

Southwell Leaves

News and Information from Southwell Minster

August/September 2020

£2.50



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Front Cover credit:

The empty nave by Tom Hislop



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Southwell Minster's Dragonfly

Jill Lucas

Images of birds, animals and plants are frequently found in places of worship, from small village churches to imposing abbeys, cathedrals and minsters. They may have been chosen for their symbolism as in the butterfly's life cycle, where the larva symbolises life, its pupa death, and the adult insect resurrection. The subjects were rarely made from metal.

Bees, beetles, butterflies and flies were of religious significance and are not uncommon, but so far, the dragonfly appears to have no such position, although it is found decorating the margins of psalters, missals and Books of Hours, for example the Lutterall Psalter dating from c. 1340.

Pre-dating the building of the Minster's Chapter House (circa 1280) a vestibule linked the nave to an outside baptismal pool via a trumeau or gate. It is suggested that a pillar from this gate was moved at a later date to its present position between the Quire and the vestibule leading to the Chapter House.

Decorating the pillar is an iron carving, hinged on one side, of a so far unidentified creature. What is it and why is it here? The creature may be a representation of an Aeschnid nymph, an immature Hawker dragonfly, the bulging eyes are clearly visible as is the thorax and the stylised segmented abdomen. Why is it here? A possible explanation lies in the original position of the pillar viz. part of the trumeau leading to the baptismal pool. Dragonflies before maturity live their nymphal state in water which could symbolise life. When the nymph is ready to leave the water, it crawls up a suitable structure and then splits its case to emerge as a free flying mature insect. This could be symbolic of a new life in Christ or of a new birth.



Subscription

If you or friends you may know would like to take out an annual subscription and receive copies by post please send details of your name, address and telephone number with a cheque for £24:00, made out to Southwell Cathedral Chapter, to Christine Kent, 16 Halloughton Road, Southwell, Notts, NG25 0LR.

For more information please contact me on 01636 812750 or email: chris.kent100@btinternet.com. If you live in Southwell I will be happy to deliver your copies by hand and the annual cost will be £15:00.

Christine Kent (on behalf of the editorial team)

Readers will see that this edition does not include the usual contacts list. If you wish to contact a member of the clergy or have other urgent reasons for contacting Minster staff please call 01636 812593.

If you are interested in submitting an article for consideration for the October/November issue, please email your offering to hugh.middleton@nottingham.ac.uk by 10th September 2020 .
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Welcome to the August/September edition of Southwell Leaves

The doors of Southwell Minster are unlocked, but the 'Year of No Hugs' continues. We are in the transition phase between complete lockdown during the worst of the coronavirus pandemic and the full gamut of the Minster's activities. As we go to press, the Minster is open from 11.00 am till 3.00pm each day, and there is a shortened schedule of services. Many people have been delighted to return to live services, sitting on widely-spaced seats, while others are more comfortable to continue for now worshipping at online services – something that we continue for some time yet. Our cover photo of the empty nave suggests possibilities for the future. Welcome to this late-summer edition!

First, there are things you won't find in this edition. The list of services stops on September 6th. Though there are hopes about what may start up again, we only wish to publicise events that will definitely happen. There is no Contacts Page, as many team members will still be furloughed during August, and the Minster Office will only open during September, once everything is COVID-proof and it is safe for staff members to return. There are no reports from Sacrista Prebend, the Music Foundation or the Education Department, as their work will not resume for some time yet.

However, after nearly four months, there are services in the Minster again, and Dean Nicola reflects on this significant event in 'From the Dean' on page 4. We also print an abridged version of her sermon on July 5th, the first service for fifteen weeks. The medical and government advice is that there should be no singing,

so organ music to reflect the meaning of the words is played at points during the service. As time goes by, you can email <https://www.southwellminster.org/worship/pew-news/> to read the weekly Pew News and get up-to-date information about what is planned.

The magazine includes accounts of what happened during lockdown - from an English schoolgirl, from France and from an online medical conference. There's a report from those who pray silently every Thursday. Two groups of rural parishes in the neighbouring part of our diocese have described their church life during those restricted months. There are also articles about what can be learned from living through a pandemic: Tom Hislop and Vincent Ashwin contribute their thoughts about the ecological movement and the need to conserve and respect the natural world. Jim Wellington refutes the theory that COVID-19 was a punishment from God.

The coronavirus especially hit those in living in poverty and in minority communities, and this coincided with world-wide demonstrations about racism. We publish articles by David Shannon and Hugh Middleton that ask what a Christian response to divisions in society should be.

So there is plenty to think about, and we hope you enjoy this magazine.

Vincent Ashwin

Towards our Ecological Awareness

'Bishop John Robinson, in his book 'The New Reformation?', has this to say: We have got to relearn that 'the house of God' is primarily the world in which God lives, not the contractor's hut set up in the grounds . .' (Quoted by Dean Martyn Percy of Christ Church, Oxford in 'Reflections for Daily Prayer 2019/2020', Monday 6 July).

Pause for Thought

For the last few years there has been a *Thought for the Week* in the Minster's Pew News. Here are two quotes from 2016.

Discipleship

Following Jesus does not mean slavishly copying his life. It means making his choice of life your own, starting from your own potential, and in the place where you find yourself. It means living for the values for which Jesus lived and died.

Rule for a New Brother, Edited by Henri Nouwen (DLT 2nd edition, 1986), Section 2

Our inter-connectedness

The 'island illusion' seduces us into believing ourselves to be self-sufficient. We know that the world consists of oceans, continents and islands but we are much less likely to reflect that, underneath the fluctuating water-levels, the world is actually just one single lump of rock. The continents and islands dominate our attention because they contribute very significantly to our identity, culture, language and sense of security. Not really surprising, then, that we can attach more importance to our island-independence than to the oneness of the bedrock beneath. ...But isolationism breeds fear, while Jesus constantly assures us that perfect love casts out fear.

From Margaret Silf, 'Wayfaring', Doubleday 2002, pp 23-4, 39



From the Dean - Writing History

On the day the Minster held its first service of public worship after 'lockdown', I asked Michael Tawn, our Deputy Head Verger, to write history in the Service Register in case the Honorary Librarian or County Archivist in 2520 AD wonders what happened in the spring and early summer of the Year of Our Lord 2020. He made an appropriately bold entry across a whole page. It is now a permanent record inscribed in black registrar's ink:

'The Cathedral was closed on 23rd March 2020 by the order of Her Majesty's Government as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Worship continued online. The Cathedral reopened for private prayer on 16th June and for public worship on 5th July.'

I still feel emotional and shocked absorbing the reality that for all those days we were unable to meet for physical worship.

When restrictions were lifted in mid-June, permitting us at last to reopen for private prayer and reflection, it felt a huge relief. Making the Minster 'COVID-compliant', to use the public health jargon, meant putting up garish warning notices, introducing a one-way system, opening the West doors to increase ventilation, marking the floor with the then required two metre distance, and rearranging chairs. A generous donation arrived on the very day we needed to order hand sanitiser units and personal protective equipment. We quickly organised a rota of clergy to be present each day during the four hours the Minster was open. The lit Paschal candle was set in the centre of the nave as a symbol of the risen Christ in our midst, radiating hope and light for all the world and its future. Tears, relief, joy, a sense of home coming, the unburdening of sorrow, loneliness, anxiety, thanksgiving, remembrance of a loved one - all human emotion seemed to be unlocked within the hearts of those who came - nearly 600 in 19 days.

Yes, the Church has been fully alive although the doors were locked; creative online worship bringing people together even at a distance, pastoral care, praying from our homes, support for the vulnerable in the community

all showed we were not asleep. But our sacred buildings comfort us psychologically because in them we are not alone, we are surrounded by the Church living and departed. They are holy places where, in T S Eliot's famous phrase, 'prayer has been valid'. Even those without a professed faith rarely leave unmoved.

I have resisted the phrase the 'new normal' but we now seem to be emerging from 'lockdown' tentatively knowing that much is uncertain. Many of our plans for this year have had to be postponed. The editors kindly asked to print my sermon preached on our first Sunday back together to share in the Sunday Eucharist - well, 60 of us pre booked, no singing, hugs or handshakes - but at least we were gathered around Christ in word and sacrament. I mention how these four months have amplified the pressing needs of our times into which now the Church is called to bring the light, love, and compassion of Christ.

'We cannot afford to forget any experience, even the most painful', wrote Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary General of the UN and author of the spiritual classic 'Markings'. There is indeed still much to process, learn and change as we recover clarity of vision and mission for the future.

May these summer weeks allow you time for rest, recreation and reflection.

Every blessing, Dean Nicola



Update on Chapter House Leaves project

Heritage Conservation Restoration Ltd, the excellent contractors working on the Quire roof repair and replacement phase of the project, were off site for six weeks, but when they returned in early May they progressed fast with impressive determination and caught up - helped by the fact that work was not interrupted by services! The scaffolding will be dismantled by the time you read this article.

The next phase of work has begun in the slype and Chapter House. The team from Croft are removing slabs to prepare for the installation of underfloor heating and for the first time in its history of over 700 years - electricity. A cantilever lift will ensure that access can be for everyone. This means that there is some disruption to the north quire aisle and across to the south door. The area is closed to the public, but a time lapse camera will capture the progress of the work. Sadly, some of the activity work with various groups has had to be postponed or cancelled given the current restrictions.

The work in the garden, and on the paths and external lighting starts in the autumn. Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey trialling the new guidebooks. The various teams and consultants are working well together, and we hope the project will complete by early summer 2021, leading to a big celebration party!

Dean Nicola

The leaves of the tree for



the healing of the nations

Homecoming for weary souls

The sermon preached by Dean Nicola at the Minster's first Sunday after lockdown 5th July

We last gathered for the Eucharist in the middle of Lent, 119 days and fifteen Sundays ago. In some ways, it still feels like Lent. I remember Ash Wednesday vividly and sensing that things were uncertain and fragile as coronavirus took its grip of the world. We could not imagine then what we see now, or the way it was to suddenly change our worship and freedom to gather and so many ordinary everyday things like leaving home to go to work or shopping or school.

Lent begins with that most profound symbolic action of the liturgy. The ashes are imposed on our forehead in the sign of the cross with the words: 'Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return: turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ'. We are brought up short, confronted with our fragility and mortality. Lent provokes a spirit of humility based on heartfelt and full repentance, not only for individual sins but for participation in corporate wrongdoing and societal injustice.

COVID 19 has faced us with a good few of those – racial inequality and the ways the virus has hit the poor and vulnerable, the elderly, the lowest paid care workers and bus drivers who we had not given too much thought to before. It has challenged us with uncomfortable issues around climate change and how our lifestyle as insatiable consumers is out of control (which – if you remember that long ago – was the focus for our Lent study); food production methods, the exploitation of animals, which may have triggered this virus to mutate to humans. It has highlighted the millions of children and adults for whom to stay home is not to stay safe, and the plight and suffering of the two-thirds world is unimaginable.

We've seen that humanity seems to have made some poor choices and now we're living with the consequences. St Paul names this strange separation from ourselves and deep dissatisfaction as sin. *'I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do'* (Romans 7:19). We want to do what is right, and do not do it. We find goodness compelling, but we do not do it.

Paul knows that God has rescued us from this deep disorder in Jesus Christ. But there is still transformation to undergo for each one of us. We have to learn through all the circumstances and seasons of life, to see and to desire what is right and good – not just for us but for others. This is part of our return to God, what St Augustine describes as 'coming home to ourselves', for in that humbling action we discover more of the abundant goodness and compassion of God even in our foolishness, our restlessness, our dis-ease. So, paradoxically, being in God's service is 'perfect freedom' says Augustine. God's desire for our wellbeing and the healing of the world is forever calling us to a new future, a new hope...

In this 'COVID-prolonged Lent', have we reassessed priorities, our use of time, relationships that may need mending? It's good to ask 'What have I learned?' What is going to be important, going on from here? Many report they have rediscovered the routine and the gift of daily prayer, and

contemplative prayer (some 70 of us on Monday evening). The church buildings may have closed but we have prayed from our hearts and homes. Yes, we have missed the fellowship of church, the sharing in the sacrament but God has been faithful and present. For those back in church today, it is perhaps especially critical to ask 'What have I found "gift" through this time; for what can I thank God?'

Where do we look for the wisdom that offers security in an anxious and turbulent world and rest for the soul? Jesus says in his most quoted and most tender of sayings; 'Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest'. Learn by being yoked like an ox in a plough team, following wherever he goes.

I wonder if the Church needs again to rediscover this simplicity, gentleness, humility of heart. How can we be a blessing to our communities? How can we call home to God those likely four million heading for unemployment, or the students feeling hopeless about their plans for university, or those who have been utterly torn apart by loneliness, those searching for rest for their soul? Do we need to rediscover the generous hospitality of God in Christ, and share it?

It may feel like a prolonged Lent but no, Death has been conquered. Light has overcome darkness. There is nothing to fear. Today some will receive the sacrament after the long fast: for others they must wait. But all of us are hungry for the resurrection, new purpose and direction and hope only God can bring in Christ.



Christ the Light of the World, by Peter Eugene Ball

Living at Three Miles per Hour

The restrictions we all faced during the height of the 2020 pandemic had some unusual results. One was that the footpaths in the local area became well worn by passing walkers. At the early stage we were told, 'Stay at home, but you may leave the house once a day for an hour of exercise,' so most people did indeed go out. At all times of day, people walked out into the fields and lanes: workers before or after a day at the computer screen, parents with or without their children, pensioners afraid of claustrophobia. And what did we find?



Lincoln Red calves at Brackenhurst

We found farming and we saw the diversity of crops grown in our area: we were walking through fields of wheat, barley, oats, linseed, oil-seed rape, sugar-beet, turnips, potatoes, miscanthus for bio-fuel, and hay, maize and beans for animals' winter feed. In Norwood Park dozens of workers, many of them flown in from Eastern Europe, began as early as 5.30am to pick the summer fruit.

Walking also made us feel a part of Creation, rather than an observer of it, and it was obvious how the concept of Mother Earth was born. Wild-life has proliferated this year. Fewer cars on the roads meant it was easier to hear familiar birdsongs: blackbirds and thrushes in our gardens, swallows and house martins near farms, skylarks and yellow-hammers over the fields, chiffchaffs and wrens among the trees, and buzzards and swifts soaring everywhere. People reported seeing foxes, hares and roe deer within half a mile of town. Butterflies, bees and dragonflies fed among the cow-parsley, poppies and rushes. Life at walking-pace means seeing, hearing and smelling the countryside with clearer senses.



Alongside the River Trent

However, there are fewer birds and insects than there used to be. Climate change and intensive farming have affected our environment, and – according to many scientists – the pandemics of the last twenty years are connected with our misuse of Creation. Brackenhurst College gives us some guidelines for the future. Though we missed the Rogation procession this year, walking through the estate has helped us appreciate its work, and to understand the college's name as the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Studies of Nottingham Trent University. Food production and care for the environment (what Christians call 'Creation') run side by side.

Brackenhurst runs what appears to be a model farm, where the crops look healthy, there are strips of woodland, and each field has a margin for wild-life. Though the erecting of a wind turbine on university land had been prevented, caring for the future of the planet in other ways features heavily in courses advertised at the campus. Disconcerting clunks emerge from the glasshouse area, where research is being done into producing food in places where energy and water supplies are limited. The herd of Lincoln Red beef cattle and horses from the equine centre eat contentedly in the fields. This is farming at its best.

Farming and the natural world feature largely in the teachings of Christ. 'Jesus went through the cornfields on the Sabbath.' 'I am the good shepherd', he said. 'Hear the parable of the sower'. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed'. 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.' These were the words of a rural man in an agricultural age two thousand years ago, and Christians have continued to see God in the natural world.

The fourth-century poet-theologian, St Ephrem the Syrian, wrote many hymns which are full of theological reflections on the created order. God has two witnesses, he taught: Scripture and Nature, which both testify to God's beauty, goodness and love. England has a tradition of naturalist parsons, most notably Gilbert White, who combined being vicar of Selborne with describing in detail the flora and fauna of his parish, in wonder at its complexity. Many of us have prayed to God in the natural world over the years, maybe on a mountain or by the sea or looking at a sunset. God speaks through his

creation, and this is picked up in the Creation Season which the Church of England now asks us to celebrate each September.

Now that lockdown is over, will we all go back to being more sedentary, and walk less? The COVID-19 restrictions were an interruption to normal life, and we can't go back to a pre-car and pre-computer age. But maybe we will act to prevent further climate change by flying off for fewer holidays, eating more sustainably, driving smaller cars and being more energy-efficient. We can give support to the inter-faith leaders who have called on the Government to ensure its post-COVID economic recovery plan does not bypass care for the Environment. If we remain as close to the heartbeat of the planet and to local farming as many of us felt during those months living at three miles per hour, we will treat Mother Earth with more respect.

Vincent Ashwin

The 5-Bar Gate

During the lockdown, as you can see on page 9, the weekly meetings for Silence and Meditation have continued online. One of our members, Olga Hudson, has ensured that we have had a leader for the day. So, on July 9th I contributed the following meditation *The 5-bar gate*, which in turn was the inspiration for Helen Sills' beautiful poem *The Holy Spirit*. We hope that you will find these two pieces a blessing on your own journeys.

On Father's Day last month my daughter presented me with a copy of *Soulful Nature* by Brian Draper and Howard Green (Canterbury Press: 2020). The authors have been close friends for many years and the book is an account of a series of walks they took together in what they call the 'South Country'.

The walks were leisurely, short (2-3 miles) and fairly unstructured. As I started to read their diary accounts, I found that I could relate to their laid-back approach that resembled the permitted daily exercise allowance of the recent Covid-19 restrictions.

Most days during 'Lockdown' Kay and I set out on a short walk, often being uncertain exactly where we would walk to and for how long. Most often we would set off away from Southwell along Kirklington Road. The route is wooded or bounded by high hedges, and the overall effect is often rather gloomy – until you get to the '5-bar gate' where suddenly there is an open view across Norwood Park Golf Course.

On one July walk Brian Draper and Howard Green discovered just such a view at Salisbury 'And here is a 5-bar gate, and a 5-bar gate always seems to offer an invitation. 'Stop. Learn. Watch'(p.91).

So here we are in Southwell, (please join us) leaning on the 5-bar gate: resting - it's hot today - and we are glad of the support. Today the view is unobstructed because the golf course is still on lockdown. Nothing is moving apart from a distant crow. We watch a bit longer, but still nothing moves; somewhere, hidden in the bushes, a song thrush is practising his repetitive melody - surely his mate is impressed. Another evening: same gate, and we meet a friend walking the other way. 'How are you?' 'Fine, you ok?' 'Yes. Be glad when it will be over'. Another day: Same gate: another friend; 'Ok' 'Yes. Bye'. People have suddenly become friendly, (even when we are passing by on the other side, keeping 'social distance').

But remember we are in no hurry; the view does not change much as the weeks pass, but we are still here. 'Perhaps we will walk a bit further tomorrow; or how about going round the other way?' The gate is about halfway, and we will be glad of the rest.

Funny gate this; and I know, strictly speaking it's a 7-bar one, but who's counting, and 7-bar seems more poetic. It's functional grey steel. In fact, it's a double gate. Can't be for golfers. Or walkers (not allowed). One of life's unsolved mysteries. Hurry home before the rain comes.

Then one day a sign has sprouted at the gate – one of those bright yellow folding ones. It reads 'Road Closed for one day on June 19th'. Will we be able to get through? Better go a different way. Pity, I was getting to look forward to the daily walk to the 5-bar gate.

Jesus said 'Enter by the narrow gate. Wide is the gate and broad the road that leads to destruction, and many enter that way; narrow is the gate and constricted the road that leads to life, and those that find them are few' (Mathew 7:13-14)

Robin Old



Helen Sills wrote a poem in response to this meditation

The Holy Spirit

The road is gloomy
Brief shafts of sunlight
Pierce the dark
Swift as will o' the wisp
They vanish

The road is winding
Potholes, slippery surfaces
Uneven slabs
The sunlight promises
Sight for the stumbler

We struggle to reach the gate
Where promise beckons
But is elusive

The gate is light
A single finger
Opens it

She/He will come through
And walk with us
As we carry along
The treacherous road

Side by side
Our unseen helper and guide.

God and the Coronavirus

[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author

'It's all because of same-sex marriage' a neighbour said to me. 'What is?' I asked, puzzled. 'The coronavirus, of course', he said. 'It's God's way of punishing us for allowing gays to marry each other'. Somewhat surprised, and being in a hurry, I simply said, 'Oh, I don't think God works in that way', and left it at that. Later in the day, while on Facebook, I came across a number of posts from Christians, offering their thoughts on the theological origins of Covid-19. The theme of divine judgment featured strongly, though the precise motive for the holy wrath took different forms, depending on the chosen whipping post of each contributor.

Two things, in particular, disturbed me about these posts. First of all, there was the deeply misguided and grossly insensitive opportunism which was on display, even worn as a badge of honour, by my brothers and sisters in Christ. A virus is killing thousands of people and plunging so many families into grief and loss, and the message from the followers of Christ is, 'You deserve it'.

Secondly, I felt an inner shame and revulsion against the caricature of my God which was being presented to the world through such a superficial analysis. To be sure, the Bible is awash with plenty of stories and images of God's wrath, mainly, though not exclusively, in the Old Testament. The expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, Noah and the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, to name but a few.

Throughout the Old Testament there is an overwhelming concern to protect the holiness of God from human contamination. This concern forms the basis for the laws excluding certain people from public worship. And indeed, the expulsion, annihilation and destruction of those who suffered in the three stories above can all be read in this light. The Holy God cannot live with unholiness, and therefore the unholy have to be eliminated. This is the assumption on which my neighbour and the Facebook contributors base their theological interpretations of human catastrophe.

What if, however, that assumption has been surpassed? What if the image of a Holy God who has to be protected from His unholy creatures no longer holds sway? What if, far from demanding His own protection from unholiness God plunges, in person, straight into the mess that human beings have made of His creation? What if God says, as He did through the mouth of the prophet of the exile (Isaiah 43:18-19), 'Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'

In the Incarnation of Christ, the Word made flesh, God has done all these things. He is no longer the Untouchable who demands justice, but the Crucified One who forgives His murderers. He is no longer the disgusted Creator who drives His disobedient creatures out of His presence, but the generous Father whose unconditional love welcomes back the wayward son. He is no longer the harsh lawgiver who decrees death for marital infidelity, but the merciful rabbi who refuses to condemn the adulteress. Christ is the 'new thing' which God does. And all our theological interpretations have to be funnelled through Him. So, if we are looking for God in the coronavirus crisis, we do not start with divine judgment. We start with divine love and mercy.

And we do not have to look very far to see Him at work. We see Him, first and foremost, in the dedicated health professionals and carers, who regularly attend the victims of this dreadful disease. We see Him in those who place themselves daily on the line for the sake of those within their care. We see Him in those who willingly and tragically lay down their lives for those whom they are seeking to save. This is the God whom we see and worship and adore in Christ, and not the caricature which belongs to the 'former things' and the 'things of old'.



Jim Wellington

Bible Verses for Reflection



God with us

God said [*during Jacob's dream of a ladder between earth and heaven*], 'Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!' And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

How God works

Jesus said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

Mark 4: 30-32

Suggestions based on the ancient tradition of Sacred Reading ('Lectio Divina')

- Read the verses slowly, perhaps more than once.
- If any word or phrase strikes you in particular, stay with it, repeating it quietly to yourself.
- Reflect about what God might be saying to you through this.
- Move into quietness, resting in God's loving presence.

What if 2020 is the year we've been waiting for?

The Silence and Meditation Group during Lockdown

During the lockdown, the Thursday Silence and Meditation Group has been far from idle. How could we continue with our life and with our meditations? Move onto email? Surely not; our meetings are live, and we didn't have any e-addresses. Zoom? Too visual for silent prayer. Overnight the term leader, whose e-skills were abysmal, morphed into a compiler/ weaver, giving birth to a format more structured than that 'on the ground' in the hope of welding us all together.

So on the first Thursday of the official lockdown, those of us who could, found a quiet place at our usual time, lit a candle, said our usual Candle Prayer and settled down to our first e-Meditation, kindly prepared by Canon Richard with very little notice. Mysteriously, some of us were acutely aware of each other's presence. It was the day after The Annunciation. Reflecting on risk, Richard pointed out that, in creating and entering humanity, God had put himself at risk, as Creator and Saviour; a risk whose tragic consequences were ultimately overturned by the empty tomb; a risk also entered by Christ's Mother, in her joys and in her sorrows. His conclusion? 'God still places himself into our hands, just as he placed himself, as a writhing, screaming, new born babe, into Mary's loving, girlish arms.'

The remaining examples demonstrate changes of mood over the whole period. Angela Lane faced full-on the very real agony of the Crisis by sharing some words by Richard Rohr that she had found particularly helpful. His subject was the Lamentation Psalms, especially Psalm 22, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* Stressing the need for Christians to develop physical, emotional and spiritual resistance, he wrote: 'Prayers of lamentation arise in us when we sit and speak out to God and one another, stunned, sad, and silenced by the tragedy and absurdity of human events'. His final conclusion, however, was that although at these times the agony was acute, such psalms always ended with an upward thrust.

In April Angela Ashwin and Olga Hudson ensured that we were able to face both the agony of Holy Week and the joy of Easter, gathered all together in the same spiritual space. Fortunately by now, our members were being greatly sustained by the Minster's online streaming. We also found we could 'embrace' the Group at the start and end of the session, and could pray with gestures to remarkable effect during a very slow 'reading' of Angela's poem *A New Crown of Thorns*.

In May, Elizabeth Yule revealed that shielding in solitude was, remarkably, a place of calm acceptance and wonder. Asking herself, 'Why, in the midst of all the sorrow, grief and uncertainty here and throughout the world would I be thinking about the Kingdom of Heaven?' She named the slow pace of life, the acceptance of solitude and the discovery of what was of most real value to her: the selflessness of others, kind neighbours, precious contact with even faraway family and friends and, yes, online worship. In her permitted daily exercise hour, she had time to take a little early morning walk, especially to see the cowslips on the Potwell Dyke Grasslands, to watch the antics of the birds from her window and to see the trees come into leaf. Finally, she left us with a jewel - an unforgettable poem by R.S.

Thomas, *The Bright Field*, which she had once read, at his request, to a dying friend. [The poem can be found online.] By contrast, in early July, Kate Sartain, quoting Ecclesiastes 3 (that there is a time for everything), and only too conscious of the needs of the world, insisted that **now** is a time for change. She used this poem by Leslie Wight, sent to her by her daughter as an illustration.

What if 2020 isn't cancelled?

What if 2020 is the year we've been waiting for?

A year so uncomfortable, so painful, so scary, so raw – that it finally forces us to grow.

A year that screams so loud, finally awakening us from our ignorant slumber.

A year we finally accept the need for change.

Declare change. Work for change. Become the change.

A year we finally band together, instead of pushing each other further apart.

2020 isn't cancelled, but rather, the most important year of them all?

As you can see, whether in or out of lockdown ('cocooning'), as a longstanding Group, we were well used to running ourselves. Of the 19 Meditations (until 31.7), most were 'home grown'. And that's only half the story, for members also sent in prayers and intercessions; the prayers often coming from Angela Ashwin's helpful compilations. A special joy was the return as e-members of people who had either left the district or found our usual timing too difficult.

Significantly, our meditations mirror the composition our group: different Anglican traditions, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic and Orthodox Christian thought. Nonetheless, wherever we have come from and wherever we are, it is silence, deep silence, and friendship that bind us all together.

Olga Hudson



What are the Church's Priorities?

David Shannon asks:

Do we build up the Church by tearing statues down?

It is said that at the siege of Constantinople in 1204 the Church Leaders were debating within the city. Among their topics were the number of angels that could dance on the head of a pin. They went on to discuss if a fly fell in holy water, was the water polluted or the fly sanctified? I cannot help but feel that often our temptation as Christians is to be side-lined into discussions which are peripheral to God's purpose for us.

As I write, Canterbury Cathedral has confirmed that its artworks are 'under review' to ensure that any connected with slavery, colonialism or other contentious figures are, 'contextualised or pulled down'. This is of course in response to the media storm following the tearing down of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol. Colston followed his father into the family business, trading wine, fruits, textiles and slaves until his death in 1721.

I have some difficulty in any widespread attempt to censor history. One reason is that when you start, where do you stop? Should we remove statues of Norman overlords because they enslaved the Anglo-Saxons after 1066? Secondly, should people today be made to feel guilty over wrongs committed by their forebears in another age with different values? I find the modern vogue of people (often politicians) apologising for past historical wrongs both vacuous and unnecessary. Thirdly, we need to avoid 'being conformed to this world' as Paul advises in Romans 12 v2 but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. 'Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will' (NIV translation). Our world's current obsessions do not need to become a stage on which we tread.

My recourse for guidance always starts with scripture. Corinth was a large, cosmopolitan city, successful in trade in Paul the Apostle's time. Yet Paul's letter, preserved as 1 Corinthians, spoke to them then as I believe we need to speak to ourselves now. Corinth was multi-cultural, with statues to both Roman and Greek gods. They prided themselves on their religious tolerance, allowing statues of the Roman overlords alongside Apollo and Aphrodite. Strangely to our modern ears, Paul does not once suggest tearing these statues down. Not even those of the Roman tyrants! Instead Paul inveighs against the Corinthian church for their failure to treat properly the

Eucharist, which had become more a social occasion than a spiritual one. He also criticised their tendency to seek litigation in the courts when two church members had fallen out! But above all he condemned their tribalism. They would latch onto

the newest church orator and put him on a pedestal. Paul's 'rival' was a great preacher called Apollos. Paul appealed to them to refrain from factionalism: 'What after all is Apollos, what is Paul? I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow!' (1 Cor 3 v 5 :NIV). Paul was evidently not as exciting an orator as Apollos, but it did not matter. 'For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building'. We should resist ephemeral issues diverting the church.

What then would Paul be saying to Christians in our time? In 1 Corinthians: 3 he gives some principles to the believers in Corinth. He likens the church in Corinth to any of the great buildings his readers would see every day. He emphasises the importance of good foundations, of building materials and the quality of each stone.

The foundation of everything should be the gospel of Jesus Christ. If the church is not proclaiming the importance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, then its work (however up to date on worldly issues) will have poor foundations. With a sure foundation the church can build, but it must prioritise, because building materials can be gold, but can equally be wood, hay or straw! Of the issues with which our church life is now dominated, which will prove to be straw, blown away on the next wind?

To Paul, the most important issue in church building was the 'costly stones' (v12). These are the people who make up the membership of the church. If, as in Corinth, the depth of their spiritual life was shallow ('infantile' 1 Corinthians 3v2) the church would totter. But if each stone was strong and well placed, the building would stand as a witness to Christ and his Resurrection. In the early days, Paul mentioned Christ and his Resurrection so often that at times listeners thought Resurrection was another person!

Where does this leave the church on vital issues such as funding its crumbling buildings, maintaining a quality of worship, meeting the needs of the poor and vulnerable or reaching out to generations whose thinking has been dominated by secular scepticism? Let alone issues within the church such as financial viability, offering equal opportunities without fear or favour in participation and employment and safeguarding all worshippers. Our commission is to stand up as witnesses to the



Our art often reflects our own context. A wall painting from the Cathedral in Orvieto, Italy.



European churches interpret Christian figures in their own artistic way

life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To preach it, to teach it and to live it. Then all aspects of church life will prosper?

No doubt Christians will have a view (or many views, if we are like the Corinthians) on contemporary issues, such as Covid-19 and its effects. Also, on climate change, on the fact that all lives matter, on globalisation and the distribution of wealth and on the issues of statues both within and outside our churches! In a recent interview on Radio 4, our Archbishop Justin was asked if the trespasses should be forgiven of those symbolised by statues, rather than tearing the statues down? He is quoted as replying: "We can only do that if we have got justice, which means the statue needs to be put in context. Some will have to come down".

I disagree! The life of Christ and his followers must be characterised by unconditional forgiveness, as Christ showed on the Cross. We may disagree with aspects of the past life of some historical figures whose statues adorn our churches and public places. But if we wait for justice for the wrongs they may have committed, we will wait in vain! WE must forgive their wrongs and move on. Not least because in the context of their times, they knew not the wrongs which they did.

Father Hosam becomes Bishop Hosam

On Sunday 14th June the Very Reverend Hosam E. Naoum was ordained as Bishop in the Church of God and Coadjutor Bishop in the Diocese of Jerusalem. The consecration took place at the Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr, Jerusalem. Hosam was consecrated by three bishops, according to the constitution. Archbishop Suheil Dawani of Jerusalem, who will retire next year, was joined by Archbishop Michael Lewis, Bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf, and Bishop Peter Eaton (Southeast Florida) from the Episcopal Church of the USA. Bishop Hosam will become the Archbishop of Jerusalem following the retirement of Archbishop Suheil next year.

Though there were restrictions on the size of the congregation owing to the pandemic, there was still an atmosphere of great excitement and joy as the ceremony took place. Fortunately a brilliantly filmed live-stream of the event via YouTube meant that those with an internet connection could see the proceedings. (The photos in this article are from the computer screen!)



Bishop Hosam thanks his family, friends and colleagues in the Holy Land and around the world



Hosam kneels, ready for the laying-on of hands

From the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

For friends in Southwell who have known Hosam and the Church in the Holy Land for many years, there were some special moments at the heart of the service. We saw him smile shyly at his mother and his wife Rafa as they helped him to put on his cope, ready to be consecrated. Father Fuad of St Paul's Shefa'Amr sang 'Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire' unaccompanied in Arabic, to the plainsong tune but with some Arab ornamentation. Suheil kissed Hosam on both cheeks as part of the ceremony. There was a genuine atmosphere of humility and awe during the service, rather than pomp and power. This showed itself especially as Hosam thanked his family and colleagues for their support and for entrusting him with his new role.

Archbishop Justin Welby, as leader of the Anglican Communion, sent a message which was read out: 'We have known you and your marvellous family for years, and you have been an example and inspiration. I am utterly delighted to be working with you.'

There were greetings from the Most Revd Michael Curry, on behalf of US Anglicans and Palestinian Anglicans in the USA. 'What a wonderful moment for Anglicans around the world who look to Jerusalem as a spiritual home! A bishop belongs to all, to bear the burdens of all. If this is true of every bishop, it perhaps true of our bishop in Jerusalem most of all. Not only are you known and much loved within the [US] Episcopal Church; you are deeply respected by leaders of our worldwide Communion and of other churches. You have played an important ecumenical role in enabling the churches to speak clearly on behalf of all the peoples of the Holy Land. You have been a highly sensitive pastor. At a time of increasing world tension, we celebrate the crucial relationships that you have built with the leadership of the three great Abrahamic faiths and the people of the countries that make up your diocese.'

A message came from Canada too: 'Hospitality, to friends and strangers alike, has been a sign of the inclusive love of God. We are glad that the schools and hospitals of the diocese will be safe in the hands of someone as able and gracious as yourself.'

The people of Southwell Minster wish the new bishop well.

Services at Southwell Minster

*Morning Prayer takes place via Microsoft Teams. To take part, email dean@southwellminster.org.uk.

**Booking recommended: go to <https://www.southwellminster.org/worship/services-calendar/>.

August

1 Saturday

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

2 SUNDAY

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

10.00am Cathedral Eucharist**
(CW; in the Minster/online)

3.00pm Evening Prayer with
Organ Reflections**

3 Monday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

4 Tuesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

10.00am Funeral of Kathleen
Beacroft RIP

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

5 Wednesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

6 Thursday

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (BCP)

7 Friday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

8 Saturday

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

9 SUNDAY

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

10.00am Cathedral Eucharist**
(CW; in the Minster/online)

12 noon Holy Baptism

3.00pm Evening Prayer with
Organ Reflections**

10 Monday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

11 Tuesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

12 Wednesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

13 Thursday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (BCP)

14 Friday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

15 Saturday

The Blessed Virgin Mary

12 noon Holy Communion (CW)

2.00pm Holy Matrimony

16 SUNDAY

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

10.00am Cathedral Eucharist**
(CW; in the Minster/online)

12 noon Holy Baptism

3.00pm Evening Prayer with
Organ Reflections**

17 Monday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

18 Tuesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

19 Wednesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

20 Thursday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (BCP)

21 Friday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

22 Saturday

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

23 SUNDAY

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

10.00am Cathedral Eucharist**
(CW; in the Minster/online)

3.00pm Evening Prayer with
Organ Reflections**

24 Monday

Bartholomew the Apostle

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

25 Tuesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

26 Wednesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

27 Thursday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (BCP)

28 Friday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

29 Saturday

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

30 SUNDAY

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

10.00am Cathedral Eucharist**
(CW; in the Minster/online)

3.00pm Evening Prayer with
Organ Reflections**

31 Monday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

September

1 Tuesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

2 Wednesday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

3 Thursday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (BCP)

4 Friday

8.30am Morning Prayer*

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

5 Saturday

1.15pm Holy Communion (CW)

6 SUNDAY

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

10.00am Cathedral Eucharist**
(CW; in the Minster/online)

3.00pm Evening Prayer with
Organ Reflections**

From the Canon Precentor

We live in interesting times! It feels very odd not to be able to submit full two months' service listings for *Leaves*, but given the rate at which events are tending to move at the moment, September feels a long way away!



We are now settled into a pattern of worship which will take us through the summer – a 10.00 am Eucharist and 3.00 Evening Prayer on Sundays (still without singing, sadly), and on weekdays a 1.15 service of Holy Communion. Also, Morning Prayer is said by a group of us on the internet via Microsoft Teams – a group which others are always welcome to join. A parallel Eucharist on Sundays will continue to be broadcast on the Minster website. A decision is yet to be taken as to whether the online Compline service, broadcast at 7.30 pm on Thursdays, will continue through the summer, so that service does not appear on this list; please see Pew News for updates.

Once September arrives, all things being equal, we anticipate that life may take another step back in the direction of normality, and our pattern of worship may shift again. What that means, and whether any greater musical input will be possible, remains to be seen. Again, please keep an eye on Pew News or the website. It is wonderful for some of us to be back in the Minster worshipping; but whether we pray in church or at home, God is with us, and will guide us step by step into the future he has prepared for us, in which we are called serve him.

Lay Clerk in Lockdown



Guy Turner pictured on the right

I have been a lay clerk at the Minster for nearly twelve years. Having never been a lay clerk [professional singer in a cathedral choir] before, it was an incredible pleasure to become one in my fifties, and suddenly to take part in wonderful singing five times a week. So to have this taken away by lockdown is very frustrating. I miss the singing very much indeed, and it is a source of constant anxiety not knowing when we will be able to sing again - and for that matter, when the Bingham Choral Society which I conduct will be able to re-group.

Luckily the social side of the Lay clerks – which is something of a second family – keeps going on Zoom through quiz nights and 'virtual pub'. Although I live on my own, I have been too busy to be bored or depressed, as some of my work in the quiz industry continues, and I have been very lucky to have been commissioned to compose several pieces of music to keep me busy. (But I also thank heaven for the family 'bubbles' that are now becoming possible!)

But none of this makes up for not being able to sing.

Guy Turner

The music will play on with Southwell Music Festival

Southwell Music Festival has become a main stay in the town's cultural diary since its launch in 2014. Normally in July we would be finalising the plans and logistics involved in bringing a world class festival of choral, chamber and orchestral music to Southwell; and people in the town and further afield would be hurriedly booking tickets for events that would be close to selling out.

In March we were at the point of finalising the 2020 programme, to be held across the August Bank Holiday weekend, when we sadly had to make the decision to firstly cancel our launch event, and then the Festival itself. It's heart-breaking to think we won't be filling the town with music this summer, that our musicians, singers, volunteers and the hard-working committee won't be coming together to create a six day Festival for our loyal friends, and welcoming new audiences to venues across the town, as well as hosting a number of free Festival Fringe events for everyone to enjoy.

As a small charity, a significant proportion of the Festival's annual income is generated through our ticket sales, and even though there isn't a 2020 Festival to finance, there are still annual organisational running costs that need to be met. We have been incredibly fortunate that our supporters and friends have generously donated to our emergency crowdfunding appeal, which to date has raised over £7,000. We would like to extend an enormous thank you to all those who have donated. Your generosity has been appreciated.

Alongside this we also made a successful application to Arts Council England's Emergency Funding scheme. This funding will go some way towards covering our costs and developing the future of the Festival. We would like to publicly thank Arts Council England for this support, knowing that hard decisions have needed to be made at what is an uncertain time for the whole arts and cultural sector.

2020 is now our "fallow year" – time to reflect on all that has been achieved and look towards the Festival's future. We truly hope that we can come together in some way for our annual Christmas celebration at the Minster, and of course to be back with a bang in August 2021 with a Festival that exhilarates and inspires.

Our much-loved Saturday evening concert in the Nave was due to take place on 29 August. We were planning what would have been a spectacular performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony, bringing together Festival performers in what is Beethoven's 250th anniversary year. We invite you to join us in setting aside the evening of 29 August 2020 to listen in your home to your favourite recording of this greatest of all symphonies, a symbol of joy and fellowship which never fails to fill us with hope for the future.

We are very much looking forward to reuniting with our friends, supporters and volunteers in Southwell very soon. We look forward to performing and enjoying music together again as soon as its safe to do so.

If you wish to keep up to date with future Festival news and developments please join our mailing list by visiting southwellmusicfestival.com or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (search Southwell Music Festival).

The online crowdfunding appeal is also still open; should you wish to make a donation please visit southwellmusicfestival.com/Fund2020.

Amy Rushby



Photograph courtesy of Dick Makin

Race, Identity and Faith

Vincent Ashwin on Christian responses to Racism

The killing of George Floyd in the USA in May shocked the world. A bystander filmed the long minutes when a white policeman knelt on the windpipe of a black fellow-American. The protests that were organized under the banner of 'Black Lives Matter' took place all round the world, including the UK, with black and white people of all ages demonstrating together in a unique show of unity. Banners even appeared in Southwell. The main message was nearly lost in indignation about historic statues and mass gatherings where nobody observed social distancing, but the sense of anti-racist solidarity was clear.

Race has recently been discussed in many contexts: Why have so many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people died from coronavirus? How is it there are still racist officers in the police force? When will our country's leading role in trading slaves be recognised? Did racism play a part in the hostility of the press towards Megan, Duchess of Sussex? Will our Church appoint another black diocesan bishop? Clearly there has been progress, but racism is stubbornly persistent, and the Church is not immune.

One cause of racism is to do with identity. There's the extremist view: 'I am British, I belong here, and anyone who is not like me doesn't really belong.' Forty years ago this was called the cricket test: 'If you support the West Indies or Pakistan, you're not truly British.' This simplistic view denies the fact that people can have several identities. Think of Freddie Trueman, who is totally a Yorkshireman and totally English. An Arab in Galilee described to me her four identities: 'I am first Arab, then Palestinian, then a Christian, and then an Israeli citizen.' So a black Londoner can be as British as a white Southwellian, but remain proud of his culture.

A recent BBC drama, *Sitting in Limbo*, was about race and identity. It told the real-life story of Anthony Bryan who came to this country from Jamaica with his mother fifty years ago; she worked with the NHS and he was a painter and decorator. Each week he would support Spurs and then go on to the West Indian social club. But he had no passport and was taken into custody ready for deportation in what is now called The Windrush Scandal. When the deportation was overturned, he was asked by a parliamentary enquiry whether he thought a white Canadian-born Briton would have been threatened with deportation in a similar situation. He thought not, and added, 'I lost everything, my home, my freedom and my identity.' His identity was both black and British.



Banner on the Burgage



Patrick Hutchinson rescues a far-right demonstrator

Another cause of racism is a feeling of superiority over a whole group of people. In the old South Africa, whites often referred to blacks as 'these people', implying that blacks were all the same, all inferior and therefore not to be trusted. I was reminded of this recently when an MP talked about Europeans as 'these people', suggesting that the main thing about them is that they also are different from us.

Sadly this superiority can also be seen in the Church. A black Catholic priest wrote about his experience: 'Consider this vignette: I arrive at a suburban parish whose members are

overwhelmingly white to celebrate Mass for a fellow priest who had suddenly taken sick. I ask the usher to direct me to the vestry. He hesitates and asks, with suspicion, "Why do you want to know?" I explain the situation to him, thinking my clerical collar is already a complete explanation of why I am here. He interrogates me, "You're a priest? Who sent you?" After explaining yet again who I am and why I am here, he responds, "Well, why didn't he send us a real priest?"

In this country, when John Sentamu was appointed Archbishop of York, some church-people were heard to ask, 'Couldn't they find a white one?'

At its best, the Christian Church has worked to stop racism. Quaker Christians were active in the USA abolitionist movement as early as the 18th century. William Wilberforce said it was his Evangelical Christianity that impelled him to help abolish the slave trade in this country. Martin Luther King was a Baptist minister, and it was his reading of the Bible that made him prominent in the American Civil Rights movement. The elderly Al Sharpton who preached at George Floyd's funeral in June was a Baptist colleague of King's. In South Africa the mainstream

churches pressed for the end of apartheid, and leaders like Trevor Huddleston and Desmond Tutu were harassed, imprisoned or exiled for their trouble. Working for justice and against racism is part of the Judaeo-Christian ethic. From the Old Testament prophets to the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns today, believers have pointed out injustices and worked for change.

A lot remains to be done. The danger is that, because most of us in Southwell are white Britons who have never been victims of prejudice, we don't recognise it in ourselves or understand it in others. When we really listen to people's hurt and give time to examining ourselves, then we can be part of the change the needs to come.

Tribalism in the Media and Online

Hugh Middleton

A little while ago I picked up a copy of a current affairs weekly that usually passes me by. It was one of those occasions when I was obliged to sit and wait, and fill the time with whatever reading material was to hand. I imagine we have all had the experience; in the doctor's or the dentist's waiting room or perhaps when visiting friends or relatives. What is to hand might not be what one would buy or subscribe to but needs must and anyway, curiosity beckons.

What struck me on this occasion was how different the tone was from my usual diet of *The Guardian* and *The Observer*. It was a relatively recent edition and much of the commentary concerned Black Lives Matter demonstrations, statues, political correctness, the 'woke' culture [Dictionary definition: 'alert to injustice in society, especially racism'], and experiences of living under 'lockdown'. It was balanced and as critical of authorities as my usual fare, but what struck me was how consistently the content reflected a particular frame of reference. Of course black lives matter, but aren't objectionable leftists taking advantage of the opportunities these demonstrations offer? Weren't J.K. Rowling's now adult film stars behaving ungratefully? Isn't the risk of contracting Covid-19 higher when queuing at Primark, or picnicking in the park higher than attending school? Throughout, and unsurprisingly given the publication in question, the tone was consistently that of a particular world view, and one that differs from mine.

The reminder, for this was far from my first encounter, led me to reflect upon media 'echo chambers'. What was really more striking than views expressed in the publication was the consistency of tone. Returning to my usual fare, of course I found the same phenomenon. Views were different, analyses pointed in different directions and events were portrayed from a different perspective but my own chosen newspapers have an equally consistent tone. I choose to read them and others make different choices, and of course in both cases we choose to read what we want to hear. There is nothing new or surprising about that conclusion, but it may be worth reflecting upon it a little further.

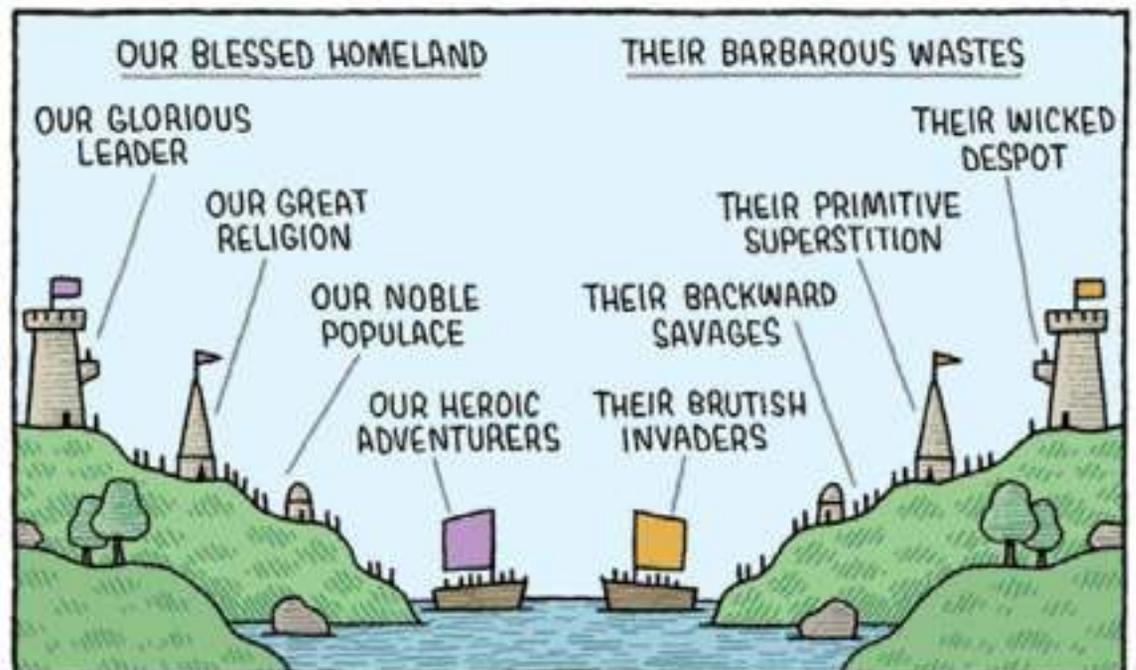
Social science is, at heart, the study of how and why people aggregate into particular patterns of association. There are many ways of understanding why 'birds of a feather flock together', but all are underpinned by the comfort that comes from being in the company of like-minded others. It is easier to feel valued. One's coveted identity is affirmed. There is a shared language and world view, and as a result it is easier to share goals and cooperate over fulfilling them. Much of human history can be read as a story in which different tribes form, consolidate and interact, often quite disastrously. A tribe, in these terms might be a set of people with common ancestry, but it might just as easily be a subgroup within a politically identified nation which has a set of common interests, such as the wealthy landowners of yore, slave owners, or colonial

entrepreneurs. It might be people who reject their biologically determined gender, it might be people who share experiences or perceptions of oppression, or it might just as easily be those who oppose and disagree with them. The core feature of a tribe, in these terms, is that it reflects a grouping of shared views.

Characteristically these are dominated by exaggerated objections to, and the systematic invalidation of other perspectives. In the first instance, huddling together is much more attractive than embracing the stranger.

Digital technology and the social media platforms it has spawned have led to an explosion in the readiness with which like-minded individuals can communicate with one another. They have also led to an explosion in the number and variety of forums available for online communication. Two obvious consequences arise. Firstly, the question of choice; the sheer number of online channels of communication means that a choice has to be made if one is to engage with any. Who still remembers just one or two television channels? Secondly, the consequences of anonymity; one can join an online group (or tribe) without disclosing one's full identity, unlike actually attending a physical meeting or another form of gathering. Together these, and probably other features such as round the clock availability mean that 'tribes' can form much more readily and much less transparently than hitherto. Choice, in particular, makes it much more likely that these will become self-reinforcing echo chambers, where participants are able to engage with and share particularly narrow and specialised views, and find them validated and amplified rather than questioned and debated.

Although the consequences of, for instance, chat rooms that advocate gender fluidity and chat rooms that object to it might appear distinct from longstanding differences between newspapers that lean to the left and newspapers that lean to the right, at root they have much in common: tribalism. Christianity teaches us that we are all the same in God's eyes, and that might be worth remembering when we leap to condemn those holding views or taking positions that differ from our own.



Archaeology in the Residence Garden: the answer to what was happening in the Dean's garden in 2018 /19.

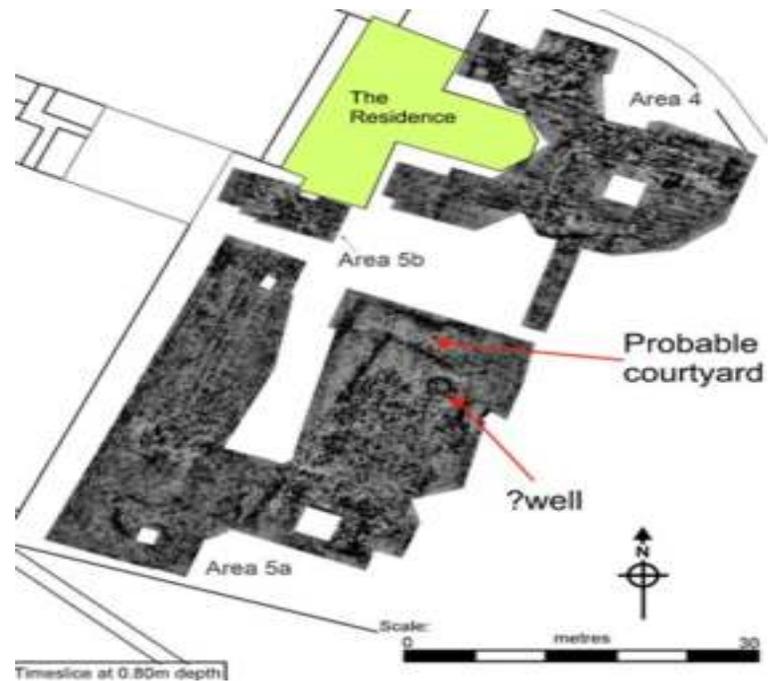
Soon after Dean Nicola moved into the Residence, she and her husband Terry embarked upon re-landscaping the extensive garden. They were aware that the archaeological significance of the Residence garden has been recognised for centuries and it is included in Southwell's Roman Villa Scheduled Ancient Monument. In 2018 they offered Southwell Community Archaeology Group the opportunity of making use of the inevitable upheaval of the landscaping work to carry out a survey. Supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund the project included a study of archive material on the Residence and the architectural stonework scattered throughout the garden. The archaeological survey began by employing ground penetrating radar to look beneath more recent features for anticipated remains of the Villa. The results seemed to confirm the accepted view and the garden indeed appears to contain a courtyard feature which is probably the core of a high status Roman villa.



Neck of 17th Century "bearded man" jug from Cologne

until the present time, builds on previous discoveries and improves our understanding of Southwell's Roman Villa. More recent work in the other gardens of Vicars' Court currently being analysed will add further to our understanding of the Villa to Minster story.

Southwell Community Archaeology Group



Geophysical Survey

A thorough search was made before and during the new landscaping work for material disturbed by previous work and two archaeological trenches were excavated. Large quantities of Roman building materials, such as roof tiles, bricks, mortar, wall plaster and large numbers of tesserae from mosaic floors were found.

There was also pottery dating from the 1st to 21st centuries. Quantities of clay pipe bowls dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries provided evidence of the smoking habits of a long line of Residents, or their gardeners.

This work, revealing ample evidence of continuous occupation from the Roman period



Mosaic Tesserae



Roman roof tile



Clay Pipe Bowls



Whose Garden Was This? A short retrospective

Tom Paxton, the American folk singer, who first came to fame in the mid 1960's and who was my chief inspiration in terms of wanting to learn to play guitar and sing, wrote 'Whose Garden was this?' in 1970. Under the shadow of the brutal war in Vietnam, the Cuban Missile crisis of 1963 and the Cold War between East and West, Tom Paxton and other artists expressed great anxiety about the future of the earth. How true those words ring true in 2020. Of course, he may have also been influenced by the nuclear threat but, as you can see clearly from the simple lyrics, the speaker (possibly a child in a future time) is reflecting on a planet that has been destroyed and the song is very much a lament for the loss of our natural environment. It represents the concerns of the environmentalist movement of the 1960's and 70's particularly about pollution, toxic waste and pesticides.



Although, environmentalism originated in the early 20th Century, ecology was now the buzz word and the movement quickly established momentum. Groups such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace were established on the 70s and yet fifty years on, although some of the issues have changed, the philosophy and ethics are unaltered, and we are faced with a climate emergency of momentous proportions.

Whose Garden Was This?

Whose garden was this? It must have
Been lovely
Did it have flowers? I've seen pictures of flowers
And I'd love to have smelled one.

Tell me again, I need to know
The forests had trees, the meadows were green
The oceans were blue, and birds really flew
Can you swear that was true?

Whose river was this? You say it ran freely
Blue was its colour. I've seen blue in some pictures
And I'd love to have been there.

Whose grey sky was this? Or was it a blue one?
At night there were breezes, I've heard records of breezes
and I'd love to have felt one.

Tom Paxton

The symbol of the garden as the earth at the time of the so-called flower power generation was powerful, the key words at the time being environmentalism and ecology. In 1969 the Woodstock Festival was a musical gathering of like-minded people who wanted to save the planet rather like Extinction Rebellion of present times. The signature song, 'Woodstock,' written by Joni Mitchell became an anthem for a better and healthier environment. She sang, 'and we've got to get ourselves back to the garden.' Again, the garden is synonymous with a prelapsarian innocence but also a oneness with nature.

Apart from Tom Paxton, other singer songwriters expressed their pessimism about the planet. Neil Young, in his 'After the Goldrush'

song, wrote, 'Look at mother nature on the run' in the 1970's.' Joni Mitchell in her 'Big Yellow Taxi' song tells the farmers 'to put away your DDT.' She also sings about putting trees 'in a tree museum.' In the early 70's Cat Stevens asked, 'Where do the children play?' and sings about 'building roads over fresh green grass.'



Joni Mitchell in the

April 22nd, 1970 marked the first ever official Earth day when millions of Americans took to the streets to protest. 2020 celebrates the 50th anniversary of the movement, and of course, climate change is very much at the top of the agenda.

At the end of the 1980s, the environmental movement began to focus on acid rain, the ozone layer and greenhouse gasses. Popular music continued to beat the drum of protest with a host of songs such as Michael Jackson's 'Earth Song' which was yet another plea to 'save the planet.'

In previous centuries pastoral literature of the 17th Century looked to a more Arcadian (in the sense of a classical paradise) existence. For example, in Shakespeare's 'As You Like It', the Forest of Arden is a place of retreat from urban corruption. This genre was popular in establishing the back-to-nature philosophy. Contemplation and reflection were key aspects. Indeed, in Andrew Marvell's celebrated 17th Century poem 'The Garden' he is anticipating early environmentalist thinking when he shows his disdain for the lack of respect for nature and its importance. In the poem, he compares himself with the lonely Adam in Eden. He argues that being solitary was a second paradise (heavenly state) for Adam, before Eve brought about the fall.

In the early 19th Century, the entire Romantic movement in art, music and literature highlighted the power and force of nature and that being closer to nature was spiritual and enriching, as in Wordsworth's long autobiographical poem, 'The Prelude.'

The symbolic meaning of a garden is that of an enclosure or a safe and sacred place of retreat - a kind of sanctuary. The Garden of Eden was an earthly paradise which exposed mankind's loss of innocence.

Hopefully, after the pandemic we can try to build on the positive of clearer and cleaner air, less traffic, and less noise pollution. Will the experience of a slower pace of life change people's attitudes to the natural world and our planet? Sadly, it may be too much to expect.

Tom Hislop

News from the Newark and Southwell Deanery

Phil White is vicar of the Benefice of West Trent:

Bleasby, Halloughton, Hoveringham, Morton/Fiskerton, Rolleston, Thurgarton, Upton.

Dear 'Leaves' Reader,

We're often asked the question *'how are you?'* and we respond *'fine, thanks'* or the over used and possibly meaningless phrase *'getting used to a new normal'*. But how are you **really**?

Recently I would have answered by saying I was a bit sad, because Ian Holm the actor had died. (There are more significant things I feel, but that's what I'm telling you now!). He played Bilbo Baggins (Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit by JRR Tolkien - I'm a fan). He has passed on through the 'Grey Havens', a Tolkien metaphor for death as the departure point for the next leg of the journey.

We are hopeful of moving on through the C-19 leg of our journey. We remember those whose lives it has claimed and those whose help and skill have eased us through - so far at least. After all, there is no guarantee we are through it yet.

In the West Trent Benefice we say *'hello and how are you'* twice a week since lockdown via Zoom worship! Someone told me about Zoom one week, and the next we had over sixty coming to participate in live worship. It has been an extraordinary experience. The cheery exchange of greetings on screen have been followed by requests for time to get to know other worshippers a bit. Some were coming for the first time and others from neighbouring villages didn't yet know each other. Almost all of us were confined to our own homes, but feeling a warm release in the experience of virtual community and worship. Virtual but nonetheless very real! (Checkout our website beneficeofwesttrent.org or email me for information).

So how are you? How am I?

I read these facts: 80% of those working from home feel a negative mental health impact. 25% of those are finding it difficult to cope with the emotional challenges of isolation. 39% of those in a married or civil partnership report high levels of anxiety compared to 19% pre-pandemic. I'm beginning to realize there are ways it has affected me, and it's all too easy to say to myself *'I'm fine'* when I'm not. What's worse is that, without attending to my own well-being, I might be inflicting it on someone else and not realizing it. It's time to check ourselves out, be honest with ourselves, deal with it before we inflict it on those around us. We can't *'love our neighbour'* if we are not *'loving ourselves'* (in this sense).

I once did a personality preference course (Myers Briggs; maybe you've heard of it.) and I recall a recommendation for someone with my particular profile: *'make yourself listen to music, even though you think it'll be a waste of your time'*! I find that amusing because it is so true of me. I've made a conscious effort lately to put on my headphones, take Leonard (our Golden Retriever) for a really long walk and listen to a playlist of favourite tracks

(some of which might surprise you!). I come back refreshed. Do we take enough time to do something to attend to our sense of who we are, by discovering 'otherness', through music, art, poetry, reading, listening, writing, bringing relief to others, worship? Are we making the most of the opportunity in this time of challenge?

It's also too easy to think how lucky we are to live where we do etc. We also need to do something for others. We have started a fund to set up a food bank in rural Kenya (The Bank of Grace) to enable the local churches show compassion to those in need. It has expanded to bring relief to those suffering from 'jiggers', an insect which burrows into hands and feet causing infection and disability. Checkout our Facebook page, 'Bungoma Calling'.

I was reading about Adrian Chiles the BBC presenter. He writes of how he became a Catholic and enjoyed returning to Mass recently. He recalled speaking to his priest about faith, since he came from an atheist family. He was told 'It's hard to find God through the church, you're much more likely to find the church through God'. Finding God, a spiritual peace, is possibly easier through a pandemic? But it is really up to us to attend to things beyond what we can normally touch, see and feel. The pandemic is not all fearful bad news, it's an opportunity.

So how are you, really?

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."



Inside Bleasby Church

East Trent Online Life in Lockdown.

*Mandy Cartwright is rector of the East Trent group of parishes,
between Newark and Gainsborough*

Picture the scene if you will: it was an evening get together for coffee, prayer and Bible reading at the end of a couple of warm, June days. Proving the truth of the definition of an English summer being 'two nice days and a thunderstorm' one of us heard a roll of thunder, felt a slight cooling of the air and heard the sudden downpour. The rest of us looked bemused in the close, still and dry air until all agreed that it was raining, then with minutes apart, one by one, we all heard the thunder and rain.

What was happening, you may ask. Was this some sort of supernatural phenomenon on a Biblical scale, whereby God revealed Godself to us all individually through a deluge? Not at all; what was happening was that we were having our weekly ZOOM meeting, which four months earlier I'd never heard of. We had made our own coffee, chosen our own biscuits and sat down in the comfort of our own homes in front of various screens. Because the East Trent Group is made up of eleven churches in fifteen villages and small hamlets, we are spread out along the A1133 Gainsborough Road, with a few border crossings into Lincolnshire. So, while we sat at home, we could all experience the storm in different places as it travelled north.

Surprisingly, this had quite a profound effect on us. It cropped up in conversations over the next few days and gave us lots of food for thought. On a very basic and self-preserving level, we all agreed that it felt nice to know that when the meeting ended, we hadn't got to go out into the damp dark night and drive home along roads which very quickly fill up with deep puddles. On a deeper level, we were all moved to realise that life differs from village to village. Sharing each other's experiences made us feel closer and in fact, we all agreed that we feel closer because of the ZOOM meetings. For one thing, we have been meeting more often and people have started attending who never came to our physical meetings. Others have contributed more and although to begin with, meeting online felt really false, awkward and exhausting, we have relaxed into it and now we can manage helpful small talk and moments of sheer hilarity. I will never forget the conversation which went like this: *Isn't this a quote from Isaiah? No, that was Bob Dylan.*

The pressure to get ready and out in time, to open up a church building and make drinks and wash up afterwards is lifted. Our cars and roads get a rest and we can get to our TVs in time for the 9pm drama.

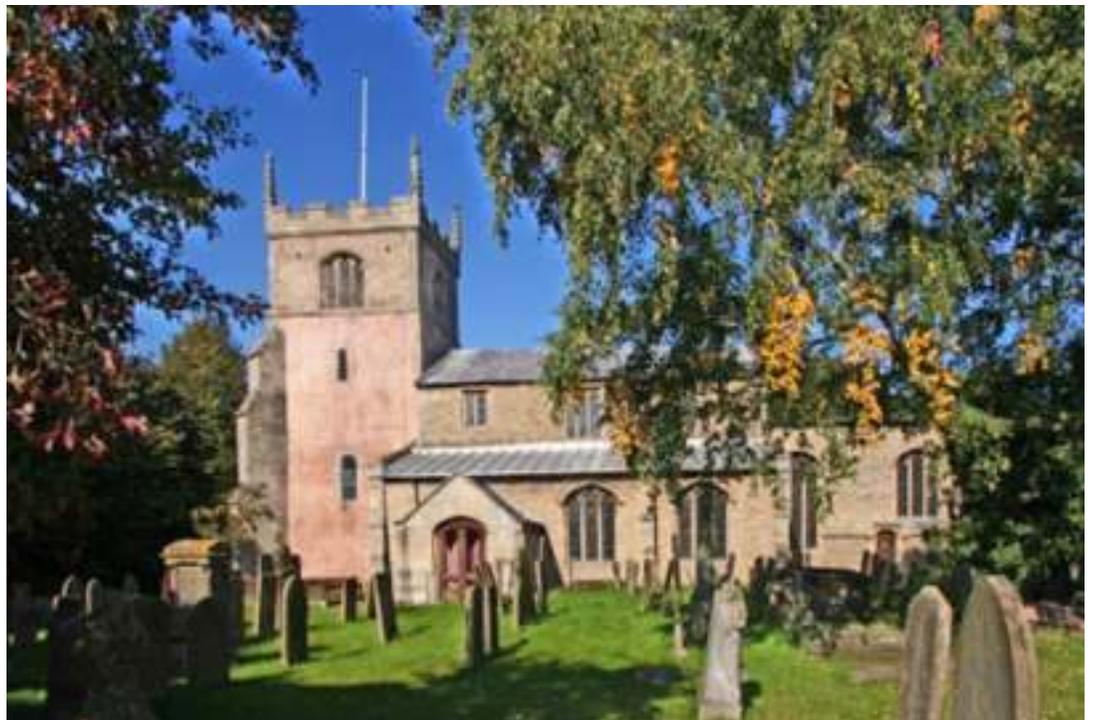
Now, I am really surprised to be writing this. I've always insisted strongly that personal, face-to-face encounters are best, in shared space with good hospitality. After all, didn't Jesus do some of his best work around the dinner table?

However, I realise that I've ignored the many people for whom that is impossible, perhaps especially with our widespread grouping.

When it comes to technology my interest has been close to nil, but since coming to the East Trent Group I've appreciated its usefulness and since the doors of our churches were locked and are now opened up to limited numbers of people and activities, my use and appreciation has blossomed. Thanks to my son I was persuaded and helped to create a You Tube channel and make videos, including a memorable demonstration of how to make a paper "palm cross" (please don't ask me to do that again!). Thanks to my husband, we were able to venture out of the study at the Rectory and make outdoor films. Once we were able to meet other people, a number of willing volunteers joined in to share their thoughts about the pandemic and how their communities have responded, as well as reading Bible passages and prayers. These films have been published on You Tube and shared via Facebook and email. More people view these recorded services than attend church and they've increased our awareness of each other and helped us to feel closer.

We don't want to lose what we've gained and now we have decided to continue with a mixture of live and pre-recorded services, as well as prayers on Facebook and written reflections, shared by email and hard copies.

One lady in her nineties who on Easter Day surfed happily from the Vatican to St David's Cathedral and finally to East Trent, has told me that what she wants from church at present is more Bible Studies via ZOOM, so we shall certainly be continuing them and watching out for each other's storms.



COVID-19 Worldwide

Hugh Middleton

On June 30 the Royal College of Physicians hosted a webinar under the title *COVID-19 stories from around the world*. It included contributions from Oman, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Malaysia and the United States.

First up was His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Alsaïdi, Health Minister to the Sultanate of Oman. Formally dressed and formally presented he began with a celebration of how the Omani healthcare system had developed over the last fifty years, from very basic provision in the form of a couple of mission hospitals to a well-resourced public health service along the lines of our NHS. The population is much smaller than ours; some 4.7 million, and the presentation was an upbeat description of how this fortunate population were responsive to restrictions and was being supported and provided for. Difficulties were those presented by the additional 1.7 million migrant workers who were not so accessible or responsive to the authorities; and the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators. The need for such equipment was presented as an opportunity to invest in manufacturing it locally.

A Pakistani perspective was provided by Dr. Salma Abbas, who is an infectious diseases consultant at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital. Pakistan's is a largely private healthcare system in which only 30% is publicly provided, and that is regionally rather than nationally administered. As a result, there had been difficulties in collecting data and mounting a co-ordinated response. Dr. Abbas referred to a 'sea of misinformation' which was making it difficult to reassure an anxious population and healthcare staff reliant upon poor PPE. Furthermore, the fact that many live in poverty had made generalised 'lockdown' unsustainable and attempts were being made to enforce it in local hotspots, but the limited availability of tests was making that imprecise and hard to implement.

Professor Innocent Gangaidzo gave an African view from Harare. He reminded us that Zimbabwe spends some £100 per person per year on a healthcare system that employs some 1.6 doctors per 10,000 population (comparable figures for the UK are £3,000 and 28). A national emergency was declared in late March, but political and economic difficulties of recent decades have degraded the country. In relation to Covid-19 this means that the efficacy of 'lockdown' is limited and it has been difficult to use what testing and medical facilities there are in a rational way. Although there had been relatively few reported cases of Covid-19 or deaths attributable to it by June 30, it was unclear how reliable these figures were and what to make of them.

Professor Tan Maw Pin of the University of Malaysia gave a contrasting account. Prior experience of SARS had provided some preparation, but they had been shocked when a single massed religious gathering resulted in 3,000 cases of Covid-19, nearly half of all reported cases in the country. Given close cultural associations with China and prior experiences with SARS most of the population were compliant with restrictions and the expectations of test and trace. A significant population of undocumented migrant workers had proved a challenge that demanded somewhat draconian measures, and Malaysia includes some 30,000 people living in some 1,000 unregistered care homes which were proving a continuing challenge.



Finally, Dr. David Martin, a British doctor practising in Boston Massachusetts gave his view of how things were in the United States. As is widely acknowledged, when compared with other OECD countries', the US healthcare system is expensive but delivers poor outcomes if considered in terms of the whole population. It is administratively fragmented, with only limited federal input into public health measures and so a consistent response had been impossible. He described how, by June 30, Covid-19 had spread from the Atlantic coast to southern states and on to the west. In his own hospital equipment supplies had not been much of a problem, but across the country getting enough of them to the right places had been. Those who were suffering most were those who were already vulnerable on account of pre-existing health difficulties and, significantly, the helpers; healthcare workers, cleaners, transport employees, essential retail staff and the like. He drew attention to the tragic suicide of Lorna Breen, a New York physician who had found this work too hard to bear.

I thought it might be interesting to set these experiences against figures provided by the European Centre for Disease Control who

	Total reported cases of Covid-19 per million population	Total deaths attributed to Covid-19 per million population
Oman	10577	48.1
Pakistan	1117.5	24.3
Zimbabwe	63.3	0.9
Malaysia	268	3.75
United States	9305	406
United Kingdom	4595	658

have been providing statistics by country on a daily basis since the pandemic began. These are as they stood on July 11.

Much may have changed by the time you read this and these figures are dependent upon local methods of case detection and definition, so I won't try and draw any conclusions ...



Did you know...

that Sacrista Prebend was once the Grammar School Headmaster's house?

In the last issue we looked at the history of the Prebendal Houses of our Minster from an early historical aspect, that they were the residences of the secular canons, the Prebendaries, who formed the Chapter of the Minster and ran its affairs. Let us now look at their more recent history. These Prebendaries often leased their Prebendal Houses to tenants, installed a resident vicar in their Prebendal parish and were represented in the choir of Southwell by a vicar choral.

A good example of this is that Dunham Prebendal House, now called Dunham Prebend, was leased to the Lowe family who also resided there. They were prominent in the county and were allied by marriage to the Sherbrookes of Oxton and the Clays of Southwell. The house was improved by Sherbrooke Lowe in about 1780, and then by George Hodgkinson Barrow who, in 1805, purchased the freehold of the property, added a rear range of rooms and gave it a Regency flavour. The land behind the House became known as "Lowe's Wong" - Mr. Lowe's piece of land. The present Prebendal house, turned into private apartments, is the property of the Rural District Council; Jubilee House, a range of modern buildings forming the Diocesan Offices, hides much of the rear of the Prebend.

The mansion of the Prebend of Rampton stands immediately opposite the west gate of the Minster. It has recently been refurbished to reveal the early 17th century diaper-patterned brickwork and might still be called 'one of the best Prebends in town', as did W Dickinson Rastall in 1787.

Sacrista Prebend was changed towards the end of the 1700s into the pretty 'Gothic Revival' building we see today by surgeon Nicholas Hutchinson. The house was purchased in 1939 by John Player and presented to the Ecclesiastical



Sacrista Prebend

Commissioners to provide a house for the choristers of the cathedral, later leased to the Minster Grammar School on the same conditions. Latterly this Prebend was the Grammar School Headmaster's house and then a Retreat House for the Diocese, now for the Minster.

Nothing now remains of Oxton 2 house following developments by the Saracens Head, the Methodist Chapel and Memorial Hall. So, progressing eastwards towards the north-west end of Church St we come to Norwell Overhall Prebend. It was leased to one William Clay in 1668 when he was Steward at Southwell for the Archbishop of York, and remained in the hands of his descendants until the early years of the 19th century. In 1758 it was divided to provide marriage settlements for the two children of John Clay; the two parts today are represented by ex -Nat West Bank, now back into private hands, and Minster Lodge. The late 18th century range of rooms across the front remain intact in Minster Lodge. The lease of North Muskham Prebend was taken in 1769 by Thomas Falkner, who improved it so much that Rastall considered it 'a handsome new brick house'. It was sold in 1866 to John

Kirkland who founded the firm of solicitors still occupying the premises.

Oxton 1 Prebend, now called Cranfield House, is Queen Anne in date and named after Cranfield Becher who lived there in the 1800s. The *new* Oxton 1 house would have been built behind an earlier one and is stylistically 1700 -1720 in date, so Queen Anne in style. The correct proportions of the house were in the very latest fashion of the period; in the view of Norman Summers it is an exquisite exercise in classical design which has no equal in the town. Its connection with the Mompessons was well covered in the last issue of *Leaves*. William Mompesson is buried in Eakring churchyard and there is an interesting cross memorial just on the edge of the village.

Ashleigh is more or less an early 19th Century re-fronting of the earlier Prebendal property of Woodborough.

The Prebendal house of Normanton presents an impressive three-storied façade to Church Street. William Mompesson, after his experiences at Eyam, was appointed to the living of Normanton in 1671, and probably kept this house for his own occupation until he moved to Eakring in 1703, when he leased the property to Elizabeth Lloyd of Halam for 99 years. The excellent Georgian proportions of the house are consistent with 1765-75.

South Muskham Prebend faces the Saracen's Head Inn looking westwards. The House, dating from the 15th century, was largely rebuilt in the 18th century but sadly was severely damaged by fire some years ago. Richard Becher leased the house from the end of the 18th century and it remained in the Becher family until 1916. John Thomas Becher, creator of the Workhouse in 1824, also built Hill House on the edge of the Manor of Burgage, later a boarding house for Minster choristers and now private apartments. The Prebendal house was for a while an Old Peoples' Home. Doubtless there are many more stories that could be told by these Prebendal houses; the above gives you a flavor of their recent history.

*With acknowledgement to Norman Summers:
"A Prospect of Southwell"*

James Pinder, on behalf of the Guild of Stewards



Cranfield House

Confinement à la Française:

*E*laine is a long-standing friend of Alison Middleton's. They were VSO cadets together in Zambia in 1969. Elaine married a Frenchman and has lived in Brittany, teaching English at the University of Nantes. Here is an account of the French experience.

Sidéré. Good word that. Not one you hear very often: Dumbstruck, dumbfounded, gutted, staggered.

'*Les français étaient sidérés*' when President Macron, accompanied by the Tricolour, the EU flag and the Marseillaise told us to stay in our homes.

'*Français, Françaises, my dear compatriots, it is my solemn duty to tell you that we are at war...*'

At war? Against an unseen, invisible enemy that proceeds by stealth. We never saw it coming.

We all knew that in faraway China the Province of Hubei had been shut down. The epicentre was Wuhan, wherever that was, a place where they eat bats and pangolins ... whatever they are. It couldn't be too serious. They didn't shut down Beijing ... perhaps because they only eat Pekin duck. Some 300 French citizens were evacuated from Wuhan at the end of January, first to Britain to drop off some British evacuees, and then to a military base at Istres, Bouches du Rhône, and into quarantine for 14 days.

We thought no more about it. This wasn't the first pandemic; SARS, Swine Flu, Ebola, H1N1 Bird Flu and others that never got near us. Why should we bother about this one? My son drinks Corona beer, my brother lives on Corona Road. *Corona*: crown; regal, an upper crust virus, and China is a long way away. France sent masks and other medical equipment to help the Chinese. We wouldn't be needing them ourselves. Chinese tourists were stopped in Paris and told to take off their masks. France is an open society, a democracy, and it is against the law, strictly forbidden to cover your face.

So, having been *sidérés*, on March 16, we also found ourselves *confines*. Another good word. Charming and a bit old fashioned: withdrawal from society towards the end of pregnancy. For a queen (she with a corona) there would be ceremonial retirement from court, closing of the shutters and blessing of the room. Six weeks on her day bed in the gloom to think and to prepare for the new arrival.

The President said that we would be confined for 2 weeks (to start with anyway, but he was a bit vague). We could leave the shutters open if we wanted, but going outside was strictly limited and you had to carry a pass, stating why you were outside and what time you had left the house. Outings were limited to one hour. In our little backwater we had the *gendarmes mobiles* out on the streets, the men in black (not the usual *gendarmes* in blue) politely checking that our passes were in order.



President Macron addresses the nation on March 16 2020

Perhaps all this was a little too late: shutting the stable door after the pangolin had bolted?

Where we live nothing extraordinary happens. During the February half term holiday some parishioners joined with others from neighbouring villages to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. On their arrival in Italy their temperatures were checked, but on their return to France there were no such precautions. Unlike the poor man who travelled to Rome from Stornoway, none of them received a death threat. Some of our pilgrims are local councillors, and some of the councillors are members of a choir which rehearses in a small, overheated room in the old presbytery. On the March 6 the choir gave a concert to a packed and appreciative audience at the AGM of the local *Crédit Agricole* bank.

Two months later we emerged from our confinement, blinking in the sunlight to discover this new world around us ... and to observe cultural differences. Amongst the personal services to reopen that first Monday, equipped with plexiglass screens and masks, were the hairdressing salons, clearly deemed by the French to be an absolute necessity, unlike some of our more hirsute neighbours who felt they could wait somewhat longer.

My first big outing was to buy a table and chairs for the garden; *un salon de jardin*. Waiting at the exit for the packages to be delivered I watched the security guard turn away two bikers trying to get into the store unmasked. The sign on the front of the bus into town now reads *Masque Obligatoire*. Only half of the seats on the bus may be used to preserve social distancing, which makes for a more comfortable ride with plenty of room for your legs and your bags. As the driver is cordoned off from the passengers you can't get to the front of the bus to stamp your ticket, so it also means that this is a free ride.

Look on the bright side. There are some advantages to this post confinement new world.

Elaine Kennedy Dubourdieu

Isabella's journal - highlights from a 9 year old's lockdown diary

Today is VE DAY

VE Day was a time to celebrate the end of World War 2. People travelled to London because it was the best place to party at that time. People were happy because the war was over but other people were happy and sad; they were sad because their family might have died, and they were happy because the war was over. People brought out banners and posters and bunting, they brought out food and tables so they could have a street party with all their friends and family. It is important to remember VE day because people were very brave and worked as a team. Children got evacuated and people fought in the war. Women worked in factories and fought in the war. My great grandfather was a para at D day! Civilians lived in bombed out houses and lived on rations. So VE day really means thank you and well done.

My lockdown day:

In lockdown I normally get up and watch youTube. I go downstairs and have breakfast, it's either bagels or waffles. Then my dad tells me to eat our vitamins, they're disgusting but we have to eat them anyway. Then I have to go upstairs to say hello to mummy, though usually she's in meetings. Then I have to get changed and brush my teeth. I go downstairs for another boring day of Maths and English. After the two hours of school I have lunch. Then my Grandma calls for story time when she reads a book on FaceTime. After that we normally just chill; I do some art and go on the trampoline, ZOOM my friends, help daddy in the garden. My dad does meetings - after his meeting we all have to read a book. Then my mum comes downstairs from her meetings. Then we go on a walk. Our favourite walk is to a place we call Wind in the Willows which we named from the book our grandma read to us. We go home and have dinner together as a family: we had meatballs last night. Then we go to sleep.

Bringing France here

We were meant to go to France this year but then the corona virus started and we couldn't go. So we brought France here. It was a wonderful sunny day so my mum said 'why don't we put the paddling pool out?' and I said 'brilliant idea and we can put out chairs and lay out a blanket and a towel on top and eat ice cream'. So we did - it was the best day.

We're now allowed to go to the beach

It was a big surprise. We drove for about an hour and when we got there my Mum said 'what if I told you that we weren't going on a long walk today because we're going to the beach?' I said 'what - really, yes! I'm so excited'. In the car I closed my eyes so it would be a surprise for me. The beach, which was warm, was not very crowded. This was good because we were meant to be social distancing with other people. Me and my brother played in the sea and covered each other up with sand whilst my mum and dad peacefully relaxed by the shore. After, we got an ice cream.

Camping In the garden

One of my favourite things in lockdown was camping in the tent. Before we even put the tent up, we made some cupcakes. It was mine and James' first time ever baking on our own. We made them

for eating in the tent (we never did eat them in the tent because as soon as we decorated them I forgot and we ate them all up). Then we put the tent up. There was a bit of shouting at first but we finally got there. When we were meant to go to sleep me and James were talking and pretending my mum and dad couldn't hear us (they definitely could) then we all went to sleep.

Lockdown coming to an end?

In lockdown we were bored, but it doesn't mean we can't still have fun. Take walks for example, when lockdown first happened, we could go on walks but we still couldn't see our friends or family. Then it got a bit better, we were allowed to go in the car to Lincoln. Then things changed a bit more, we were allowed to have walks with other people, 2 metres apart though, and that is what I wanted to tell you about. It was really fun - we normally went on walks with friends Eva and Isaac. On every walk James and Isaac found a stick to keep them apart. They called it a 2 metre stick that made me and Eva laugh. My brother James who's 7 once said a really smart thing, 'I think every step of lockdown is getting better and better.' We can now go to our grandma and grandad's garden and they sometimes bring us snacks and I feel really happy that we can see them face to face and not just on ZOOM.



CATHEDRAL SHOP

CHILDREN'S BOOKS AND BIBLES

A QUALITY RANGE OF FAIR TRADE GIFTS

THEOLOGICAL BOOKS

HEAVENLY GIFTS AND CARDS

EYE-CATCHING JEWELLERY

DIVINE MUSIC

REALLY FRIENDLY SERVICE

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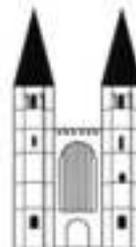
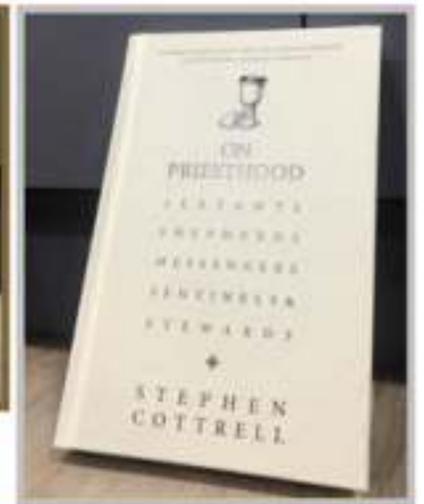
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