' robes. Many men, from all parts of society, still spend some time as a monk, before settling down to their career. Monks rely on the generosity of the people to give them food. Here are two monks in a small village collecting their breakfast.



As well as visiting temples, eating and socialising with friends are Thai pleasures. Restaurants are mainly open-air: The dining table in our house seats up to 16 people, and is often full up, as neighbours come to join in. Languages and cultures cross borders, so my wife's village speaks Isan, the language of Laos and many Thais marry Laotians. The only obvious difference is that, having been French, Laos drives on the right whereas Thailand drives on the left. Makes the bridges interesting!

On the western side of the country is the River Kwai, where the Japanese forced WWII prisoners to build a bridge. Last year we stayed with friends in the local town and spent the day visiting the bridge, hotels, restaurants, museums, POW cemeteries and tourist shops.

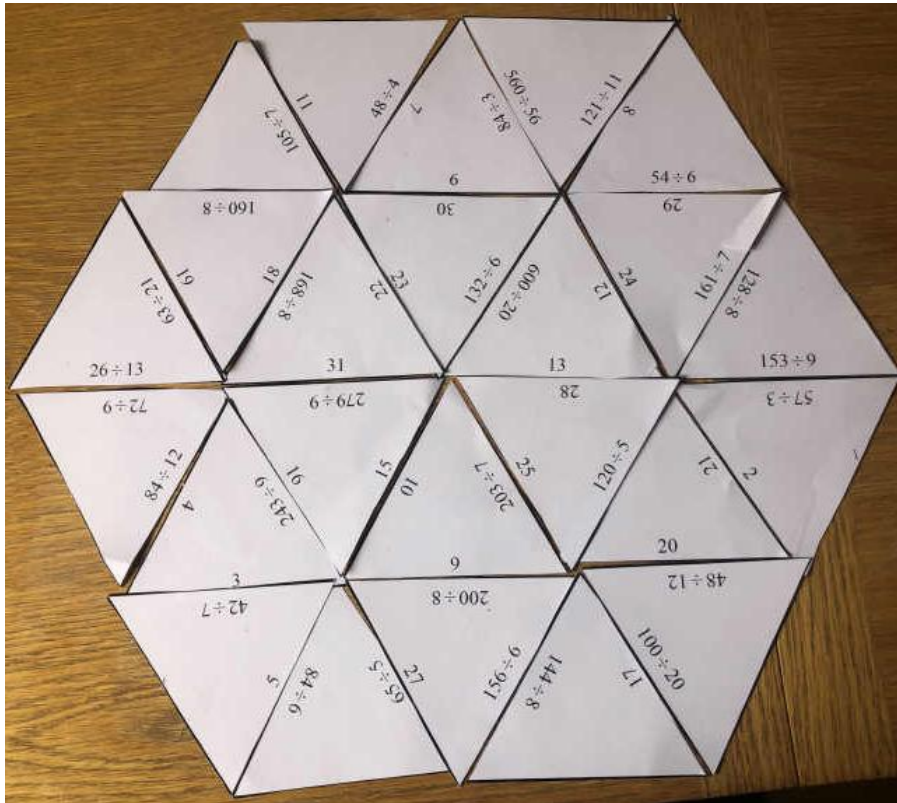
Much of Thailand is full of tourists, although COVID19 has temporarily halted this. They flock to beaches and islands off the coast, to temples, shopping malls, floating markets – on or beside canals, rivers, or lakes – royal palaces (King Rama IX reigned from 1946 to 2016, although our queen is rapidly catching up with this), theme parks, island resorts, sea-food restaurants, National Parks to protect wild life or sanctuaries for elephants and tigers. **Chris Lewis**



Reclining Buddha at Wat Pho Temple

Times Table puzzle - with thanks to Lois Bushell

Something a bit different this week! Print out the puzzle below, cut out the triangles and re-arrange to make the times tables work



... and some more interesting numbers for you!

Views on the St John's YouTube channel – FromeStJohnBaptist – total 1002 for the period 27th March to 6th July, some 500 different viewers! Here are the individual figures (upload date in brackets):

<i>In Conversation</i> (1 July) 119	<i>Morning Office</i> (17 Apr) 108
<i>Open for private prayer</i> (19 June) 56	<i>Easter Service</i> (11 Apr) 91
<i>Commemorating Bp Thomas Ken</i> (6 June) 96	<i>#clapforNHS</i> (8 Apr) 76
<i>Virtual Well dressing</i> (23 May) 86	<i>Service of Darkness & Light</i> (5 Apr) 49
<i>VE Day reflection</i> (8 May) 33	<i>Via Crucis – Stations of the Cross</i> (31 Mar) 115
<i>Via Lucis</i> (2 May) 35	<i>Antecommunion</i> (27 Mar) 108
<i>Remembering Shakespeare</i> (19 Apr) 31	

Days out near Frome

KING ALFRED'S TOWER, SOUTH BREWHAM

Eds: Thanks again to Angela for this up-to-date visitor information.

Three miles from Stourhead by road is King Alfred's Tower (now a separate National Trust property but once part of that estate). You can park separately without booking and walk around but not in the tower. There is now no access into the Stourhead garden from here.

King Alfred's Tower is a 160ft (49m) high folly, designed by Henry Flitcroft for Henry Hoare II and completed in 1772. It is believed to mark the site where King Alfred the Great rallied his troops in 878. The tower commemorates the accession of George III to the throne in 1760 and the end of the Seven Years War.



Bible plants quiz answers

1. Sycamore
2. Lilies of the field
3. Tree of knowledge
4. Galatians
5. Olive
6. Fruit trees and cedars
7. Gopher-wood
8. Grass
9. Almonds
10. Olives
11. A rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys
12. Apricot tree
13. Acacia
14. Abram/Abraham
15. Oak
16. Cedars and cypresses
17. Sycamore, figs
18. One whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night
19. Crocodile
20. Jeremiah

This week's SUDOKU

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