



June 2016

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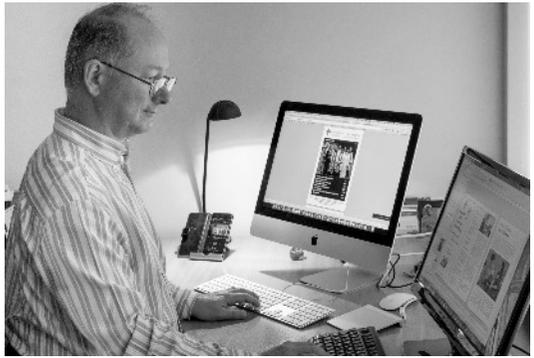
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Submission Deadlines

Items for inclusion in the July
2016 edition must reach the
Editor by midnight on **Friday 10th
June**.

Items for inclusion in the August
2016 edition must reach the
Editor by midnight on **Friday 8th
July**.



It is with great pleasure that, on behalf of all our readers, I am able to introduce The Revd Larry Wright to these pages for the first time in his new role as Rector of Kings Norton. Many of us had the pleasure of welcoming Larry and Amanda to the parish at the service of installation & induction on 26th May and there will be many opportunities to get to know them better in the weeks ahead.

This is an historic edition in more than one sense. The arrival of every new Rector is a milestone, of course; but we also look back to a rich local heritage in our Farmers' Market, Kings Norton's lost cinema and the history of Reader ministry. Two much-loved parishioners with deep roots in church and community are remembered by those who knew them. We also make history in our first interview with a Country & Western singer and our first report from the Scilly Isles. Indeed, islands play a significant role this month, as you'll see if you read Eddie Matthews' reminiscences of South Atlantic dentistry.

So, welcome! And, as always, if you have stories to tell about life in this thriving community, past or present, do get in touch.

The Editor

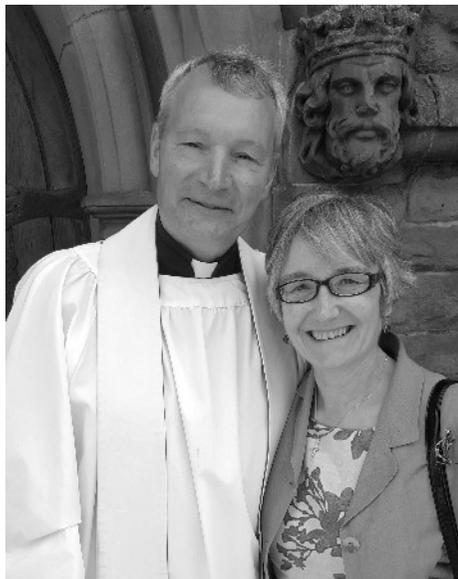
FROM THE RECTOR

Belonging & Identity

*“Who are you? Where do you live?
What do you do for a living?”*

These are probably the most frequently asked questions between people meeting for the first time. The answers allow an opinion to be formed about a person’s identity and status; the answers help to “locate” someone geographically and socially. Interestingly, in other cultures, particularly many African and Middle Eastern cultures, opening questions between strangers are more likely to be about parentage and family connections as these define one’s status and identity and establish relationships of obligation.

Whenever we undergo a major change in our lives, moving home, changing school, a new job, getting married, starting a family etc., we are inevitably changed to some degree. For Amanda and me, moving from two inner city churches to Kings Norton parish has meant not only a geographical change but a major change of context. Kings



Norton parish has many facets and a multitude of activities, which we are looking forward to experiencing, and the parish enjoys a significant historical profile with public buildings of national importance. We hope we will soon feel at home and quickly develop a sense of belonging to our new parish and community.

Any serious reading of the New Testament raises fundamental questions of belonging and

identity and anyone serious about living a Gospel-inspired life needs to address where their true self or identity is located. Do we belong to this world or to God's Kingdom? Are we the sum of our genetic inheritance and social conditioning (nature and nurture) or do we only find our true selves in Christ? The early Christians wrestled with these questions and saw them as defining their relationship with the world around them and with heaven.

Believers in Jesus Christ are **in** the world, physically present, but not **of** it, not part of its values (John 17:14-15). As believers, we should be set apart from the world. This is the meaning of being holy and living a holy, righteous life, to be set apart. We are not to engage in the sinful activities the world promotes, nor are we to retain the insipid, corrupt mind that the world creates. Rather, we are called to conform ourselves, and our minds, to that of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2). This is a daily act of commitment. But we should be careful not fall into the temptation of self-righteousness and being judgmental: as John 3.17 reminds us, the work of judgment is God's alone.

When it was recently disclosed that the Archbishop of Canterbury's

father was not the man who helped raise him, his dignified response was commended widely. However, the media were less inclined to report his theological reasons for being so sanguine about the news. He wrote:

"This revelation has, of course, been a surprise, but in my life and in our marriage Caroline and I have had far worse. I know that I find who I am in Jesus Christ, not in genetics, and my identity in him never changes."

To whom then do our lives ultimately matter? What helps us live with in this world while knowing we belong to God's eternal realm? How do we balance these two realities? I commend the prayer of St Augustine to you as a spiritual resource to aid reflection on identity and belonging:

*Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless
till they find their rest in you;
so lead us by your Spirit
that in this life we may live to your glory
and in the life to come enjoy you
for ever.*

Rev'd Larry Wright

From James I the King, Greeting!



“Ladies and gentlemen good afternoon. I would like to introduce myself as Keith Bradshaw, High Sheriff of the West Midlands. I know from experience that many people are unfamiliar with the shrievalty, for those who are acquainted, do forgive me while I explain.

The office of High Sheriff is an ancient one, tracing its roots back to the seventh century. Indeed it is the oldest continuous secular office in the land. Thanks to Oliver Cromwell, it has now lost all of its powers and is wholly ceremonial; but at the time of Magna Carta it was important enough for 27 of the 63 articles to be

devoted to the role of High Sheriff.

While today the High Sheriff has no real power, as my wife constantly reminds me, it is an annual, voluntary and non-political appointment charged with upholding justice, supporting the emergency services and also voluntary and community organisations.

It is a great honour and privilege to be able to join you on such an historic occasion, particularly in my home town. As you have heard, 400 years ago, more or less to the day, King James I of England signed

a proclamation allowing Kings Norton to hold a market on The Green. To put this in its historical context, Kings Norton was substantially bigger than Birmingham and High Sheriffs were considerably more powerful than they are today! Markets, too, were very different. Not only did they sell produce, but you could get your teeth pulled, get remedies for all sorts of maladies and hire people to work for you.

I will now read an extract from the Patent Roll concerning the grant of a market to the men of Kings Norton on the 15th May in the year 1616.

From James I, The King, to all to whom this shall come. Greeting. Know ye that we grant to certain gentlemen and yeomen of Kings Norton that they be entitled to hold annually and every year a market to be held on Saturdays each week and two fairs to be held similarly annually, the first of them on the eve and on the day of Feast of St Mark (25th April) and on the morrow of that same feast; and the other fair to be held on the fifth, sixth and seventh days of August with a court of pie-powder to be held there at the time of the said markets and fairs; provided that neither the said market, fairs or any of them be to the harm of any of the neighbouring markets or fairs

near adjacent. Attested by The King at Westminster on the 15th day of May 1616.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Kings Norton Farmers' Market is run by volunteers who do some sterling work. It gives all of its proceeds to charities and local causes such as paying for the lights on The Green at Christmas. I hope that you will continue to support them."

Dr Keith Bradshaw DL

High Sheriff of the West Midlands

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THE KWIKSAVE TERROR

The Cinema's Final Feature

Towards the end of April 1983, Kings Norton residents were dismayed, but hardly surprised, when it was announced that the cinema on the Green was to close within a few weeks. After all, cinema attendances had been declining for years. Why then did the decision result in a furious campaign of protest which lasted more than a year and ultimately saw a major triumph for local democracy?

Actually, Kings Norton was one of the last of the local areas to be deprived of its cinema. Previously there had been the demise of the *Stirchley Pavilion*, the *Cotteridge Savoy*, the *Oak* in Selly Oak, the *Kingsway* in Kings Heath and the *Essoldo* in Longbridge, together with others in Northfield, Rubery and Weoley.

Why then was there such a display of feeling? Was it a surge of unexpected affection for the silver screen? Would locals really be missing a facility that by all accounts they had barely been using for the previous few years?

No, it was something completely different. As the closure decision was announced, local people were astonished to learn that the site had already been sold, and appalled to hear that the new owner was the *Kwiksave* discount supermarket

group. There was a possibility, indeed a probability, that the cinema would be replaced by a large supermarket. And to make it worse for all those concerned with preserving the tranquillity of The Green, *Kwiksave* was a byword for cheapness, with stores that generally prioritised function over style, internally and externally.

It was a terrifying prospect for many, far more frightening than any X-rated film the cinema might show.

The cinema, called the *Kings Norton* had opened in September 1938 during the golden age of the movies. Ironically, there had been a great furore over the fact that some of The Green's longest-established (though barely habitable) cottages in the Old Square were demolished to make way for the cinema.



It was a very distinctive picture house, designed by the famous cinema architect Harold Seymour Scott, with an elegance that represented a genuine effort to harmonise with the environment of The Green. It had 1,000 seats, with a balcony and stalls.

Like every other local cinema, the *Kings Norton* had some 30 years of success. But it began to struggle from the middle of the 1960s, making losses in most years. If a *blockbuster* was shown, there could be an enthusiastic response: for example, when the famous film *ET* was shown in 1982, more than 6,000 filmgoers attended in a single week. But generally attendances continued to decline.

Understandably, cinema manager Peter Fawke tried everything he could to rescue the cinema and the jobs of its 13 staff. As the proposed closure was announced, he

suggested that the cinema could be made viable if capacity was reduced and the building revamped, with a 300-seat film theatre on the first floor and the ground floor leased out for other activities. He urged local clubs and residents' groups to campaign to keep the cinema.

But of course the primary motivation for local people was to frustrate the *Kwiksave* proposal, for which a planning application had already been lodged with Birmingham Planning Council. Things looked desperate when in May 1983, weeks before the building was to close, the City's Chief Planning Officer said that he could find "no grounds to refuse the application".

A formidably titled "Kings Norton Cinema Development Committee" was set up, mobilising public opinion to an impressive degree. Leaflets were distributed urging residents to write to the Secretary of State to request rejection of the supermarket plan. The Committee picked up the cinema manager's idea of a shared use of the building, proposing that the ground floor be used for craft workshops and leisure activities.

With a formal decision by the Council set for June 8th, opposition

was manifested by dozens of individual letters to the appropriate authorities and a petition with more than 2,000 signatures. Protesters argued that a supermarket would not only harm the environment of The Green as a conservation area, but would also affect established local traders, and create significant traffic problems in a part of The Green that was already congested. (In fact, the latter argument was given added strength when, with the debate at its height, a car turning into The Green from Westhill Road crashed into a parked vehicle!)

The campaign was given an emotional angle when it emerged that Snowy the cinema cat, its chief mouser for more than 12 years, was refusing to move out of a building he regarded as his home.

Opposition was not unanimous. John the butcher, whose shop was only yards from the cinema, said that the *Kwiksave* plan would attract more

shoppers to The Green rather than risk their going elsewhere, and denied that the store would affect the character of The Green.

Feeling was so strong that the Council deferred its formal decision in June, and a formal inquiry was set up, headed by a national planning inspector. In November, he issued his report, which rejected the *Kwiksave* proposal. He said that he felt that local shops on The Green already catered adequately for local demand, that a supermarket would cause delivery and traffic problems in a conservation area, and that the *Kwiksave* proposal would “severely compromise the semi-rural nature of the Green”. He commended the local campaign, saying that “public opposition has been heavy and voluble, demonstrating the need ... to conserve the village atmosphere.”

The campaigners had won a remarkable victory. However, there



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was a sting in the tail. The planning inspector added that it was important to find an alternative use for the cinema quickly, rather than risk its falling into disrepair. This put pressure on the campaigners. It was estimated that it would cost some £60,000 to convert the building into the leisure facility they had proposed, an enormous sum at the time.

The challenge of raising funds was approached with typical vigour. Even though it was probably always destined to fall short, at least residents knew that there would never again be the spectre of a supermarket development.

Sure enough, within a couple of years the site had been sold to a Church Housing Committee, which submitted plans for the cinema to be demolished and replaced by a development of sheltered apartments. Built with commendable speed, the development opened in 1988 as the Grosvenor Court we know today.

For the record, the cinema closed on 15th June 1983 after a week's run of the Dustin Hoffman film *Tootsie*. There's no record of what happened to Snowy.

Michael Kennedy

The Revd Jayne
Crooks on

Island Life

I have just returned from a short holiday on the Isles of Scilly. The weather was kind and the scenery wonderful. It was easy to imagine that you were not anywhere in the UK but on some tropical island paradise! The group of islands known as the Isles of Scilly number some 50 or so in total, although only 5 are inhabited (St Mary's, Tresco, St Martin's, Bryher & St Agnes) and each island is very different in habitat and character with bird watchers and flower hunters in abundance.

There is virtually no crime on these islands and people leave doors unlocked and even cars are left with engines running while the driver pops into a shop. I was amused to see one such car left by a lady driver only to see it driven off a few minutes later by a man! I was told it happens quite often: a couple share a car and one will leave it for the other!

Each of the five main islands has an Anglican Church and together they form the Parish of the Isles of Scilly, within the

Diocese of Truro. They have one Chaplain and two Assistant Priests and between them they cover services at all five churches on a Sunday morning, which necessitates a boat trip or two, hopping between islands! It's quite a different picture from those priests in the UK who hop around several churches in their cars! Last year, it cost the Parish something like £8,000 in boat fees alone. The Chaplain attends Clergy Chapter meetings and other diocesan meetings mainly by *Skype* and plans his trips to the mainland to include several events at once. The Archdeacon of Truro has to fly in to swear in the Churchwardens each year and as the planes don't fly on Sundays, this means at least a two-night stay on the island of St Mary's.

I visited all five churches during my stay (none are locked) spending a small amount of time in each just sitting quietly and enjoying the peace and unique beauty of each place. Many of the stained glass windows were

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beautiful. Some reminded me very much of windows in St Nicolas' and others were by a local artist, Oriel Hicks. There is also a beautiful Kempe rose window in St Nicholas' Church on the island of Trecco, depicting the Virgin and Child together with the attributes listed in Revelation 7: 11-12.

I was also fascinated by the arrangements for schooling. There are currently 270 pupils spread over the 5 main islands and they have one headteacher. Each island school caters for the 3–11 year olds. At age 11 or the start of Year 7, the children all attend the high school on St Mary's, boarding for the week on the island, arriving at about 8.30 am on Mondays and leaving again on Friday afternoons. At the age of 16, they have to transfer to a mainland school, which means termly boarding. By the time they go on to university, they are very confident about living away from home and are skilled in independent learning.

Island life is very dependent upon the tides and the weather. The waters around the islands are quite shallow and the tides in spring can rise and fall by as much as 15 meters or more, making sea transport very much a mathematical calculation. For instance, one day the tide was so low that we could actually walk across from Trecco to Bryher. Our party made it across safely, but a couple were stranded and rescued by the lifeboat service! A daily freight ship arrives, bringing food and other goods across to St Mary's and then smaller freight boats take stuff to the islands. As soon as the boat docks there is a flurry of activity and the boat is

unloaded in double-quick time, while a small fleet of quad bikes or tractors distribute the products around the island; and as roads are narrow or none existent, walkers beware! Small planes seating either 8 or 17 people fly from the mainland on 6 days of the week (no planes or boats on Sundays), weather permitting. For instance, there were no planes, in or out, on the Saturday of our stay as the cloud was too low.

I thoroughly enjoyed my stay in this beautiful place and indeed it was obvious that many people felt the same as they had been returning for holidays year after year (some as long as 30 or more years), but on reflection, I was glad to be home.

Revd Jayne

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A Tribute to Betty Cross

Written by Hilary & Diane, Betty's daughters and read by Diane at Betty's funeral in St Nicolas' Church on 4th March 2016.

It is so appropriate that Mum's funeral is in St Nicolas' today as both Mum and Dad were fully involved in this church's life from the day they moved here when Dad got a teaching post at Broad Meadow Junior School in 1951. Mum wrote the children's page of the Parish Magazine for many years and baked cakes galore for every fund raiser. Dad was an ardent member of the Dramatic Society when rehearsals were in the Old Grammar School. He also worked on Thursday evenings to maintain the churchyard.

Hilary and I were christened here and married here. We both danced around the maypole every summer and we were Sunday School teachers for several years. So, this church has been a significant part of all our lives. Many of us gathered here eight years ago for Clive's funeral and we are now here for Betty's.

Mum found it hard to get used to living alone after 62 years of happily married life. She bravely involved herself in many things, but deafness was a real handicap, despite the most expensive hearing aids. The last few months have been very difficult for her with broken bones, lengthy hospital stays and finally a nursing home. However, she had a

rich and fulfilling life and this is what we shall all treasure.

Some of you will remember Betty for her amazing three-tier wedding cakes, for her flower-arranging prowess or for her demon tennis. She always used to say, when Hilary and I were children, "It would be wonderful to be *really* good at something, to really excel in a particular way." In fact, Mum was so good at so many things. She was a qualified L.A.M.D.A. Elocution teacher and a good pianist. She could type like the wind, was a wonderful cook and home-maker, to say nothing of her elegance and love of fashion. She had a demanding job as the Lodgings Officer at Birmingham University for 25 years and yet always had many interests and hobbies: music, theatre, dancing, her beloved dressmaking, travelling and entertaining, to name but a few. She was great fun to be with and always an optimist.

Mum was always highly organised. When sorting through some of her files, I found records of Christmas gifts and cards for everyone dating from 1955! I have some of them here. I discovered that, in 1960, Hilary was bought a dressing gown costing 19 shillings and sixpence (95p), but my



jumper was only 14 shillings and sixpence (75p)! Life has never been fair, has it?

Our parents met in Southport just before the war, when Clive was on leave. A six-year courtship by letter followed, including a proposal and a £5 postal order sent for mum to buy her own diamond engagement ring! Things were very different then. They married as soon as Dad returned from serving with the Palestine police and had many, many wonderful years together. They were the most marvellous, loving, caring, supportive parents to Hilary and me. Not only when we were growing up, but as we all know, parenting does not stop, ever! They helped Ron and me when our daughters were born, dropping everything to support us as we

had just moved to a new area where we knew no-one. Hilary stayed with them for several months when she returned from Cape Town, enabling her to job-hunt and house-hunt. They were doting grandparents to Rachel and Katherine, who each stayed with them for a week every summer. I know they both have many fond memories to treasure of their holidays in the bungalow, chaotic Christmases and family celebrations with Grandma and Grandpa. They always had the best party dresses, beautifully made by Mum.

Hilary and I were delighted when mum decided to move back to Kings Norton and into the lovely Awdry Court retirement complex. Every time I visit I try to book a place for myself for the day when I'll need it. Moving there helped mum enormously. The events and visits organised were a real godsend. Hilary and I would like to express our sincere thanks to all the residents and to Mike for their kindness to Mum over the past five years and to Mavis especially, who has been a loyal, special friend. Also to all Mum's friends here at church, and the library, to Barbara who looked after Mum and Dad over many years and who has been a great support in recent years.

Thank you to you all for being here today to remember our dearest mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Brightest and Best

An Encounter with Reginald Heber

If you were in church on Trinity Sunday you may have sung, or at least heard, the hymn “*Holy, holy, holy*”. But did you, I wonder, notice the name of its author? The hymn was written, as was that Epiphany favourite “*Brightest and best of the sons of the morning*”, by Reginald Heber.

Bishop Heber first swam into my consciousness (I use the expression advisedly) in the late 1950s, when I was invited to share in a carol service at St John’s Church, Tiruchirapalli (formerly Trichin-opoly) in the Church of South India. During the service, I found myself sitting in the sanctuary area, with my feet on a memorial stone marking the grave of the Right Reverend Reginald Heber, Bishop of Calcutta.

Intriguing. How did the Bishop of Calcutta come to be buried in a place many hundreds of miles south of the city in which he was based?

Reginald Heber, it turns out, had a relatively short but distinguished career. Born at Malpas, Cheshire,



on 21st April 1783, he was educated at Whitchurch Grammar School and Brasenose College, Oxford. He took holy orders in 1807, and became Rector of Hodnet in Shropshire, where his father, also Reginald, had been Rector until his death three years earlier. During his time at Hodnet, in addition to an active involvement in the life of the parish, he was called upon for some diocesan duties, and his outstanding ability was recognised

by an invitation to deliver the Bampton Lectures in Oxford in 1815. He was also writing hymns, mainly for the various seasons in the Christian year.

But back to India, where the See of Calcutta had been established in 1814. It was rather large as dioceses go, covering not only most of India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), but also Australia and parts of southern Africa. Its first bishop, Thomas Middleton, died in office in 1822, and the question arose, "Who was to succeed him?" Reginald Heber was known to have a long-standing interest in the overseas missionary work of the Church, and he was tentatively invited to consider the appointment. After initial doubts and hesitations he eventually agreed, and, with his wife Amelia and daughter Emily, sailed for India in June 1823. They arrived in Calcutta some four months later on 10th October 1823.

The new bishop took his wide responsibilities very seriously. In June 1824 he began an extended tour of northern India (also taking in a visit to Ceylon), which did not end until he got back to Calcutta in October of the following year. Sixteen months on tour!

By the end of January 1826 he was off on his travels again, this time to visit southern India. So it was that on 1st April he found himself in Trichy, as it is familiarly known. St John's Church, built originally to meet the needs of the British garrison in the city, had been consecrated in 1816 (it is celebrating its bicentenary this year). In a service at St John's on Sunday 2nd April, Bishop Heber confirmed 42 people. The following day he attended an early morning service at the church, and, no doubt to the great delight of Indian members of the congregation, pronounced the

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benediction in Tamil. After the service he returned to the bungalow where he was staying and went to take a dip in what is described as a plunge-pool. Perhaps the shock of entering the cold water was too much for him. Who knows? But he died immediately, and was carried lifeless from the pool. His funeral took place at St John's the next day, and he was buried where (so to speak) I found him, on the north side of the altar.

During his all-too-brief time in India Bishop Heber developed a deep love and concern for its people, and was greatly loved and respected by them in return. His memory is treasured

in the Church of South India, not least through the High School and College in Tiruchirapalli, which are named after him. Here in Britain we remember him mainly through his hymns. Of the many hymns he wrote, some (such as *"From Greenland's icy mountains"*) are well past their use-by date; others, like *"Holy, holy, holy"* and *"Brightest and best"*, are still widely sung and enjoyed. Reginald Heber himself was certainly among the brightest and best churchmen of his generation. May he long rest in peace in the sanctuary of St John's.

Bill Knowles

Lee's Link Letter

Lee Norfolk is this parish's "link missionary". He works for CMS, the Church Mission Society and is currently preparing to return to Bolivia in South America where, as you will read, he will be serving some of the poorest communities in Santa Cruz.

Because we support Lee, financially and in prayer, we are privileged to receive his regular letter, in which he keeps his supporters up to date with what he is doing. This month, we are printing an extract from the letter he sent out in April 2016. If you would like to read the full text, to receive future letters or to support Lee in any way, you can email CMS at links@cms-uk.org to request details.

Dear Supporters and Partners,

The past few months have been great for me but also tinged with sadness; as I unpack this letter, I will let you into what has been going on with me and my family. Hopefully, it will bring you all some encouragement.

Back in January, I moved to Oxford in

what was, with hindsight, a massive move really, a big shake up for me but one which I knew would serve me well. After speaking with Bishop Henry Scriven, who is our Latin America director here at CMS, I decided that God was urging me to come and spend three months mission training, something that all CMS partners have to do now. I was

Mike Baker

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quite nervous but trusted God for everything, including my finances which were in a parlous state at that point! Coming to Oxford, though, has opened my eyes once again to how God works. I realised that I have already worked in some tough areas doing mission, from spending three years in Walsall as a youth worker and then in Hull, along with being on several short-term mission trips to Bolivia. So coming here to Oxford for three months offered me the opportunity to have a breather and perhaps reflect on a busy life up to now.

Before coming, however, I had a family crisis that really affected us all. My brother Jason, who is 20 years old, went on a night out and police later discovered all his clothing and belongings washed up on the riverbank besides the Humber. We have not been able to discover whether he is still alive or not but we live in hope and are praying earnestly for him. He went missing on 6th December and the past few months have been very tough not knowing what has happened to him. Please can you pray for him? Also, please pray for me and my family at this tough time.

All my family need the hope of Christ; I am currently the only Christian in my household. I came to faith through the Youth for Christ (YFC) movement and more specifically, through the love and care of CMS mission partners Anna and Chris Hembury who are based here in Hull. Since then, they have been like a

second mother and father for me, guiding me through the many snares and traps of life since I was about 10, even chastising me when I go a bit crazy!

Since coming to CMS, it has been a time of enlightenment, because for many years I knew I was different from many people. I love God and love bringing his light to the world, helping people and reassuring them that things will be okay. The people here at CMS have been so patient with me, the staff so helpful in ensuring that my mission dream comes together, and educating us in cross-cultural training, communications and theological training. It's all designed to ensure that, when we are out in the field, we are the best possible versions of ourselves and doing exactly what God has called us to do. Romans 8:22 says: *"We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."* This is because, as the verse points out, we are currently living in a time when people are looking for answers, for truth, for peace.

Through four short-term visits to Bolivia, I have seen firsthand how young people are left abandoned with no one to love them or even give them a second look. As I head towards Bolivia, please pray that I would take up my cross further and be able to use my role as youth worker, advocate and "father" to

these young people and show them what real love is. When I get there, I will be based in the boys' home called *El Camino* (The Way), and will be working with a British missionary couple called Isha and Roger Hulford who oversee the ministry. Initially, though, I will be spending time in Santa Cruz for a period of orientation. Then, when I get to my placement, I will firstly be working on the streets alongside a local Bolivian contact team offering medical aid to youngsters who range in ages from 1-30. I will then be in the boys' home cooking, playing and teaching sports and teaching them to worship.

Bolivia is a hugely Christian country, mostly Roman Catholic, but there is no ministry to the young people who are abandoned so it's going to be amazing

being back in my second home, where I became a Christian in 2007 on the hills with my friend Seberino (as he sang the song "*Open the eyes of my heart, Lord*"). I then gave my heart to Jesus during a two week mission trip to Santa Cruz with Hull Youth for Christ.

Thanks for reading and God be with you all. I pray that the Lord would shine on you, and may the strength of the Lord rest on you. May he grant you rest in your lives and may you remember afresh that we are not in race but instead a marathon, helping to bring God's will to pass on earth!

Blessings

Lee



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The Church in the Parish

We are a Church of England Team Parish in partnership with the Methodist Church, serving all in Kings Norton through St Nicolas Parish Church and Hawkesley and Immanuel District Churches.

**We believe that the church in Kings Norton exists
To be a worshipping transforming partnership in Christ
To live out God's radical hospitality for all
To be equipped for work in God's world**

St Nicolas' Parish Church

on The Green, Kings Norton, B38 8RU

Sunday	9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
	10.30 am	Holy Communion (with "Oasis" for 7's-11's)
2 nd Sunday	10.30 am	Parade Service or Morning Worship for all ages
	4 pm	Holy Baptism (1 st and 3 rd Sundays of the month)
	6 pm	Evening Worship (see below)

Every Sunday evening we offer prayer, music and quiet for all. 1st Sunday: Taizé Prayer, 2nd Sunday: Holy Communion with Prayer for Healing, 3rd Sunday: Night Prayer (Compline) and Reflection, 4th/5th Sundays: Evening Prayer or Evensong (B.C.P.).

Mon & Weds	9 am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday	12 noon	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

Hawkesley Church (Anglican & Methodist)

at Hawkesley Academy on the corner of Shannon Road and Old Partway, Kings Norton, B38 9TR

Sunday	10.30am	Worship and Children's Activities (5-11's)
		1 st & 3 rd Sundays Holy Communion
		2 nd & 4 th Sundays Morning Worship
Tuesday	10am	Hawkesley Coffee Morning (every two weeks)

Immanuel Church

at Saint Nicolas' Place, 81 The Green, Kings Norton, B38 8RU

Sunday	10.30am	Worship (with "Oasis" for those at Primary School)
1 st & 3 rd Sundays		Holy Communion;
2 nd Sunday		Joint service with either St Nicolas or Hawkesley
4 th Sunday		All-Age Worship

Open Church

Visit, pray, light a candle or share conversation over coffee.

We open St Nicolas' Church as much as we can so that all may share God's peace and promise in a space where they have been found and trusted for centuries. There is a place for you within its story. Please pray that more will know it as a safe place for prayer and healing, where sorrow and joy are held in God's love. We welcome volunteers to share in our offering of welcome, refreshment and care through St Nicolas,' Hawkesley and Immanuel, to steward at St Nicolas' during Open Church and to care for our churchyard, flowers and brasses.

Wednesday	10.00 am – 1.00 pm 6.30 pm – 9.00 pm : Candlelit Church with informal learning together at 8.00 pm. Quiet spaces, candles, conversation, creativity & music. Come and go as you like.
Thursday	6.30 pm – 8.00 pm for all Marriage and Baptism enquiries
Saturday	10.00 am – 12 noon for coffee, "Knit & Natter" & prayer.

For Young Children

Bumps & Babies: for new and expectant parents, in St Nicolas' Church every Monday from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm. **Tiny Tots:** for 0-5's and their parents or carers every Thursday in term time at 9.00 am in St Nicolas' Church

Growing in Faith

We are exploring fresh ways for all to grow in faith, those making their very first step, those who have made many and those who are rediscovering God's love after times of change. Please ask in each church or see our website for details.

Help us to keep our Parish Church open for all

It costs around £800 each week to keep St Nicolas' Church open. We welcome all financial support through donations and especially through regular Planned Giving. Do ask for details and, if a taxpayer, ask how you can Gift Aid your offering.

Baptisms and Marriages

Please visit St Nicolas' on Thursdays between 6.30 pm and 8.00 pm to ask any questions and arrange bookings with our clerks. One of the clergy is also present to help if there is a question over whether your service can be held in this parish.

More details at www.kingsnorton.org.uk

Remembering Alec Fell

*From a eulogy delivered at his funeral on 11th April 2016
by the Reverend Jayne Crooks*

Alec was born in Sparkhill in 1925. He attended St John's Primary School and then went on to Yardley Grammar, which included a short spell of evacuation in Gloucestershire. From an early age Alec was active in Church life: Sunday School, chorister, member of the Cubs and Scout Groups, both at St John's and St Mary's, Moseley. The group had a hut in Druids Lane and Alec recalled in his memoirs walking, with several others who had recently been confirmed, from the Scout hut to St Nicolas' Church for 8 a.m. communion on Easter Sunday and Whit Sunday, little realising that this church would become his family's spiritual home in the years to come.

Alec's commitment to Scouting spanned some 40 years. Following his time at Moseley, he took over as Troop Leader at St John's and then acted as Assistant Leader for the 44th Woodcraft Troop at Sparkbrook. He had a short break from scouting but was recruited again in 1964 as Assistant Scout Leader here in Kings Norton, a post he held for 11 years.

By the time Alec left school at 15 in 1941, Britain was at war and Alec had already experienced the effects of this. The family home in Sparkhill was

damaged in the winter of 1940 by a bomb. When he was 17, he joined the Home Guard platoon at Midland Gear Case Co. in Hall Green, where he was working in the toolroom and served as the signaller. In Feb 1946 he began his National Service, which for two years was mostly in Palestine, a time to which Alec makes little reference in his memoirs.

Along with everything else he was involved with, Alec pursued his education after leaving school, studying at the Central Technical College, which later became the University of Aston. Here he gained a B.Sc. and became a Member of the Institute of Production Engineers. A new post saw him using these skills at Lucas, later British Aerospace, in the design and planning department. He was involved in many major projects, not least the design of Concorde's fuel pump.

Outside work, involvement in Church life continued, serving on PCC at St John's and in the choir. He was also involved with the IOGT (the International Organisation of Good Templars) and it was while on an IOGT conference in Hamburg in 1952 that

Alec met Cynthia. Discovering that they both came from Birmingham, they became friends and back home discovered both a deepening friendship and love for one another. They were married in St John's in 1954 and, in subsequent years, their three children, Alison, Chris and Pat were baptised there too. After their marriage they lived in Kings Heath until 1957 when they moved to Grassmoor Road in Kings Norton.

For a while, Alec continued to be a member of St John's, Sparkhill, but when the children started to attend Sunday School at St Nicolas', Alec began to attend Matins here, which took place at the same time. He joined the choir in 1961 and was a loyal member for 15 years. As well as being a church chorister he was also a member of the Birmingham Festival Choral Society and the Birmingham Choral Union and he wrote that one of the high points was taking part in a performance of the Berlioz Requiem, conducted by Harold Gray, for the final concert at the Welsh National Eisteddfod in 1972 along with the CBSO and the Hallé Chorus before an audience of eight thousand.

Alec's service to this parish was truly inspirational. In addition to his choir involvement, he has served on the PCC and both the Youth and F&GP committees, has been a representative on the Deanery Synod and a Churchwarden at a time when health and safety issues were not as regulated

as they are now; and so he was often found up a ladder replacing light bulbs. He was also one of the founder members, along with Cynthia, of the Churchyard carers' group.

In 1962, after the death of Cynthia's father, Alec and Cynthia made the decision to sell their home in Grassmoor Rd and move in to share the home on Redditch Road with Cynthia's mum. They were to remain here for the next 44 years.

Alec was a good father, instilling in his children those good, old-fashioned values of politeness, punctuality and respect. He was very supportive of them and generous with his time, energy and financial support. In the 1960s whilst they were pupils at Kings Norton Primary School, he served on the Parent Teacher's Association Committee as a member, as Vice Chair and as Chair. He spent hours with Chris working on different cars, even if he did have issues with the way Chris looked after his tools and the way Chris managed to spray paint almost his entire garage on one occasion. I think a padlock on the tool box after this was mentioned in conversation with Chris.

Chris & Alison also recalled family holidays, camping and caravanning, which were great fun, and caravan holidays continued for Alec and Cynthia after the family had grown up and moved away.

(Continued on page 34)

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF Reader Ministry

With so much unpleasant news around almost every day, it's great to have something to celebrate and be thankful for. So it was a real pleasure to be present along with approximately 90 Readers at the celebration of 150 years of Reader training at the beautifully restored St Barnabas' Church in Erdington. It was a great chance to combine the main business of the day on training for Readers in "Preaching at Special Occasions" for baptisms, funerals, and all-age worship, with the Annual General Meeting of The Readers' Association chaired by the Warden of Readers, Revd Martin Stephenson.

The day began with worship lead by Reader Paul Raymer, followed by keynote speaker and preacher The Revd Dr Kate Coleman whose talk was entitled "*When The Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary About The Day*". Reflecting on the Bible passage about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, we were reminded of context when preaching.

Huge thanks must be given to all who helped to make the day a success, and especially to the Revd Liz Howlett (who is responsible for lay training), Warden of Readers Revd Martin Stephenson, Gerald Nembhard and the staff at St Barnabas.

As one of the Assistant Wardens to Readers in the Diocese of Birmingham, I can't express adequately my huge thanks to all the 200 or more Readers in this diocese for all they contribute to their own churches, communities and deaneries. Each individual Reader brings to their ministry, their own individual gifts as given by God's gracious Spirit. Each deserves to be recognised, valued, supported, encouraged, and kept in prayer. They are a great bunch!

I end with a huge thank you to our own Readers here in Kings Norton, Mandy, Ruth and David who, like so many others, exercise their gifts in ministry as they juggle work, family responsibilities and the usual pressures of life. It's a pleasure, privilege and blessing to work with each one.

As we look forward to working alongside our new Rector, the Revd Larry Wright and his wife Amanda, I pray that they may each continue to be a part of the blessing to our Team Ministry here in Kings Norton.

Fay Fearon

*Reader and Assistant Warden of Readers
in the Diocese of Birmingham*



READERS REINVENTED

On Ascension Day 1866 the Bishops of the Province of Canterbury reached agreement that laymen could be licensed in all dioceses to lead prayers and preach in the absence of a clergyman. The title “Reader” had already existed in the medieval church to denote one of the orders or ranks through which a trainee priest was expected to progress. But it was not until the Reformation that something resembling Reader ministry emerged in the Anglican Church.

When Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558, she reintroduced Protestantism. Many clergy who had served under the Roman Catholic Queen Mary either resigned or were dismissed. The Church of England was therefore left with a staffing crisis and the bishops of the time resorted to licensing laymen to

read services. These early Readers were so called because their task was literally to read the service from the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*, but they were never licensed to preach. They had to be literate in English but, unlike the clergy, they were unable to read Latin.

Readers never quite died out in the 17th and 18th centuries simply because there were never quite enough clergy to go around. By the early 19th century, it is likely that few Readers of the old kind remained. However, in 1839 the famous Headmaster of Rugby School, Thomas Arnold, preached a sermon calling for the ordination of “distinctive deacons” as well as the creation of an order of lay “subdeacons” below them. His concern was, in part, that an elite class

of priests, almost all of whom had been educated at Oxford and Cambridge, were struggling to appeal to ordinary working people.

Arnold's sermon led to a "*Lay Address to the Archbishop of Canterbury*", submitted in 1844, which called for the authorisation of Lay Readers to share the burden of ministry with incumbents and to allow less educated men a chance to participate in ministry. The Anglican Church of the time was also anxious about the rise of nonconformist denominations such as Methodism, which did allow uneducated men to preach. Some hoped that the creation of the office of Reader would address this concern.

There was much discussion of the issues in the early 1860s but progress was slow. The decision of 1866, when it came, was a watershed. Readers after this date were different from their predecessors in that they existed to serve what the Church saw as a need to provide opportunities for lower middle and working class voices to be heard. They were also different in that, for the first time, they were licensed to preach as well, something which would have been unthinkable before this date.

So, this year, we celebrate the 150th anniversary not of the beginning of Reader ministry, but of Reader ministry in its modern form. These days, of course, that role is open to both men and women. While selection and training are as rigorous as they have ever been, the breadth of background, education and experience among Readers today and the variety of roles in which they serve are a priceless gift to the church.

The Church of England currently has about 10,000 active Readers. Most are licensed to a parish, as in Kings Norton, but some are chaplains in prisons, hospitals, hospices and schools. They exercise what is called "a teaching and preaching ministry within a pastoral context" and are sometimes referred to as "lay theologians", their close contact with everyday situations helping them to proclaim Christ both in the church and in the wider world.

If you would like to find out more about Reader ministry, you'll find a wealth of information at www.readers.cofe.anglican.org.

David Ash

Reader & Editor

APRIL 2016

MARRIAGES

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SW: Demi, thanks for taking time from a busy schedule and, not least, university studies. Life's pretty good right now. Your debut Country EP recently hit No. 1 in the *iTunes* Country Albums chart. How long has music been part of your life?

DM: Well, music began for me at a very young age. When I was 5 I picked up my first instrument which was the violin. From then, I taught myself piano, guitar, ukulele and more.

SW: When did you get your first guitar and what was the first song you learned to play on it?

DM: My first guitar was a Christmas present when I was 14. I think the first song I learnt was probably a *Paramore* one.

SW: We first met in 2011. Then you

were working on writing your own songs. Now, you've a catalogue. Where do you find your inspiration?

DM: I get my inspiration from real-life situations; sometimes mine, sometimes other people's. Writing is like an escape, so I choose situations that have an effect on me.

SW: You've recently settled on Country as your genre. What is it about Country music that caught your interest?

DM: Country music tells stories. I love songs that can create an effect on the listener, and that's exactly what Country music does to me.

SW: So, how did your Country EP, *Tracks and Trails*, come about? And what's the story behind the songs?

DM: I had a lot of songs and wanted to play with a band. So I formed the “Demi Marriner Band”. The stories behind the songs vary. *C You* is about one person seeing a friendship as more than it is but not taking it well when told differently. *Runaway Train* is about lost love and whether you should fix something or accept it’s broken. *Pretty* is about being pretty much whatever you want, being happy in yourself. Finally, *Second Hand Smoke* about moving on from anything negative in your life and accepting that somethings aren’t “..gonna taste any better than the first time” ; there’s always something better.

SW: You have a degree to complete but you’re also a chart-topping artist. How will you balance all that?

DM: I absolutely love my degree. It’s teaching me so much about music and helping me go from strength to strength. I’ll keep doing what I’ve been doing and let the two sit hand in hand.

SW: Your story. *A chapter: ‘What Demi did next’*. What do we read?

DM: We have lots planned this year; playing the main stage at Wychwood Festival and recording our first music video, amongst others. I hope you’ll also read about some incredible gigs, tours and lots more.

SW: Last one. What advice do you have for someone who wants to break into music?

DM: I’d say that every gig is a good gig, even the really awful ones, because they are a learning experience. All it takes is one person to smile. Follow your heart, stay true to your music and make the most of every experience.

SW: Thanks, again, for your time. Good luck with all you do and **we look forward to seeing you at St Nicolas’ Place on Saturday 9th July.**

DM: It’s been my pleasure.

Stuart Aston.

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CONTACTS

If you cannot find what you are looking for here, you will probably find it on the parish website (www.kingsnorton.org.uk). Alternatively, please ask questions at services, during Open Church or at the Parish Office. Situated inside Saint Nicolas' Place on Kings Norton Green, it is open from Monday to Friday between 10 am and 1 pm.

81 The Green, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B38 8RU
parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk 0121 458 3289

THE MINISTRY TEAM

The Rector	The Revd Larry Wright
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Jane Platt
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Robin Mortimore
Methodist Minister	The Revd Caz Hague
Children's Work Development Worker	Pauline Weaver
Readers:	David Ash, Mandy Butler, Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman
Pastoral Care Team Co-ordinator	Anne Hughes

THE CHURCH WARDENS

St. Nicolas' Church	Anne Hughes & Phil Burton
Hawkesley Church	Jim Clarke 0121 550 3455 or 07 939 838 086
Immanuel Church	Sue Hartley

OTHER CONTACTS

Parish Administrator & P.C.C. Secretary	Judy Ash
Finance Officer	Catherine Deghani
Regular Giving	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Church Facilities Manager	Sylvia Fox
Churchyard Care	Anne Hughes
Flower Arranging	Alison Blumer 0121 486 2837
Oasis (Sunday School) Tiny Tots & GPS	Pauline Weaver
Oasis (Sunday School) Immanuel	Nicky Moorcroft

MUSIC

Church music, choir training and handbells are overseen by Sylvia Fox (07 778 449 170). Choir practices are held on Fridays (tuition from 4.45 - 6.30 pm, juniors from 6.30 - 7.45 pm, adults from 8 - 9 pm). Handbell practices are held on Mondays (3.00-4.30 pm) and on some evenings. Please phone first to check.

Bell Ringing Catherine Taylor c.r.taylor@bham.ac.uk

Practices for bell ringers are held on Tuesdays from 7.30 to 9.15 pm in the church tower.

SAINT NICOLAS' PLACE

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Manager: Andrew Driscoll.

Seniors' Club (Over 65s)

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Women's Fellowship

Carol Devic (Secretary)
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Guides and Brownies

Rainbows: Mondays 5.30 - 6.30 pm
Brownies (188th Birmingham): Tuesdays 6.00-7.30 pm
Brownies: Thursdays 6.30 - 8.00 pm
Guides (247th Birmingham): Mondays 7.15-9.00 pm

Guides and Brownies

at Hawkesley Church Centre

Rainbows (1st Kings Norton): Mondays 5.30 pm
Brownies (259th Birmingham): Wednesdays 6.30 pm
Guides (141st Birmingham): Thursdays 7.00 pm

Scouts and Cubs (St Nicolas, 198th Birmingham)

*Tuesdays at Oddingley Hall,
Oddingley Road, B31 3BS
www.myscouts.co.uk*

Beavers (6-8yrs): 5-6 pm Penny Hattersley 628 5694
Cubs (8-10½): 6.15-7.45pm Alan Haynes 07534 615489
Scouts (10½-15½): 8 pm

Hawkesley Church Primary Academy

Shannon Road, Hawkesley, Kings Norton, B38 9TR 0121 459 6467

Headteacher: Mr Derek Higgins

APRIL 2016

BAPTISMS

17th Apr Maddison-Leigh Julia Tyndall
Oliver Daniel Burn
Carter Paul Seston
Leighton John Dixon
Henry Jonathan Oliver Pratt

“BAPTISM marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first step in response to God’s love. ”

The Baptism Service, Common Worship

However, on reaching the age of 80, both Cynthia and Alec decided that the time had come to stop galling about with a touring caravan and to buy a static one at Bromyard in Herefordshire, near to Chris and his family. Two years later they replaced this with an even more comfortable

residential van and made the decision to move there on a permanent basis, where life took on a much less busy pace. They had time to enjoy the countryside with its wonderful variety of bird life and to make new friends. Alec joined the local bowling club until back pain caused him to give up in 2012.

Later that year another move occurred, to a specially-adapted bungalow just a few doors away from Chris and Yvonne and nearer to shops and other local amenities.

Sadly, after more than 59 years of a loving and happy marriage, Cynthia passed away. Today we gather to celebrate Alec’s life and the faithful contribution he made over so many years to the church at large, as he served his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. God bless you Alec and thank you.

Revd Jayne Crooks



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Calling All Gardeners

Would anyone like to take on stewardship of a flowerbed in our churchyard? You would be free to plant as you wish providing it looks neat, tidy and welcoming. There are a few flowerbeds in need of some tender, loving care. If you are interested, please speak to Anne Hughes, (Churchwarden).

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APRIL 2016 FUNERALS

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life." (*John ch.3 v.16*)

1st April	Hilda Betty Palmer	88	In.CY
6th April	Reginald Hephherd	89	SN.Bu.BE
8th April	Cyril Parkinson	81	In.CY
11th April	Alec Ernest Fell	90	SN.Bu.CY
14th April	Meryl June Allen	66	In.CY
21st April	Norma Irene Hill	68	SN.Bu.LH
29th April	Olive Betty Thompson	82	SN.Bu.CY

SN : Service at St Nicolas' Church, **Cr** : Cremation, **Bu** : Burial,
In : Ashes interred, **BE** : Brandwood End, **CY** : Churchyard,
KN : Kings Norton Cemetery, **LH** : Lodge Hill, **PB** : Perry Barr, **QN** : Quinton,
RH : Robin Hood, **RD** : Redditch, **SC** : Sutton Coldfield, **WI** : Witton,
WP : Westall Park,

King's Norton Parish Magazine

Minimum Price Six Pence

June, 1966

Fifty years ago this month, the Vicar's Letter in the Kings Norton Parish Magazine reflected on the declining numbers of men applying to train for ordination (the Church of England voted to ordain women as late as 1992). Here's an extract.

The number of clergymen in England this century has declined from 24,000 to 18,000, a fall of 25 %, while the population has risen greatly.

In 1963, 737 men were recommended for training, in 1964, 656 only. An increasingly large proportion of those coming forward are over 40. I would be the last to belittle their contribution, and they bring with them a wealth of experience, but their length of active and vigorous service is inevitably restricted and our ministry **MUST** be based on younger men.

Scholarship is important. In 1964, 45% of the candidates were university graduates, in 1965

only 39% were graduates; and this at a time when there are more and more graduates leaving university. In an age of increasing specialisation and university education our Church must get its fair share of university men.

Where will the answer be found? As far as I can see, the only answer to that is in the parishes. From a parish like ours we ought to have at least one man in training all the time! If only parents could think of it as an honour to have one of their sons enter the ministry: yet, by and large, they try their utmost to dissuade them from entering it...

Anthony J. Balmforth

HALF A CENTURY LATER...

...the Church of England has just over 8,200 paid clergy (average age 52) and relies increasingly on self-supporting ministers, active retired clergy and Readers. About 23% of full-time clergy are now women. Revd Balmforth would have no reason to be disappointed with his former parish, which has produced a steady stream of candidates for ordination and Reader ministry over the years, most recently **Gail Rogers** (right) who, having been accepted for training for ordination from September 2016, is Kings Norton's latest ordinand (clergy trainee).





Saint Nicolas' Place

www.saintnicolasplace.co.uk

The Tudor Merchant's House and the 17th century Old Grammar School set around the Norman foundation of St Nicolas' Church and containing the 18th century Saracen's Head constitute the finest collection of mediaeval buildings in Birmingham. They are owned and managed by Kings Norton Parish church for all to discover, enjoy and use.

Café : Monday to Saturday 9am-4pm

Gift Shop : Tuesday to Saturday 10am-3pm

Guided Tours: Friday and Saturday at 11am and 2pm.

Group tours can be booked at various times during the week.

Booking: Visit our website for details and photos of our facilities for weddings, family functions, corporate and community events and training. We offer a wide range of catering options too. You are welcome to view at a time to suit you. Call us on **0121 458 1223** to arrange a visit or email info@saintnicolasplace.co.uk.

Marriage and baptism enquiries are welcomed at St Nicolas' Church on Thursdays from 6.30pm to 8pm.

Activities

Saint Nicolas' Place is home to a wide range of activities every week including Uniformed Groups, Seniors' Club, Community Choir, Social Support Groups, Zumba, Rhythm Time, Slimming World, Dance and Fitness Groups, Kings Norton History Society, and heritage group events. We still have room for more. We are also developing rich local archive and study resources.

Learning to Pray

The Thoughts of a Children's Worker

I don't know about you, but I very often find prayer quite difficult. I find it difficult for all sorts of reasons: finding time, knowing where to start without my prayer sounding like a shopping list, not getting distracted, knowing how to start. Prayer can be tricky. It can be especially hard if you are new to prayer or undergoing a crisis of faith.

Sometimes we all need help to refresh our approach to prayer or encouragement to look at prayer differently. While I was thinking about writing this article I found myself doodling, which is one of my favourite forms of prayer. It is based on the idea *Praying In Colour* by Sybil MacBeth. As you doodle and colour your prayers are mixed with the images and in the silence your mind is able to concentrate on the prayers. They don't have to be perfect, that isn't the point, and they can include words and names as well as shapes, squiggles and drawings. They are not images to share, they are just as private as any other prayers but they do become a visual reminder of your prayers.

You may prefer to write your prayers or say them aloud. You

might have a prayer tree or table with items on to help you pray. You may like prayers written by others to read or you may like simple reminders like teaspoon (TSP) prayers (thank you, sorry, please) which works very well if you use it every time you use a teaspoon. Creative prayer challenges you to find a way of praying with any everyday object: literally anything can be used as an aid to prayer with a little imagination. When I explore creative prayer with other people my bag of props includes a jar of marmite, a pair of reading glasses and a sea shell and always leads to some interesting discussion!

It is important for families to learn how to pray with their children, especially if they are families new to faith where prayer is a new experience for the parents too. We have special prayer bags available to help with this. They include items such as wooden blocks, bubbles, a



birthday candle and balloons.

The idea is that you use the items to pray together as a family. For example, building a tower by taking it in turns to add a block and saying thank you to God for something as you add each block. The bubbles can be used in several ways, popping a bubble for each thing you pray about or watching the bubbles float away carrying your prayers.

Because prayer can be so different and individual, writing corporate prayers can be challenging. It may seem straightforward to write prayers to use in a service but have

you ever stopped to wonder if you can actually say *Amen* to a prayer? Some people will just mechanically say *Amen* at the end of a prayer, others may not agree with something in the words and don't feel that they can add their own *Amen*. That makes writing prayers a much bigger task.

I hope that wherever you are in your relationship with prayer you remember that there are no rights and wrongs, only what works for you in helping you talk and listen to God.

Pauline Weaver

+*Harry L Marks*+

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A Visit to the Dentist

In this month's episode from our resident retired mariner, Eddie visits New Zealand and the Falkland Islands to test the limit of his dental skills and the RAF organises an emergency tooth extraction.

The *MV Mairangi Bay* is a container ship of some 40,000 tons owned by P&O and it is currently situated in New Zealand. It has already called at Auckland and the capital, Wellington. The ship is heading for the final port of call which is Port Chalmers on the South Island, close to Dunedin. A long haul then lies ahead, some 28 days at sea non-stop across the stormy Southern Ocean and then into the Atlantic, northwards to Europe and home.

I am in my office when Rick the Petty Officer (Navigation), better known as the Bosun, pops in. I say, "Keep out of my fridge," as he tends to swipe the odd can of beer from my hospitality stock. Rick is quite a character. He has had a lot of bad luck and lost his daughter in a car crash. He had also won some £30,000 on the Irish lottery. His wife then cleared their joint bank account and ran off with another man. A sad set of circumstances.

"No," he says, "no beer today. I have a bad toothache." I take him up to the medical room and put the

light on. I open the small dental kit, which includes a mouth mirror. The back tooth which he is concerned about looks really bad. I tell him I will get the ship's agent to arrange a dental visit when we get into Port Chalmers. We will be in port for almost three days as we have a lot of New Zealand frozen lamb to load for Europe. "Great," says Rick.

On the first morning in Port Chalmers I tell Rick that the agent is due soon and will arrange a dentist to take out the tooth tomorrow. "Sorry," he tells me. Some friends are taking him to the horse races and he has a day off. "The tooth seems to be less painful now," he says, optimistically. "Listen, bonehead," I reply, "we have 28 days at sea and that's no joke." But all to no avail. Off to the races he goes.

Well, the long voyage begins, day after endless day. The ship crosses the International Date Line so we have two Fridays. An iceberg is spotted, huge and looking like the

White Cliffs of Dover. The Captain is pleased as the ship's radar tracks its position very well.

The Bosun was in agony with his tooth. I gave him strong painkillers and Valium tablets to help him sleep. I tried to pack the tooth with cotton wool and oil of cloves but, of course, I needed to extract the offending item, something we could not do on board.

After 14 stormy days, we turned into the Atlantic Ocean and past the Falkland Islands. I am in my cabin at about 2 p.m. and the phone rings. It's the Captain. He tells me to get up to the bridge pronto; so off I go topside and into the wheelhouse. "Quick, Eddy, pack a small bag for the Bosun including his passport." The mate had been on the VHF radio to see if P&O had a ship's agent in Port Stanley with a view to getting the Bosun to a dentist and back on board while the ship just slowed down.

It was then that the RAF cut in on the radio to say a Sea King helicopter was on exercise and would lift the Bosun on board with a short flight to the services' medical facility. "Marvellous," says the Captain. The pilot said, "Captain, just stay on the same course and speed and leave it to us." The Master was getting a bit panicky.

Then we saw the helicopter approaching.

I run down to tell Rick and grab his passport, just in case. I ask him how he feels about being hoisted on board a helicopter. He tells me it is no problem as he was in the RAF Search and Rescue. Rick asks if he can take some bottles of booze with him. I say OK and give him a bottle of rum, one bottle of whisky and a litre of Bailey's.

The helicopter arrives. It seems huge and very noisy. An RAF Sergeant comes down onto the main deck on a winch. "Good afternoon," he says, "I've come for your Bosun." "He is here," I say. "Take him away, for goodness' sake." With that, Rick is winched on board the Sea King 60 feet above and off it goes.

Some two hours later, the ship has entered Goose Bay, steaming very slowly as some wrecks are visible, left over from the Falklands War. The Captain tells me that the Bosun will be brought back to the ship by boat; and so I go down below. A small door will be opened in the engine room to get him on board, where we will sign any papers required by the boat crew. We do have an agent on the Falklands and he has arranged the matter.

Sure enough, we soon get Rick, minus his tooth, back on board and full of relieved smiles. I try to think what the boat crew would appreciate and pass out a box of oranges. This is well received and many thanks are given. Rick tells me about the treatment he received. A lady dentist, a Colonel, had whipped out the bad tooth. She

received a bottle of Bailey's and was very pleased. The helicopter crew got a bottle of rum and were also grateful. The small boat crew were given a bottle of Scotch. And so the ship sailed on, no doubt leaving behind a tipsy few on the Falklands. Bless 'em all!

Eddie Matthews



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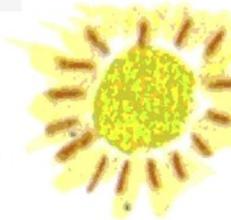

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