

**march 2021**




**grapevine**

**50p**

the magazine of st mary's church rushden  
& st peter's newton bromswold

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## grapevine march 2021

March 14 is - according to Lewis Carroll in the mouth of the Mad Hatter - the day that the March Hare went mad. But who's he to talk? It feels supremely unlikely that we would be allowed to do anything so alarmingly antisocial: so don't let me put ideas in your head. If you've ever been privileged to witness a whole field of Mad March Hares going completely bonkers - I think that's the right technical term - just try and be happy for them.

Privilege is one of this month's recurring themes. The world is both bigger and smaller than we're used to. We find ourselves intimately involved with events at a global level and at the same time excluded from interaction with our best friends.

Richard Ormston [p15], Phil Nightingale [p4] and the Growing Faith adventure [p16] all share belief in using the new opportunities enthusiastically but wisely: or as Tony Smith puts it in his Book Review [p30]: letting 'God get a look in at 30,000 feet'.

*Jude Curtis, Editor*

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*Items for the  
**April grapevine**  
should be sent by  
**Sunday 14 March***

Preferably by email to:  
[missjudecurtis@btinternet.com](mailto:missjudecurtis@btinternet.com)

## From Phil . . .



A new film about the life of C S Lewis called ‘The Most Reluctant Convert’ is due to be shown on TV this year, although an actual launch date is elusive. The film is based on the stage show of the same name already performed on Broadway to much acclaim.

It will focus on how the famous writer, who [as everyone knows] penned the Chronicles of Narnia series - some of which have already been made into Hollywood films - went from being a vigorous opponent of religion to becoming perhaps the most celebrated Christian apologist of recent history.

Much of the film focuses on his way of dealing with suffering: both in the light of processing the atrocities of World War II, and the death of his wife from cancer in 1960.

Such suffering in this world is, of course, nothing new, and each of us experiences despair and loss subjectively. However, we might also say that because we have all shared in the suffering brought about by coronavirus over the last year, it’s a special collective experience that we haven’t had to deal with since World War II.

Words like ‘unprecedented’ have often been used to describe the state of things. Indeed, looking forward, whilst we all might hope for an increasing relaxation of lockdown restrictions in the coming weeks, none of us will know exactly how our emotional and practical landscape will have changed until the fog finally lifts and all the dust settles.

Come what may, living through the coronavirus pandemic has been very hard for people on many levels. We have all suffered.

Often people look to suffering as evidence that God does not exist. Lewis touches on this in some of his writings where he speaks of the fact that he, ironically, didn’t believe that God existed, yet was simultaneously angry with him for not existing. An obvious contradiction, but one that very much chimes with the atheist mantra

“There’s a repose, a safety (even a taste  
Of something like revenge?) in fixed despair:”

C S Lewis, *Sonnet 2 of Five Sonnets*

of the day whereby many might cry that there is no God, and yet they are still angry with him!

The truth is that suffering exposes our longing for something better – something that is both lasting and perfect. In essence it exposes our God-given need for the very thing he promises to give everyone who turns to him in this life - that longing for heaven and a new creation that is a gift to everyone who will receive it in Jesus Christ.

Another of Lewis’ famous sayings about suffering is how God whispers to us in our pleasures but shouts to us in our pain and how God uses suffering as a megaphone to rouse a deaf world. Whilst there is no delight to be taken in suffering, the Bible teaches that God graciously allows us to suffer in this life in order that we might understand that we cannot meet our own deepest needs and that they are only finally met in him so that we might lift our eyes upwards and beyond ourselves to see the bigger perspective he is calling us towards.

As we begin to slowly emerge from the pandemic, may it be that we have allowed the suffering we have experienced to become our teacher and draw us closer to God and deepen our roots in him, or even cause us to turn to him for the first time. For in him is life, and life in eternal abundance.

*Phil Nightingale*

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## Movie Notes

Films have been made of **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**, **Prince Caspian** and **The Dawn Treader**. Plans to make a film of **The Silver Chair** were cancelled last year, but the [good] news is **Netflix** are planning their own Narnia movies and TV series. Ed

## Invest in the future



One underlying theme of the times we live in seems to be remarkably positive. Despite everything, good things are coming out of our confrontations with Covid-19 and its attendant hazards. We may even become a more thoughtful and caring human race as a result. So let's invest in the future [as we are in the simplest ways by planting seeds for cropping in the summer like those illustrated on The Back Page – long, live, Auntie Madge!]

Life is rarely wholly good or wholly bad. Small things in the last year have made me feel immensely privileged and others made me seriously question my past and present priorities. Some things have become habits I would be foolish to break - a delivery driver recently heaved another 16Kg bag of perfect Whitworth's Granary Flour through my front door: regularly making and exclusively eating my own malted granary loaves would be a silly habit to break – I do try and share a bit of it within current restrictions!

Having access to a much richer virtual world than even six months ago has been a game-changer. Not all my experiences with Zoom have been fun-filled, but scheduled events: like the live **OU/BBC** presentation on the planning and making of David Attenborough's series **A Perfect Planet** with 625 other past and present OU students and staff was brilliant.

One beauty of this new virtual world is that, even if you miss the debut, material becomes available on line later to be mulled over and savoured. I may well have to go back to the **Embrace Annual Lecture 2020/21** which went out live in February and gave Lebanon hostage John McCarthy the opportunity to bring his story up to date.

He was on his first professional trip as a reporter in the Near East when he was kidnapped on the way to Beirut airport in 1986. I'd left Iraq back in 1984 which may give me some kind of bragging rights. It would be nice to think we've both worn well despite our earlier life choices. Coincidentally we both have fathers who were stationed in the area at the end of World War II.

The single fact that struck me most forcefully though, throughout his meaty and fascinating presentation was, what he called, the 'international invisibility' of the 25% of Israel's citizens who are Arab, but live outside Gaza



and the West Bank. They have become increasingly marginalised and vulnerable, and unfairly catered for in accommodation and education. This is particularly so since the recent redefinition of Israel as a homeland for Jewish people rather than a state for all the people who actually live there.

At a fascinating grassroots level he told the story of the Jewish card-player, who comes regularly each day to an Arab café, and nearly always wins – but still gets welcomed back. He spoke of the encouragement to be found in the coming together of Israeli Jews and Palestinians working alongside each other in the health service. The same principle is there in Embrace's initiative to harness the power of bringing both Arab and Jewish grandmothers together over coffee to discover that they have more in common than keeps them apart. He also told how, even at the worst periods of his incarceration, his jailers in Lebanon would make sure he had access to a Bible: and because he was reading much of the Old Testament for the first time, he could see, and was obscurely comforted by, the ancient tensions in the Holy Land being played out again then.

Despite everything, he praised the indomitable human spirit to be seen in Lebanon, which is currently in political freefall, with no functioning government and with Beirut still hurting from that toxic explosion last year. Their model of sectarian representation is, he says, badly broken.

Sometimes there is no substitute for personal experience: sometimes it really helps to see things through others' eyes. Either way some things are developing which bode well for the future: I think it's a future well worth investing in.

Jude Curtis, Editor

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*Note: John's talk is already available on the Embrace website - [embraceme.org](http://embraceme.org), along with a more recent blog.*

# St Mary's News

## **A Note about Services in Church - see also p28 for a Schedule of On Line Worship and Children's Activities**

The Church Wardens and Steve have decided to remain **online only throughout March** – hopefully with Easter as the first **Sunday back together on the first week in April**. If Boris completely surprises us and opens shops, etc in his announcements on **February 22** we may revisit this.

You can always find up-to-date details **online at** [stmaryschurchrushden.org](http://stmaryschurchrushden.org).

### **Prayer in our Church**

**Building:** from **Wednesday 17 February** our church building has been open for prayer from **11.00 am to 12.00 noon every day**. Of course we will continue to wear masks, maintain social distancing and cleaning, but please feel free to come into the church to pray.

For prayer requests, please phone or email Steve at the Rectory [312554/ [stephen.prior@aol.com](mailto:stephen.prior@aol.com)].

**PLEASE NOTE NEW EMAIL**

### **Housekeeping**

Happily the **work on the boilers** is complete and everything is heating up nicely!

### **St Mary's Church Office**

While the times continue to be 'complicated', messages for the Church Office team may be left via email- [stmaryschurchoffice@btinternet.com](mailto:stmaryschurchoffice@btinternet.com), or on the office phone [01933 412235] as these are checked every few days. Notices will be put on the church website and requests for posters will be fulfilled and put up in the porch and Church Hall.

**Brian and Val Hodgkin** are retiring after 36 years of ministry with Wycliffe Bible Translators [see Sue Eagles' write up on p31]. We have partnered with them through prayer and giving during their journey and as a church we are making a gift to them as they retire. If you would like to be a part of this, you may do so by either:

- making a cheque payable to Rushden St Mary's Church with a note indicating "Hodgkin Gift" and posting it to our Treasurer, Robert Bates, 16 Keats Way, Higham Ferrers, Northants, NN10 8DQ
- making an electronic payment to the following account: Acct Name: "CC of St Marys Rushden"; Acct No: 00081414; Sort Code: 30-97-20; and reference your payment "B&V"

**Signs of Spring return to Newton's churchyard** - in glorious colour on **The Back Page**





# St Mary's News

## The Children's Society

John's new quiz 'OH' is now on sale price £1 and can be obtained from Pam Bailey or Joy Holloway on Rushden 318415.

## Photo Albums

I have a number of 7"x5" photograph albums each holding 200 prints, **Free To A Good Home** [or homes]. If interested please contact Peter Chamberlain on 01933 386826.

## Thank you from Rita Nutter

"I and all the family would like to thank everyone at St Mary's for their prayers and kind messages during my great granddaughter Alice's illness. It is with much sadness I have to say that Alice lost her fight against Neuroblastoma cancer just a few days before Christmas and just two weeks after her second birthday. Thanking you

## Newton News



# Briefing

## Lent Lunches 2021

Rushden & Higham Ferrers Council of Churches is unable to offer the weekly soup lunches for Lent this year. It will instead be holding a weekly prayer time on **Zoom each Wednesday from 1.00 to 1.30pm**, starting on **Wednesdays through Lent** and led by a different leader each week – and also ones on **Maundy Thursday and Good Friday**. Access details can be found at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81084450699pwd=Tm5DT0lFbllXMVpSUG1MVWtoQVdpZz09>

Meeting ID: 810 8445 0699  
Passcode: 495190

*Andrew Presland*

**Looking ahead, the Peterborough DEF Annual General Meeting** will be open to all, and taking place from 7.30pm on **Monday 19 April** on Zoom.

Following the AGM, **Rev Andrew Symes of Anglican Mainstream** (and formerly of this Diocese) will be giving a talk and answering questions. The Zoom link and paperwork will be available from Andrew Presland - [andrew.presland.harborough58@gmail.com] in due course.

# ENCS - Latest Developments

## The New Sanctuary

In partnership with East Northants Council, ENCS have secured new premises to reopen the **Rushden homeless accommodation** [which we know better as **The Sanctuary**]. This will be slightly different from the previous night shelter due to government guidelines, with single bedrooms and short to medium accommodation provision.

They have been joined by **Lee Hopton** who will be running homeless services in Rushden, and the accommodation provision will work alongside their outreach worker to help those who are homeless in the district.

There have been a number of delays to opening successfully but it should happen soon!

**If you would like to get involved**, they are looking for **volunteers** for various roles, including evening and weekend volunteers; people to collect food donations from local supermarkets and volunteers to do shopping and other roles.

If you would like to **find out more**, please email **info@encs.org.uk** and they will get back to you when we can.

**ENCS** are reliant on **grant funding and donations** from individuals, groups and companies to keep their services running, and are incredibly grateful to all those who do support them, whether with food items, their time, financial donations, spreading the word or with their prayers.

**If you would like to donate towards this work** you can do so online at <https://www.give.net/20217071> or by cheque, payable to 'East Northants Faith Group' and sent to ENCS, c/o 60 High Street South, Rushden, NN10 0QX, with a covering note if the donation is for a particular project [eg Rushden Homeless Project or Food Bank] rather than for ENCS in general. Gift Aid forms are also available from on request at **info@encs.org.uk** or 07871 999020.

*I have a pencil that  
used to be owned by  
William Shakespeare.  
But he chewed it a lot.  
Now I can't tell if it's  
2B or not 2B*

# You might like to know . . .

**The Peterborough Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship [DEF] Lent Bible School: *God, sex and human flourishing*** will be taking place on Zoom in five sessions on Wednesday evenings over Lent [24 February to 24 March] and thinking through Christian teaching about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

Each session will run from 7.30 to 8.30pm, and needs booking separately using the links accessible from <https://www.pdef.co.uk/events>.

There you will see that St Mary's very own Phil Nightingale will be talking, about sex, on 17 March.



## **Vaccine bookings for Covid-19**

The vaccine generally is being offered at larger vaccination centres, pharmacies and some local NHS services such as hospitals or GP surgeries. When it's your turn, you'll be contacted by letter, text or email with information on how to book your appointment.

**By letter, text or email** - If you're invited to have your vaccination at a larger vaccination centre or at a pharmacy, you'll get a letter. If you're invited to have your vaccination at a local centre such as a hospital or GP surgery, you'll usually get a text or email. You may get both. You can choose to go to a larger vaccination centre or pharmacy, or wait to be invited to go to a local NHS service. More places are opening all the time.

**The COVID-19 vaccine is free of charge** on the NHS. If you think you have been a victim of fraud or identify theft, report it to **Action Fraud** on 0300 123 2040.



"Don't worry, I'm not getting Covid - I didn't realise the sign meant a low door..."

# Food for thought and prayer ...



## ... In the time of Lent

A quiet conscience ...  
Because regular tidying up  
Means that spring cleaning  
Isn't such hard work.

A quiet conscience ...  
Because excuses merely  
Make the water  
Muddier.



A quiet conscience ...  
Because hypocrisy  
Is such hard work  
That it's refreshing  
To stop pretending  
I'm perfect.

A quiet conscience  
Because 'sorry' is one of  
The most liberating words,  
Both for the one who says it  
And for the one  
To whom it is said.

*Extracted from **Quiet Moments**, Tom Wright, Lion Publishing, 2003*

# Daily Bible Readings for March 2021

The readings for March take us through the rest of the Gospel of Mark, bringing us into Holy Week. As you read through Mark's account, notice how Mark sets out the answers to the questions

Who is Jesus? What has he come to do? How do people respond to him? and ask yourself: How do I respond to Jesus?

Monday	1 March	Mark 5.1-20
Tuesday	2 March	Mark 5.21-43
Wednesday	3 March	Mark 6.1-29
Thursday	4 March	Mark 6.30-56
Friday	5 March	Mark 7.1-23
Saturday	6 March	Mark 7.24-37

But they  
laughed  
at him."  
Mark 9.40

"...they were  
overwhelmed with  
wonder and ran  
to greet him"  
Mark 9.19

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>7 March</b>	<b>John 2.13-22</b>
Monday	8 March	Mark 8.1-21
Tuesday	9 March	Mark 8.22-30
Wednesday	10 March	Mark 8.31-9.1
Thursday	11 March	Mark 9.1-13
Friday	12 March	Mark 9.14-32
Saturday	13 March	Mark 9.33-50

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>14 March</b>	<b>John 3.14-21</b>
Monday	15 March	Mark 10.1-31
Tuesday	16 March	Mark 10.32-45
Wednesday	17 March	Mark 10.46-52
Thursday	18 March	Mark 11.1-19
Friday	19 March	Mark 11.20-33
Saturday	20 March	Mark 12.1-27

"At this the  
man's face fell. He  
went away sad..."  
Mark 10.22

"And they were  
amazed at him."  
Mark 12.17

"And he broke  
down and wept."  
Mark 14.72

"Surely, this man was  
the Son of God"  
Mark 15.39

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>21 March</b>	<b>John 12.20-33</b>
Monday	22 March	Mark 12.28-44
Tuesday	23 March	Mark 13.1-31
Wednesday	24 March	Mark 13.28-37
Thursday	25 March	Mark 14.1-31
Friday	26 March	Mark 14.32-52
Saturday	27 March	Mark 14.53-72

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>28 March</b>	<b>Mark 11.1-11</b>
Monday	29 March	Mark 15.1-32
Tuesday	30 March	Mark 15.33-47
Wednesday	31 March	Mark 16.1-20

## So what else is happening . . ?

### The Real Easter Egg

As related in the February grapevine many of the big supermarkets have chosen not to stock The Real Easter Egg this year. As well as buying direct from their website - [meaningfulchocolate.co.uk](http://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk) - the milk chocolate **Real Easter Egg** can also be obtained through **Embrace the Middle East** website [[embraceme.org](http://embraceme.org)]. If you buy one of their brilliant 'Alternative Gifts' P&P is usually free. **Price is £4.49**

### 2021 Lent Study

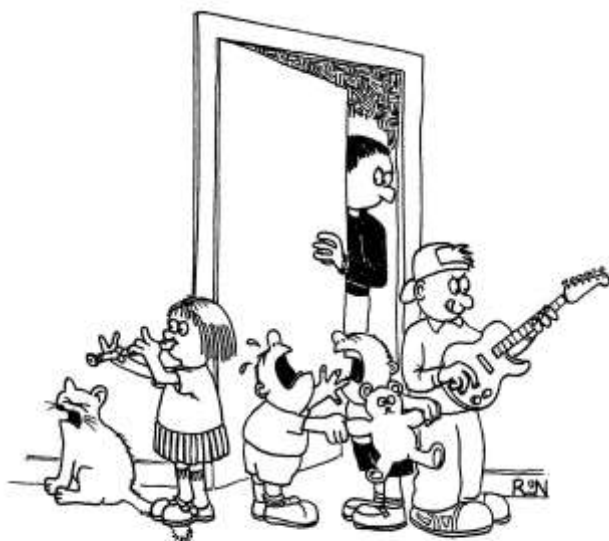
**Bishop Donald's Lent Talks** continue through to Easter and are a brilliant handling of the **Letter to the**

**Hebrews**. It's not too late to catch up!

Links to the material can be found in Steve's weekly 'Dear Church' email or on St Mary's website.

If you're missing meeting with your Home Group this is a great way to spend some quality time with a really gifted teacher. You can also, always, find someone to discuss the material with - I'm finding it truly inspirational.

You can also access the material through the Diocesan Website - just go to **[peterborough-diocese.org.uk](http://peterborough-diocese.org.uk)** and take a look around. *Ed*



*Kevin took himself off to his  
study to pray for peace*

## Make a difference

**M**onday 8th March is the day that the Church remembers Edward King, former Bishop of Lincoln, who died in 1910. On my bookshelf I have a copy of *The Spiritual Letters of Edward King* and towards the end of the book is a letter headed 'To a Working Man'. King says "The world goes ahead wonderfully – railways, telegraph, telephone, steamships and now aviation; we must hold fast by the faith..." 112 years on, we might write "The world goes ahead wonderfully – Eurostar, emails, Zoom, solar-panelled shipping, space exploration..." We could also add "...and the development of multiple Covid vaccines within a year".

We live in a wonderful and terrifying world. King could not have foreseen that the wonders of railways, steamships and aviation would play their part in causing a planet-wide climate emergency. You may have watched David Attenborough's *Perfect Planet*. Some of his observations are heart-breaking, but what can we do? Well, asking "what can we do?" is a great start.

At Diocesan Synod on 20th March, one of the items to be discussed is how we will respond to General Synod's massively challenging target of being carbon net zero by 2030. It all seems so big, doesn't it? When I was a curate, Stuart Blanch – the former Archbishop of York – took part in our training. To those of us in



large parishes he said: "Just because you can't visit everyone doesn't mean that you can't visit anyone". True. The same goes for saving God's beautiful creation. Just because we can't solve the whole worldwide problem doesn't mean that we can't do anything.

Remember those words from Bishop King: "we must hold fast by the faith". In these amazing, scary, rapid and challenging days, we travel in the knowledge that our Creator and Redeemer has always walked with us and will always walk with us. Let's pray that, through this worldwide pandemic and climate emergency, God will give us the courage and the will to start where we are and make a difference.

Richard Ormston  
Archdeacon of Northampton

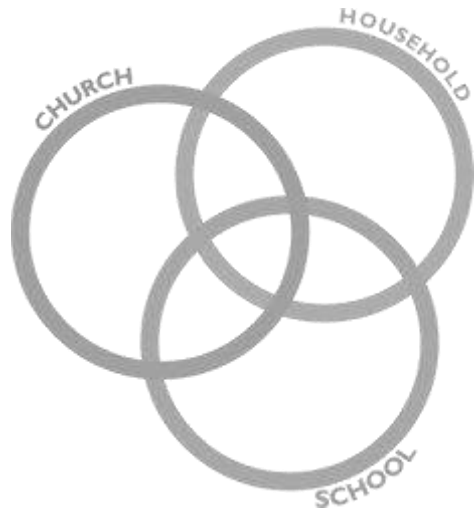
## The Growing Faith adventure

For the last 18 months, the Diocese of Peterborough has been one of only six ‘trailblazer’ dioceses within the Church of England to take up the Growing Faith initiative.

Growing Faith seeks to bring together the three spheres of church, school and households – in how we think and in what we do – and we have been appointed to champion the relationships between faith in these three spheres. The aim is to inspire our parishes to grow deeper in these relationships, and we are encouraging all our parishes and schools to engage with this vision.

The Gen2 Children and Youth team are leading on Growing Faith in our diocese but working closely with all diocesan teams, the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and senior leadership.

Now, before you think “Not another project!”, think again. This is a new way of thinking about how we engage with children, young people and families. It requires a culture change in the whole Church – and indeed in our diocese – where we seek to look at everything we do, and every decision we make, through the lens of what it means for children, young people and families.



Growing Faith is underpinned by the belief that the intersections of church, household and school are the ideal places where Christ is encountered and faith is grown for children and young people. It is guided by three values:

### **Connected Communities**

Faith grows in community and each sphere has a unique role to play, but together we generate stronger and intergenerational relationships that nurture faith.



## Spiritual Encounters

Faith begins and is sustained by encounters with God, and is rooted when we tell the story of those encounters.

## Imaginative Practices

We need to find new ways of being church together in different spaces in order to meet the challenge of reaching children and young people.

Canon Pete White, our Director of Children and Youth, explains the impact of Growing Faith so far in our diocese:

*"We are encouraging parishes to be aware of the ideas and to reflect on how their mission and ministry can work in the intersections. We are focusing on work with schools – working with our Mission team and the Diocesan Board of Education on this – as well as working more closely across teams and departments.*

*"We're including training on Growing Faith in our lay training courses and our curate training, and asking all clergy to make contact with their local school (church or community school) to offer support and help.*

*"We're also producing resources to support parishes to deliver Collective Worship and Assemblies, and we've developed a partnership with the Care for the Family – Kitchen Table project to support faith at home.*

*"In addition, we have 13 'hub groups' bringing youth and children's workers together to support one another, share ideas and resources.*

*"In short, we are trying to encourage everyone to consider every decision and action through the lens of the effect on children and young people."*

This [video](#) (click on the link to watch it) from the National Institute for Christian Education Research, based on their 'Faith in the Nexus' report, explains how faith can grow within these intersections.

Please pray for our Gen2 team as they continue to lead this important vision.



## Lockdown opportunities

**E**mma Kirby, one of our Gen2 missioners, tells us about the unexpectedly positive effects that lockdown has had on her work.

Here at St. Mary's in the parish of Weldon and Priors Hall, we have a heart for reaching out into the community. We believe that it is by making a difference in people's lives and building relationships with them that they see Jesus through our work, and want to find out more.

Whilst lockdown has temporarily stopped some of our work and groups, it has also been a great opportunity to make new contacts which we may not have been able to do as easily in normal times. We are part of the Weldon Care, Share and Support team who provide help to those who are isolating at home by getting their shopping and

prescriptions, and by making meals. The vicarage has a Community Shed with donated food and household supplies for emergency care packages. By working with the team, the church has raised its profile and credibility, demonstrating its commitment to actively supporting the community. We have also been able to come alongside those who are needing support, and have initiated relationships which will continue and develop past these uncertain times.

Through this intergenerational work, the community, in turn, supported us with our Christmas programme. Children and families naturally take part in outreach activities when the whole community is involved. As a Children and Families Mission Enabler, I see this as a stepping stone towards future opportunities for exploring faith.



*In the rain 5th Oct*

A host of useful information and resources to help you during this time can be found via [www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus).

Visit [www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/events](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/events) to find out about our online events.

# Steps that matter . . .

**The COP26 Climate Change Conference** and the Chadwick family's support with their feet, that we featured in the February grapevine, is only the first of many opportunities we've come across to get outside, get healthy and support a favourite charity or draw attention to an important issue.



**Crisis** - an organisation we notice more during its **Crisis at Christmas** period, but is active throughout the entire year - is also launching a campaign to **Step Forward to End Homelessness**. It simply involves tracking your steps throughout March, using a pedometer, phone app or a smart watch. Go to [crisis.org.uk](http://crisis.org.uk) to sign up.

## **Crowd Science**

**Search on line under BBC SOUNDS** for a smashing piece called **Do Greenspaces Make Us Healthier?** It was first released on **BBC World Service** on 4 October 2019 but is totally relevant now and is inspired by a massive vertical green space in Milan. When I say massive I mean humungous! Ed

## **The Foot Map of Rushden ...**

remains at the research stage - the fun bit! - but many thanks to the many who asked after it. It grows daily, despite snow, ice, gales and the ubiquitous mud. I've now 'researched' on foot well over 1,300 miles of Rushden and Higham since the beginning of Lockdown 1 on 23 March 2020.

My first target was managing more than 20 miles in a week: I did that by May. By July It was 30. On rare occasions - before the mud took over - it broke the 40 miles a week barrier.

I've had sight of some new [to me] maps, which don't obscure the terrain with street labels at the expense of the traffic-free alleyways and paths I want to record. For instance the map packaged with the Rushden Guide five years ago doesn't even show the area of grassland once known as The Baptist Sports Ground because of a plethora of new, surrounding streets and closes: the names of which obliterate its existence. It came as a very pleasant surprise at the base of the Bypass Bridge many months ago and is now a permanent alternative route for me!

As soon as there is a working map I'll make it available to all-comers.

Jude Curtis

## Meet the Congregation – Nicky Sutton

On 1 July 1971, Patricia and David welcomed their first child, Nicky. Living in Tunbridge Wells, mother was a secretary, but gave up work when Nicky was born, and David was a builder. Later the family was completed with a brother and a sister.

As a child Nicky loved going to the Corn Fair, but when it was time to go home there were always tears - now she hates fairs! School started at the local CofE primary and she went on to an all girls secondary school with a very strong Christian ethos, similar to Bishop Stopford in Kettering. Her favourite subjects were RE and English Literature. Following her A levels she studied Theology at Birmingham University.

She was awarded a place at Canterbury Christ Church College, but was not convinced she wanted to teach, and it was suggested she take a year off to gain some experience. Unable to find a job as a teaching assistant, she worked as an auxiliary nurse in Burswood, a Christian medical centre, founded by Dorothy Kerin - a beautiful place of Spirit-led healing that included worshipping before work each morning with the medical staff. Nicky was inspired by the care that put God at the forefront of all their work.

After that year out, she did start her PGCE\*, but found her heart was still in nursing, so she only got through eight weeks of the course. But it was not a waste of time as she met Anthony through a friend on that same course! They stayed in touch when Nicky returned home and they quickly became boy and girlfriend.

Nicky worked as auxiliary nurse for five months before starting her nurse training. She proposed to Anthony in her second year and then moved back to Tunbridge Wells to work on an acute medical ward for a year - the distance between them was challenging, but they eventually married in Tunbridge Wells in 1999.

By then Anthony was about to start a new job in Wellingborough so they returned from their honeymoon in Mexico to a new home in Raunds, with Nicky working at KGH for five months, doing bank work on medical wards, while she looked for a Community Nursing post.

That opportunity came at Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, where she worked till giving birth to Hannah in 2000. She continued to work part



time as a Community Nurse in Blisworth, but Hannah wasn't settled in the nursery, so Nicky gave up work, and in 2003 along came Oliver, and in 2008, Samuel.

In 2016 Nicky completed a Masters with the University of Birmingham and her dissertation [on Obligatory Presumed Consent for Organ Donation] gained her a distinction!

In 2017 she did a 'Return to Professional Practice' course and took a part time post with Rushden District Nursing team. After a year she changed to do Bank Work with Rushden and Thrapston District Nursing Team - which fits in perfectly with family life.

Right from school Nicky has had a close relationship with the Lord. She and her friend Alison would talk about the Bible and pray together. She was fascinated and excited by it all and became involved with Covenanters and YPF.

At St Mary's she is involved in the Music Group and her Home Group and loves singing and playing the guitar.

*Roving Reporter*

---

*\*Post Graduate Certificate of Education*

## Those questions

### Biggest Influence

My friend Alison, who has taught me many Christ-like qualities - she is gentle, kind and loving, yet humble

### Hobbies

Walking, theatre, swimming and philosophy.

### Guests to dinner?

My parents, brother and sister

### What would you serve?

A belated Christmas lunch!

### Favourite Place?

Home

### Proudest Moment?

Lily passing her exams

### Special Treat?

A trip to a West End theatre

### Favourite Bible verse?

"... For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"

*John 3.16*



## Last Minute

### Colouring In

Don't forget to send me a jpg of the results of your 3 Wise Men colouring in - I'd still like to see them in next Christmas's grapevine! Ed  
missjudecortis@btinternet.com



**Apologies ...** for the missing Corvid in the February edition: I pushed him out of the way for a moment and forgot to let him back in. He's hidden somewhere in this edition. Ed



**Don't panic! This one does not apply to St Mary's!**



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# Looking Back at St Mary's Magazines

50 years ago

March 1971

## Thought for the Month

"We should like to see Jesus" John 12.21

## Mothering Sunday

... is on March 21st when we hold the traditional Mothering Sunday Family Service at 9.45am. Children will distribute flowers to their mothers during the service. Our special speaker the Rev. Peter Jeffrey, Curate of St Giles, Northampton. He will also be preaching at the 11 o'clock Service. A Scientist by training Mr. Jeffrey is a talented speaker.



25 years ago

March 1996

## PNG

The computer that we bought our link missionaries V & B Hodgkin is being well used.

The latest news is quite amazing. Bill Collins [Val's Dad] was talking to me recently and informed me that he now hears from Val via E-mail! For those not sure of the term it means that news from them is typed into the computer and then it can be sent electronically to the recipient.

Bill was able to edit Val's latest letter sent to him this way and then forward the edited copy electronically to me! I am now trying to get myself registered with Wycliffe so that Val and Brian can send news this way.

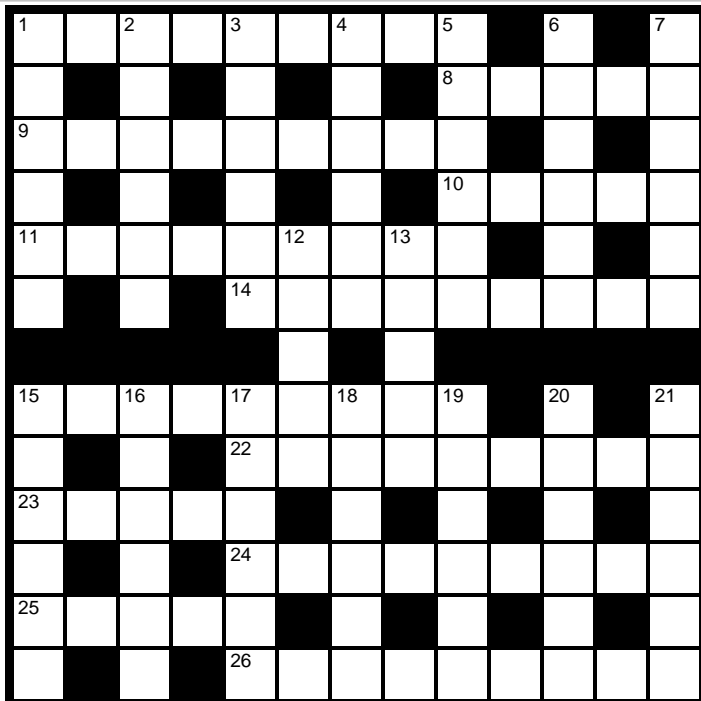
Elaine Williamson



# Crossword No 376

## ACROSS

- 1 Zion (9)  
 8 Person from Baghdad (5)  
 9 Act of saving (9)  
 10 Hittite officer in 2 Samuel 11 (5)  
 11 Whitsun (9)  
 14 Silver medallists (7-2)  
 15 Type of drill (9)  
 22 Attack (9)  
 23 Companion of Paul (NT) (5)  
 24 '--- of Jesus', (hymn) (2,3,4)  
 25 Dagger signs (5)  
 26 Used an oily substance to preserve wood (9)



## DOWN

- 1 11th son of Jacob (OT) (6)  
 2 Soften (6)  
 3 One of an American religious sect (6)  
 4 Provided (4,2)  
 5 60 seconds (6)  
 6 King of Persia in Daniel 6 (6)  
 7 Senior clergyman (6)  
 12 West Indian islander (5)  
 13 Escargot (5)  
 15 Greek island mentioned in Revelation 1:9 (6)  
 16 17th OT book (6)  
 17 Of Moses (6)  
 18 African fly (6)  
 19 Hug (6)

## Solution to Crossword No 375





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*Photographic*

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# On-line Services - March 2021

*For the time being we do not anticipate a return to services in church in March: however we do hope that along with other measures to be announced on 22 February we will be able to worship together at Easter. Meanwhile, services will continue on line as before.*

To access these go to our website: [stmaryschurchrushden.org](http://stmaryschurchrushden.org) which displays both the **Facebook** and **YouTube** links. Click on which you prefer and you can join the following services in March:

- **Sundays:** 7, 14, 21, 28 - 10.00am - *Morning Worship*
- **Thursdays:** 4, 11, 18, 25 - 10.30am - *Thought for Thursday*



**Helen Smedley's work with children and families continues on line, with a few changes as things develop**

- Monday 10.00am: **Bumps&Babes** online
- Monday 10:20am **Toddleractivities [NEW!]**
- Wednesday 10.00am: **Crafty Crafts**
- Friday 6.00pm: **Bible Bedtime Stories**
- Sunday 5.00pm: **Sunday Club** online

**Buggy Buddies** is also available to parents and guardians with children under 5: a socially distanced walkabout and natter. Slots can be booked for this with Helen on 07495 304974



'My times are  
in your  
hands'

Psalm 31.15

# Belfry Gossip

As the country continues in a state of lockdown we are still in a situation where Sunday services are no longer being held in church and we are not able to ring the bells. When the restrictions are eased it may once again be possible to ring some of the bells for Sunday service, but whether this will be in time for Easter is, as yet, unknown. In the meantime we are maintaining contact with a virtual practice on Zoom and Ringing Room.

Tintinnabulum

... and a little wry humour



# Book Review

**Richard Coles, Kate Bottley and Giles Fraser, *Three Vicars Talking***

SPCK, 2020 [based on the BBC Radio4 series]

This is an unusual book: since the authors are three CofE clergy we might perhaps expect a theology text book. It isn't, but theological insights keep popping up.

Since the three authors are all well known as broadcasters, with a considerable following, we might expect an autobiographical document written to satisfy the curiosity of their fans. It isn't that either, but as we read on facts related to their personal life story emerge.

As this book is published by SPCK we might expect that its purpose is to help everyone make sense of the Christian faith through personal testimony. I suspect that on a bookstall in an airport a book entitled *Three Vicars Talking*, with three recognisable faces smiling at the potential customer on the dust-cover, just might result in thoughts of God getting a look in at 30,000 feet, in between the distractions of the meal trolley and the latest film.

This is an unusual book. It is a verbatim record of freewheeling discussions, typical of what happens when a group of people who work in



the same business get together to exchange views and anecdotes - a sort of clerical Hansard.

The text of the book could be used as a script for three actors, to provide an evening in the company of characters created by Alan Bennett. At times the conversations are full of humour and good-natured banter: at others profound issues emerge that gracefully evoke expressions of empathy towards fellow Christians confronting basic questions of faith in their lives.

I think that you could enjoy reading this book during Easter - the final session was recorded for Easter 2020, during the first lock-down. I expect that last year's conversations will provide meaningful, challenging thoughts for us this year too, whilst other chapters will inform and amuse you.

This book is like a Bedfordshire Clanger: solid meat at one end and sweet dessert at the other. I hope you enjoy the varied menu that it provides.

*Tony Smith*

[If required, I can provide more information on the 'Bedfordshire Clanger' TS]

## Mission Matters - *Brian and Val's Retirement*

In 1986, Brian and Val Hodgkin, with two-year-old Becky and baby Tim, arrived in Papua New Guinea. As members of Wycliffe Bible Translators/ SIL they were to live alongside the Menya people, and carry out a literacy ministry among them - work on the translation of the Menya NT had already begun, led by Canadian colleagues, Carl and Pat Whitehead.

During the following years the Hodgkin family grew with the arrival of Deborah and Esther. As the literacy ministry was expanding Brian's responsibilities increased. Leadership roles culminated in his becoming Director of the entire PNG branch of Wycliffe for almost four years.

When the family eventually returned to the UK Brian was put in charge of translation teams working on Eurasian languages. In 2017 he became seriously ill, but the Lord graciously enabled him to recover. Since then he has worked on developing prayer material relating to background issues connected to the work in Eurasia.<sup>1</sup>

Brian turns seventy in March and the time has come for him and Val to retire. They have written to St Mary's expressing how grateful they are for our support over the many years we have been linked together: through prayer and fellowship and financial giving. For us it has been a privilege and a joy to know them as mission partners. We have been inspired by their love for the Lord and by their faith and obedience to him, and we have valued their friendship and fellowship. We thank God for them and all that he has accomplished through them. We pray that he will greatly bless them, together with their now extended family, during the years ahead.<sup>2</sup>

*Sue Eagles*

on behalf of the Mission Committee: Sue Eagles,  
Josie Smith, Sue Prior, Edna Wadsworth and Martin Compton



<sup>1</sup>For more on this go to [eurasia.sil.org/culture/social justice](http://eurasia.sil.org/culture/social%20justice)

<sup>2</sup>To learn more about WBT/SIL go to [wycliffe.org.uk/stories/](http://wycliffe.org.uk/stories/)

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