

‘KEEP IN TOUCH’, Autumn 2021

Copy by, but, if possible, before 10th July 2021

Earlier than usual, to allow the Editor (hopefully) family holiday time!

All contributions welcome.

Maximum preferred length: 500 words!

‘Keep In Touch’



Bluebells at Wanlip 2021

KEEPING YOU ‘IN TOUCH’ IS

Name

Address

Tel. No.

SUMMER 2021

***CHURCH & VILLAGE
BIRSTALL & WANLIP***

THE PARISH OF BIRSTALL AND WANLIP

| | | |
|--|---|---|
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The views and opinions of the authors who have submitted articles to 'Keep in Touch' belong to them alone and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the wider church.

I have enjoyed worshiping at Hinckley, but I was only there three months before the first lockdown. We took Rosie with us; she was her usual vocal self before and after the services, but she was as good as gold during the services (An 8am and 10:15am service every Sunday morning). She even came up with me for Communion without making a sound.

I missed going to church, and was glad once I had received the first vaccination and felt able to return. This coincided with the church re-opening on Palm Sunday.

Vince received a Hairy Bikers' Curry Cook Book from a friend for Christmas, and he has made some amazing curries.



I love working in the Church Office, and I was pleased to be able to continue after we left. I am much looking forward to working with Amanda when she arrives.

Love, Sheryl

Gracious God, equip us with

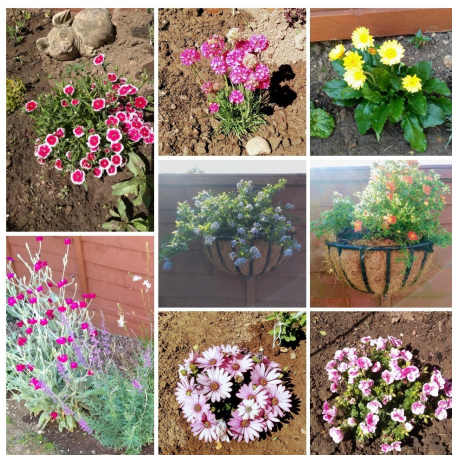
**Power
Energy
Newness
Trust
Eagerness
Confidence
Opportunity
Strength and
Truth
Amen.**

LIFE SINCE LEAVING BIRSTALL & WANLIP

Dear Friends,

A few weeks after we left Birstall, Ashley came home from Japan for Christmas. It was fantastic having all three of our children together at the same time. I don't think that has happened since Emma got married in 2014.

It's been over 18 months now since we left, and most of it has been living in lockdown, but a plus side of the first one was that it gave us the time to do some renovations, to decorate, to settle into our new home and to sort out the garden. I didn't think I would ever say that I like gardening, but now I really enjoy doing it.



Once the Garden Centres were allowed to open, Vince would come home with loads of plants for me. We enjoy sitting outside listening to the birds while drinking coffee and having lunch surrounded by colourful flowers.



During the spring and summer, when restrictions allowed us to travel outside our area, we enjoyed lots of long walks in the countryside, and stopping for a picnic on the way. On one of the walks one of us needed a helping hand for a mile to enable us to get back to the car!

INTRODUCING OUR NEW RECTOR

The Revd Amanda Digman



On Sunday April 25th, our churchwardens were able to announce that our new Rector will be the Revd Amanda Digman. The service of Institution and Induction will be conducted by the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow, on Wednesday 15th September 2021 at 7.30 p.m. at St. James the Great, Birstall. Amanda has written the following short autobiography by way of introduction.

Hi everyone,

I'm Amanda Digman, and I'm really excited to have been appointed as your new Rector.

I'm married to Paul, a retail consultant, and we have two children, Sam (20) and Emily (18). Paul and I are looking forward to joining you at Birstall and Wanlip in the near future. Sam and Emily will mainly be staying in Nottingham to finish their respective college courses.

I was born in Northamptonshire, but grew up in a village near Southampton, moving again aged 16 to Great Yarmouth where I met Paul. We moved to Nottingham after marrying in 1994.

I was a church youth worker for about ten years before training for ordination at St John's College, Nottingham. I served my curacy at St Mary Magdalene, Sutton-in-Ashfield and I've been Priest in Charge at the Churches of St John the Baptist, Carlton and Colwick, for the last (almost) 9 years.

I love all kinds of music and play the double bass, recorders and flute.

My first degree is in music and I also studied German.
My hobbies include learning languages, history, reading, and cooking.
I'll go on a bike ride or walk if Paul reminds me to! I am not excellent at any of these things, but I do enjoy them!

For me, the heart of the Christian faith is knowing we are all loved and cherished by God who wants all people to enjoy fullness of life. I believe we achieve this by knowing and acting on what God is calling us to do and be, and by enabling others to do the same. This means making church and our lives places of welcome and encouragement for all we meet. As we serve a God of justice, we should also serve those in any kind of need, as much as we are able, so they too can enjoy life in all its fullness.

Unlike 'normal' clergy, I don't like tea or coffee – chocolate, however, is another matter!

A final thing to add, is that I am a 'hugger'! Once Covid allows, that will be my default move, so if that's not for you, you need to just stick your hand out for a handshake as soon as you see me coming – I won't take offence! We look forward to meeting you all soon.

God bless, and enjoy the summer.

Amanda

JUST A SMILE!

They're back! Those wonderful Church Bulletins! These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins, or were announced at church services:

The Fasting and Prayer conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus walks on water'. The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus'.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Cynthia Colman

BETTY BATES R.I.P.

13th March 1934 – 5th April 2021

In recent years Betty Bates and her sister Joan have been very dearly missed at Wanlip church, their deteriorating health preventing them from getting here, especially during the winter months. Until then, from the time they arrived in Wanlip in the 1950s, they were mainstays of the congregation. John Ward called them 'Angels of the North.'

Betty and Joan would be here cleaning every Friday, washing linen and polishing silver and anything else that might need doing. They would just get on quietly in the background and do it. You would always find Betty beavering away, washing up and cooking at all the Wanlip events. She produced unknown quantities of cakes for every occasion, and was especially famous for her meringues.

Both Betty and Norman were extremely generous with their time, not only for the church but also for the Hall. For many years they were key holders for the Hall. Hirers would collect and return the Hall key from Betty and, of course, both Betty and Norman were on hand to sort out any problems that might have arisen during a letting.



Right up till the end, Betty remained a key holder for the church. She would sit with Joan, and Martin when he could join them, in their regular pew just to the west of the cross aisle.

Debbie Shephard

The picture shows a butterfly, crafted by Norman, for the Bates' front gate.

CARS, PLANES, SHIPS, ENGINES - HIDDEN IN THE BIBLE

ANSWERS

- 1 **CAMEL**. WWI fighter aircraft RFC/RAF built by Sopwith. Mt.19:24
- 2 **DESTROYER**. multi role Navy ship. Ps. 17:4
- 3 **TEMPEST**. WW2 fighter built by Hawkers and modern jet fighter. Ps. 55:8
- 4 **WHIRLWIND**. WW2 twin engine fighter built by Westland. Name the engines?
Job 37:9
- 5 **TRIUMPH**. Aircraft carrier WW2 and 1946-81 also make of car. Ps. 47:1
- 6 **AVENGER**. WW2 American Navy and Royal Navy. Name of a car by what firm?
Dt. 19:12
- 7 **QUEEN ELIZABETH**. Royal Navy battleships WWI and WW2. 1 Ki. 10:10 & Lk. 1:41
- 8 **WIZZARD**(s). Name of Hillman car early 1930's 1 Sam. 28:3
- 9 **EAGLE**. Sister Aircraft carrier to Ark Royal 1951-72 also Rolls Royce aero engine WWI Jer. 48:40
- 10 **HAWK**. RAF trainer aircraft and Humber car. Job 39:26
- 11 **ARK ROYAL**. Aircraft carrier Royal Navy WW2, & 1950-79 sister to HMS Eagle and 1981-2011 Falklands conflict with Hawker Harrier jump-jets. Gen. 7:9 & Esther 6:8
- 12 **JAGU(A)R**. British car manufacturer. Josh. 15:21
- 13 **JAVELIN**. British car made by Jowett. Gloster Javelin delta wing RAF fighter.
1 Sam. 19:10
- 14 **HUNTER**. Hawker jet fighter and car by Singer; later Roots Group and Chrysler.
Gen. 10:9
- 15 **SWALLOW**. Light aircraft & 1940's experimental jet. 1930's Swallow cars became Jaguar. Ps. 83:4
- 16 **SWIFT**. Supermarine RAF jet fighter 1950's and Comper Swift 1930's light aircraft.
Jer. 46:6
- 17 **RENOWN**. Royal Navy battle cruiser 1916-48 and Triumph car 1950-54. Ezekiel 39:13
- 18 **BEAN**(s). Make of English car. 2 Sam. 17:28
- 19 **SINGER**(s). Make of English car. Ps. 68:25
- 20 **VICTORY**. Royal Navy battleship of the Line and Nelson's Flagship. Ps. 98:1

PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH THE AWARD SCHEME AND ME!

What a privilege to have met the Duke — well twice, actually!

I was fortunate enough to be able to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. I started late, but was able to work hard for my Silver and Gold Awards. In those days the age limit to finish was very different from today. And therefore I didn't have the time to do the Bronze level.



I loved every minute: the planning, the taking part, meeting people, trying out completely different tasks, even the reports were a joy, and pushing myself to the limit.

It was whilst working with the Birstall St James' Cubs that I first met John. We got on so well, got married, and, as they say, the rest is history.

I first met the Duke when I was presented with my Gold Award at Buckingham Palace. Unfortunately at the time my leg was in plaster, and the Duke asked if I had done that on my expedition! The next time I met him was in Leicester, at the St Matthew's Centre, where the DofE committee held a reception and a day of activities to show him, and other representatives, what was being achieved in Leicester and in Leicestershire through the award scheme. He was really interested in every part of the day, and very chatty.

I feel very proud to wear my award, and it certainly helps in life to take part in schemes like this. It's an extremely good building block for life, and it opens many doors. I have found that people have a greater respect for you. Long may it continue, and may many more young people feel the benefits.

Julie Ward

PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH

A LIFE OF LOVE, SERVICE, FUN AND FAITH



Prince Philip of Greece was born in Corfu on 10th June 1921 and died at Windsor Castle on 9th April 2021. What a life! Six weeks off his 100th birthday, so not quite receiving his special 'Greetings Card' from his wife Queen Elizabeth. On watching, listening and reading about his life, his many interests and everything he was involved in during his long life of 99 Years, we found it very difficult to decide how put 'his life' in a flower and object tableau. But that was what we wanted to do.

Reflecting on his standard, 'GOD IS MY HELP', and learning about his naval career and love of sailing, gave us the idea of an anchor shaped wreath with his motto. This represented the two 'symbols' that ran throughout his life, public and private, whatever the sport, and the challenges both in life and faith.

The anchor is full of white flowers, with a centre of red and blue to complement and represent the United Kingdom. The anchor is edged with green laurel. The tree had coloured leaves representing all his interests: the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, flying, sport, the military, inventions, science, engineering, learning, and multi-faith dialogue. The figures around are the family, with a horse and a car. Then blue for the sea, with a boat. Around the tree, in the sand, are the wild animals he helped conserve with the World Wildlife Fund.

AFTER TRINITY

Much of what we now call 'ordinary time' used to be known as 'the Sundays after Trinity', though in the Book of Common Prayer there was a patch after Candlemas (the Presentation of Christ in the Temple) known as 'the Sundays after Epiphany' which led into the three 'Sundays before Lent': Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima. Then, after Eastertide, Ascension, Whit-Sunday and Trinity Sunday, we moved into the 'long, long Sundays after Trinity' which John Meade Faulkner described in his poem 'After Trinity' as the 'passionless Sundays'. Those of you who still use 'The Book of Common Prayer' may continue to lament these losses? And I still love this poem!

Canon Anne

We have done with dogma and divinity, Easter and Whitsun past,
The long, long Sundays after Trinity are with us at last;
The passionless Sundays after Trinity, neither feast-day nor fast.

Christmas comes with plenty, Lent spreads out its pall,
But these are five and twenty, the longest Sundays of all;
The placid Sundays after Trinity, wheat-harvest, fruit-harvest, Fall.

Spring with its burst is over, Summer has had its day,
The scented grasses and clover are cut, and dried into hay;
The singing-birds are silent, and the swallows flown away.

Post pugnam pausa fiet; Lord, we have made our choice;
In the stillness of autumn quiet, we have heard the still, small voice.
We have sung 'Oh where shall Wisdom?' Thick paper, folio, Boyce.

Let it not all be sadness, not omnia vanitas;
Stir up a little gladness to lighten the Tibi cras;
Send us that little summer, that comes with Martinmas.

When still the cloudlet dapples the windless cobalt blue,
And the scent of gathered apples fills all the store-rooms through,
The gossamer silvers the bramble, the lawns are gemmed with dew.

An end of tombstone Latinity, stir up sober mirth,
Twenty-fifth after Trinity, kneel with the listening earth.
Behind the Advent trumpets they are singing Emmanuel's birth.

We recorded the voiceover in my garden for this last PowerPoint. In the next few weeks, we have a Teams Meeting organised with the Primary Schools so that we can discuss whether our efforts this year have been supportive of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus, and also how we can provide support next year.

Contact with Cedars has not happened until now for various reasons but a Teams Meeting has been organised with a new contact in the next week. We are hoping to have plans in place for the next Academic Year, so that when our new incumbent arrives, she will be able to work with us to enhance our efforts.

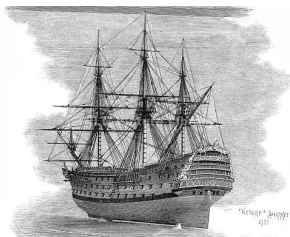
Josephine Burgess

CARS, PLANES, SHIPS, ENGINES - HIDDEN IN THE BIBLE

This reflects my overgrown schoolboy interests. Some may relate to more than one of the above. See what you can achieve first before referencing books or 'googling'. I have used the King James' AV Bible so modern 'Noddy meets Mister God' paraphrases will not work! Where there are two verses you will need one word from each. With 8 delete an 's'; 12 add an 'a'; 18 & 19 you need to delete an 's'.

1 Matthew 19:24; 2 Psalm 17:4; 3 Psalm 55:8; 4 Job 37:9; 5 Ps. 47:1
6 Deuteronomy 19:12; 7 1 Kings 10:10 / Luke 1:41; 8 1 Samuel 28:3
9 Jeremiah 48:40; 10 Job 39:26; 11 Genesis 7:9 / Esther 6:8
12 Joshua 15:21; 13 1 Samuel 19:10; 14 Genesis 10:9; 15 Psalm 84:3
16 Jeremiah 46:6; 17 Ezekiel 39:13; 18 2 Samuel 17:28; 19 Psalm 68:25; 20 Psalm 98:1

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Robin Martin

These were accompanied by a photograph of him in his naval uniform as Admiral of the Fleet with all his war medals, hard-earned in sea warfare, and joined by a picture with his wife, saying 'Thank You.' They fell in love and he supported her in all her royal duties, both at home and around the world.

'The Homage' sat outside our main Church Door. As people walked past to pay their respects, in earshot of the Service, they could hear the prayers. Afterwards the anchor went to Groby Cemetery where Prince Philip joined his naval and other military comrades (Going over the Bar). The 'Life Plant Tree' came to our street where we put up some bunting saying 'Happy Birthday' to the Queen on April 21st, and St George's Day flags on April 23rd. Other people put up flags and some children spontaneously planted a basket of flowers to grow, something he would have appreciated and encouraged.

So be the best God has made you to be! And take a lead from his challenging, interesting and extraordinary life. Full of fun, full of faith, full of service and full of love.

Rita Richards and Rose Parrott



A YEAR FROM THE START OF LOCKDOWN – AND COUNTING

If asked what we enjoyed during the last year or so, most of us would say 'not a lot'. However, thinking about it, what made my solitary walks enjoyable was that most people said 'Hello', 'Good morning,' or 'Good afternoon' with a smile, and often a brief chat. Then there are the bird songs, heard so much more clearly because of less traffic (at least early on); the pleasures of the garden – having tulips I'd forgotten about coming through, pansies I had planted in several pots, patches of forget-me-nots and bluebells, as well as other plants in unexpected places.

Some years ago, two friends and I went to the National Exhibition Centre to a garden show. I think it is true to say, that they carried home more of my plants than their own. Another friend has been known to forbid me to buy any more plants – on the basis that I don't need them – if we find ourselves in a garden centre (say, after a walk). She isn't a gardener!

I love being in my garden. It is not very large, but it is my own space – although, as you will probably have gathered, I don't garden like most people who buy plants for specific places – I'm a somewhat compulsive plant buyer – I see a plant I like, buy it, and then wonder where I'm going to plant it.

It does make for what might, generously, be called an 'informal' garden. There was a plan at one time, but that seems to have been lost along the way.



Birstall, it looks as if it may come to an end when they move. So, this may be *Nearer's* final report. We hope, however, that the labyrinth will continue to provide something for people to use after *Nearer* is gone. We pray it will continue to be an on-going way in which the church can serve the wider community.

During *Nearer's* lifetime, we have found our knowledge and understanding of God deepening, our use of, and variety of prayer expanding, and our commitment to God and to each other strengthened. Because of all this, we have found that our willingness and ability to talk about the God we know and love has greatly increased. We feel more able to recognise Him working in us, and in others, and we thank God for that.

Gill and Peter Chester

SCHOOL WORK REVIEW 2021

During the first lockdown nothing happened because my PC skills were limited and James Blackhall from the Methodist Church, who is the Messy Church, Schools and Community Co-ordinator, was furloughed. By October James was back at work, so we were able to compile a PowerPoint about Harvest which was sent to the Primary Schools. With the arrival of the Revd Rosie Homer, the three of us working in church compiled a Christingle PowerPoint with a recording. Not only was Rosie able to help us with the religious content, but our computer skills were developed. During February and March, James and I worked on adapting the material that had been used for 'The Last Week of Jesus' Life'. Thanks to the agreement of the Diocese of Gloucester, we were able to use their excellent photographs, together with ideas we had used previously, and successfully support the schools with their Easter work. We modified our efforts for Hallam Fields, as the pupils are much younger.

Recently James and I have compiled a PowerPoint about the building of St James'. The primary schools had requested this because pupils in the past had visited the church. I found various photos on my PC which have proved very useful.

We are meeting as a team to discuss new Safeguarding Training, how to access it, and how we can bring families together in a Covid-safe way to link people again with their friends. We are now eagerly awaiting the arrival of our new Rector and are all looking forward to journeying together into the future.

Rose Parrott Children and Youth Team Leader

NEARER REPORT 2021

At the beginning of 2020, *Nearer* started a new initiative, *Soul Games*. The idea was that we would meet monthly to play board games and to talk about spiritual issues relating to the games. It was going really well and we had 15 members coming along. At the last meeting, in March 2020, it was difficult to stop the discussion on prayer and get back to the games! Many of those joining us didn't even know where the church was, so it was great to be discussing God with them. We were about to start *Soul Space*, a time for quiet and reflection, when Covid happened. It never started and so *Soul Games* came to an end.

Initially, when we went into lockdown, we didn't know what to do, but, within a few weeks, we started a Shabbat service. Based on the Northumbria Community's Daily Prayer, the Shabbat service is a preparation for the Sabbath. We joined together on Zoom on Friday evenings for the service and found it really helpful to spend 15-20 minutes to 'let go, let God, shalom'. A few weeks later we restarted our regular Wednesday meetings, again on Zoom, and met to pray, and then enjoyed doing *The Prayer Course* together and completing *Inspired to Follow* (using works of art to explore our faith). It was great to maintain fellowship as we have endured Covid. In late summer one of us had the idea of creating a labyrinth for anyone to use to stop, reflect and spend time with God. With the great help of Phil, who cuts the church lawn for us, we created the labyrinth in the autumn. We've had some very positive feedback about how some people have found it.

Sadly, *Nearer* is small. And with Gill and Peter moving away from

In spite of my rather unorthodox style of gardening, I get enormous pleasure from my garden. It gives me a feeling of peace, it lifts my spirits, and I realise that, when I am in it, I stop thinking, and that time passes without my knowing.



Trying to explain this, a friend said that this experience is sometimes called 'being in flow', being so fully present in the moment that there is no thought and no need for thinking about it.

It is important to me knowing that my family is safe and well, and that those who 'should' be working are able to do so. I give grateful thanks for their continued well-being, for seeing my great-grandchildren on Sunday mornings after church, for feeling well myself, for having had my two jabs and for meeting up with friends – albeit socially distanced at the moment.

I thank God too for having time to stop and chat with those friends, neighbours, and sometimes strangers that I meet along the road, because there is rarely any rush to get 'somewhere' (apart from the hairdresser's – mission accomplished!)

I feel that most people have 'grown' their community spirit – or got it back – during lockdown, and I pray this continues. Life has many unexpected twists and turns, such as during this past year, but I think that if we hold on to what is important, our faith, our family, our friends, and seeing beauty around us in small and unexpected places and ways, we will come out stronger, and increasingly aware of what truly matters.

Doreen Wilson

MY HOBBY

I AM A DISSECTOLOGIST

Many of you may be too. What is one of those, you may ask? Well, it's a person who loves doing jigsaws. It seems a strange term, as a jigsaw is a process of assembly, not dissection!

I have loved jigsaws for as long as I can remember. My first memory is at nursery, and those wooden trays with cut-out shapes you had to fit in the right hole. When I was a little older, I would spend many an hour doing jigsaws with my father, also a dissectologist. We had one very important rule, you do not use the picture. That was considered cheating, and I still do jigsaws without looking at the picture. It makes it more challenging and also frustrating. Later I introduced another rule of my own, no one could put a piece in until I have completed a puzzle once. Even now my son will say he can't help me as 'he's not allowed'.

The first jigsaw puzzle was created in 1762 by John Spilsbury, a map engraver. He mounted one of his master maps onto wood and then cut around the countries. He gave it to children in the local school to help them with their geography education.

The concept was soon copied by others and expanded into educational images other than just maps. At this time the puzzles were created from wood, and were called dissected puzzles. The term jigsaw comes from the 1880s when a special saw called a jigsaw was used to cut the puzzles.



This is due, in no small way, to the help and support we have had throughout from our retired clergy, the Revd Kerry Emmett, Canon Anne Horton, Fr. Robin Martin and Fr. Michael Webb. We are enormously grateful to them for everything they have done and continue to do, and I'm sure they will enjoy being part of a team with Amanda once she arrives in September. It is with no little relief that I end this report in the sure and certain knowledge that next year we will be able to return to the 'Rector's Report'! Before I end, I would just like to thank all of you for pulling together and supporting the churchwardens as you have done. It has made our lives a lot easier. Thank you. And God Bless.

Debbie Shephard

CHILDREN'S WORK AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

Since the national lockdown in March 2020 there has been no regular Sunday School at Church. To keep in contact with families we have accessed Zoom Support meetings run by the Diocesan Youth Officer, gaining ideas and ways of doing this and of supporting each other. Since July 2020 we have given James Bear Bible-themed activity bags to all families linked with us, delivering them to members' doorsteps or sending through the post.

Doreen Wilson, in her capacity of Pastoral Support, has continued to telephone parents and so help with any needs. Team Meetings have taken place in my garden, socially distanced, as the rules permit, to keep the team together, to work on the Bible Themes and to report back on family welfare. Telephone and email have been used to keep in contact with one another. Christmas Cards were given to all adults personally and sweets/cards for each child. A Nativity Story trail was set up in the Church on Monday 21st December, with staff dressing up and meeting visiting families. This was done to reassure them of our continuing presence and to enjoy the Christmas story together. Easter Eggs and Chicks were provided to all families. Families have been kept advised of our Services online or in person, to link in as they wish. They would like to return to Church to see their friends, as soon as it's possible.

We then re-introduced our regular monthly Holy Communion services after our Candlemas service. Wanlip has also been open for Private Prayer on Wednesday afternoons, something we will continue to do whilst we can staff it.

We have also managed to 'Zoom' virtually all the Sunday services at Wanlip, which has been very popular. Whilst 'zooming' will never replace being present at a service, it clearly offers a service, and reaches out to those who cannot physically make it to church. At the moment we are facilitating the process via my laptop and mobile phone but I would like to think that we can set up something permanent, at both churches, to carry this forward into the future.

APPOINTMENT OF A NEW RECTOR

Having been put on hold at the beginning of the first lockdown in March 2020, we were finally able to pick up the process of advertising for our new Rector. The advertisement was placed on the 8th January, and interviews took place on 26th March.

Interviewing for a new Rector, someone who will be with us and guide our church for many years to come, is a massive responsibility, and was not made any easier by the overriding Covid restrictions. Tony Bloxam and John Borrajo showed the prospective candidates around the parish and were the only people to meet them 'in the flesh.' The system is such that we couldn't even discuss their opinions of them! There was a 'Zoom' session in the morning of the interviews in which candidates could ask their questions about the parish to a selection of people who represented the church and the villages. The afternoon interviews were conducted by the Archdeacon, Area Dean and two parish representatives, John Ward and me. We were prepared to re-advertise if we weren't absolutely convinced that a candidate was the right one. At the end of the interviews, however, we had no doubts. We were unanimous in our choice of the Revd Amanda Digman. She fulfils all our requirements on the Parish Profile, and more, and I can't wait for you to meet her. I am massively proud, on all our behalves, that, after so long and such difficult circumstances, we still have a strong and thriving church to pass on to our new Rector.

In the 1930's wooden puzzles were produced in higher quantities, and, for the first time, put in boxes with the finished image on it. It would have been considered cheating to use a picture as reference before this time. I'm vindicated.

A shortage of plywood at the beginning of WWII led to jigsaws being made from an enlarged photograph glued to cardboard. Jigsaws are now available in a great variety of sizes, shapes and subjects. The puzzle with the most pieces consisted of 551,232 pieces and was completed by 1,600 students of the University of Economics of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on 24 September 2011. The largest I've ever done is 6,000 pieces.

Since the beginning of lockdown there has been a big increase in the sale of jigsaws as more people take up the hobby.

Most of mine come from charity shops, which of course closed. Luckily I already had a lot still to do and friends gave me more. I must have done 40+.



There is always a puzzle on the go, or one just finished. I like to leave them for a few days before breaking them up. The board never gets put away now.

If anyone would like to borrow a jigsaw, I've a good choice. Or, if anyone is interested in setting up a group to swap jigsaws, please do contact me.

According to the Alzheimer Society, doing jigsaw puzzles is one of many activities that can help keep the brain active and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Here's hoping!

Gill Pope

HOW HAVE YOU WORSHIPPED? **HOW HAVE WE WORSHIPPED?**

So many ways: in lockdown; in isolation; walking in the countryside; in the garden; in peace and in the presence of God; on Zoom; with Radio Leicester; on screen with the BBC; or by telephone. Some churches have provided outdoor worship in their church grounds or in other open spaces whenever the weather forecast was favourable. Parishioners either luxuriated in the sun or wrapped up warmly in the cold. When possible, thirty or fewer people worshipped together in the church, everyone two metres (six feet) apart, doors and windows wide open for ventilation. In some churches, people entered and left one by one as directed by a sidesman or steward. In Methodist churches, to avoid wafting bacteria and viruses around, only the minister moved, bringing Communion to each worshipper.

Many isolating people received Communion 'spiritually,' as suggested in the Book of Common Prayer, especially oblates and tertiaries of religious orders. A rural dean led a Maundy Thursday Communion by telephone, inviting people to take wine and bread, or water and dry biscuit as a sacrament. In some rural areas, without public transport or sufficient drivers to provide lifts in normal times, churches rented a telephone conference room by the month. Parishioners paid nothing, as long as they kept to a maximum of 59 minutes. So Sunday morning services and services on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday were available, and groups, the choir, the MU and others were able use the 'room' mid-week. Sometimes a Zoom group joined the telephonists (but the music seemed to me like musical porridge when they collaborated).

I have worshipped with four churches around Ivinghoe since April 2020 by telephone. I really got to know some parishioners as I listened to their chatter before and after the service; they wanted to know how the weather was in Leicester; how my broken arm was doing; and they sent greetings for my 90th birthday. They plan to continue their phone and Zoom worship even when normal life resumes, so that no-one need ever miss worshipping together again. How did you worship?

Noreen Talbot

VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH WARDENS - APCM 2021

Well what a year, or, more accurately, six months! Following our last APM and APCM in October 2020, we went almost immediately into the second lockdown, fortunately not quite as stringent as the first, and we were able to use the churches. Happily this coincided with the arrival of the Revd. Rosie Homer on her eight week placement with us. Rosie's arrival took some of the strain off our wonderful retired clergy, and, with her help and guidance, we were able to start streaming our services on Facebook and YouTube. This was something that Father Michael took responsibility for at Birstall after Rosie's departure until we were able to return to church proper.

We were also able to keep the churches open for Private Prayer, and, following strict guidelines, offer some of our Christmas celebrations to the villages. Not being able to hold services, we couldn't hold the ever popular Nine Lessons and Carols at Wanlip, but on the Sunday before Christmas we were able to put together a 'deconstructed' version. The church was candle lit and the Nine Lessons arranged as stations around the church. Andy and Paul played carols throughout the afternoon. It was a beautiful afternoon and very well received by the village. The event led straight into Evening Prayer.

St. James' normal Carol Service and Christmas Eve Children's Service couldn't happen, but on the Monday before Christmas, St. James' hosted 'Follow the Star' which was an extremely well organised, interactive event run by Rose Parrot and team. It followed the journey that Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem, and was visited by a number of people from the village which would have been even greater if the weather hadn't been so awful! Christmas wasn't quite the same without being able to sing carols, but we hope that, if we can hold massive football matches with fans chanting support, next Christmas we might just be allowed to sing carols in church! St. James' was closed for two months at the beginning of the year but we managed to keep Wanlip open, at first for Evening Prayer.

the swirls of the buns a little, without melting completely.
Loosen the caramel with a drop of milk, if needed, then drizzle over the icing.

9. Leave to set for 30 mins before serving.

PER SERVING 434 kcals, fat 16g, saturates 10g, carbs 65g,
sugars 33g, fibre 2g, protein 7g, salt 0.6 g.

Julie Ward

THY WAY!

My thanks to you all for putting up with me as one of St James' Churchwardens for a total of 21 years. It has been a privilege and an honour to serve, and I know that I will miss it, but at 87 I think it's time to hand in my churchwarden's stave. The church needs growth, and change is a catalyst for growth, so let's look forward to new initiatives, new energy and new vitality. So, now it's goodbye to PCC meetings, to being responsible for the silverware and the fittings and ornaments, to organising rotas, to keeping the rain out, to meeting with architects, etc., etc. I've supported four incumbents and eight curates, but these are all transitory things. More importantly, I have been enabled to be more and to do more than I ever thought that I could, and that's wonderful. This now has been capped by the generous and unexpected gift from my fellow Christians, for which I am so grateful. My hope is that I have worked with and for Christ, and with you my friends. In all that I've done Lord, I've tried to do it Thy Way.

And now the end is here, and so I face the final curtain.

*My friends I'll make it clear, it's time to change,
of that I'm certain.*

It's been a time well blessed.

I've had my chance, and had my say.

And Lord, much more than this. Did I do it Thy way?

(With apologies to Frank Sinatra)

Tony Bloxam

OPPOSITES

When I feel myself weak
God is building my strength.
When I feel low
God is lifting my spirits.
When I stagger with fear
God is cheering me on.
When I feel faint and lost
God is walking beside me.
When I neither see nor hear
God fills me with hope
and speaks.



LAH

WORSHIPPING IN WANLIP

In Wanlip church, once small congregations were permitted to gather, we have happily mixed 'real' worship with Zoom worship, with some seventeen people in church and six or so fellow worshippers joining us on Zoom.

We have also been able to include hymns, not congregational, but with a single singer enhancing our worship from the choir stalls.

We may well continue this mixture of worshipping in church and Zooming our worship beyond our walls into the future, so that more people may be included in our worship.

Many thanks to all those who make this possible, especially Paul Wilcox our organist, Sarah Reeves our chorister and Debbie Shephard, our churchwarden and Zoom expert.

Canon Anne

CARAMEL APPLE CINNAMON BUNS

I have had this (Waitrose) recipe for at least two years, and have been meaning to bake them, but never seemed to find the time! Unfortunately my husband John has been in hospital very ill, and I decided as a distraction to try it out. It is a long winded process, but certainly worth it at the end. I found it very therapeutic and it gave me time to reflect and meditate. If you have the time, it is well worth the effort. They taste delicious, and I am sure John will love them when he comes home.

Cook Cassie Best wrote that she used sharp eating apples to balance the sweetness of the caramel, which 'adds toffee apple vibes. Paired with tangy soft cheese icing, they're mouth-watering and very moreish.'

The recipe makes 12 buns. Preparation 35 minutes, plus a few hours proving and cooling. Cooking time 50 minutes.

For the dough: 320 ml milk, plus an extra splash; 50 gms cold butter cut into cubes; 500 gms strong white bread flour, plus extra for dusting; 7g sachet fast-action dried yeast; 2 tbsp. light brown soft sugar. *For the apple filling:* 3 medium eating apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1 cm cubes; knob of butter; 2 tbsp. light brown soft sugar.

For the cinnamon butter: 100 gms butter, softened; 100 gms light brown soft sugar, 2 tsp vanilla extract, 1 tbsp. cinnamon.

For the icing: 150 gm soft cheese, 150 gm icing sugar, a large pinch of cinnamon; 3 tbsp. canned caramel.

1. Prepare the dough for the buns the day before you want to bake them, if you have time—this will develop a better flavour. Warm the milk in a pan until steaming but not boiling. Add the butter and swirl the pan for 1-2 minutes until the butter has melted and the milk cooled slightly. It should be just warm.
2. Put the flour in a large bowl, or the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the yeast and sugar to one side of the bowl, then 1/2 tsp salt to the other.
3. Whisk together, then pour in the warm buttery milk. Mix until the ingredients form a soft dough (it should be a little sticky),

then tip onto a lightly floured work surface and knead by hand for 8-10 minutes, or keep the stand mixer going for 5 mins. or so. The dough will feel stretchy and soft when it's ready — you should be able to pull it apart without it breaking straightaway (this means the gluten has been developed). Lightly oil a bowl, add the dough and cover. Leave to rise at room temperature for a few hours, or until the dough has doubled in size. Or chill, overnight.

4. To make the apple filling, cook the apples, butter, sugar and 1 tbsp water in a pan for 5-10 minutes until soft and sticky. Add a splash more water if the pan looks dry or the sugar starts to burn. Leave to cool.
5. If the dough has been chilled, take it out of the fridge 30 mins before shaping. For the cinnamon butter, mix the butter, sugar, vanilla and cinnamon together with a pinch of salt. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface, shape into a rough rectangle, then roll out until it's about 50x40 cm. Spread the cinnamon butter over the dough and all the way out to the edges. Spoon over the apple filling.
6. Working from one of the longer sides, roll the dough up as tightly as you can into a sausage shape. Cut into 12 equal pieces. To do this easily, first cut the dough in half crosswise, then cut each half into three pieces, then halve each piece. Line a large round baking dish or cake tin, c. 33 cm, with baking parchment. Arrange the buns, cut side up, in the dish or tin, so they don't unfurl when baked. Leave some space around each bun, as they will expand as they prove. Cover loosely and leave to rise for 30 mins—2 hours (depending on how hot your kitchen is) until the buns are puffed up and touching at the sides. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6.
7. Bake for 35-40 mins until golden. Check the buns after 25 mins. If they still look a little doughy at the centre but the edges are burning, cover with foil but continue baking. Leave to cool in the tin while you make the icing.
8. Mix the soft cheese, icing sugar and cinnamon together. Spread over the buns while still slightly warm, so the icing drips into