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2 COVER PHOTO BY DAVID ASH April 2021

favourite watering holes

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Catherine Matlock

edge of Druids Heath

The Secret Garden of Walkers Heath Discovering a hidden gem on the

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Welcome



There's more than a hint of Spring in this issue. It's not just that Easter is just around the corner, though it is (you'll find details of our **church services for Holy Week and Easter on p.38**). You'll be able to detect from the number of references to parks, gardens, plants and vegetables that the sap is definitely rising!

In case you are not in the mood to get up, get out and get active, we also have some reassurance for those who feel the need to take it steadily after a very difficult winter. Our first ever Swedish contributors extol the virtues of the afternoon nap while Pauline Weaver introduces us to a unique and beautiful book (p.8), one which reminds us of the healing potential of kindness, friendship ... and cake.

The towpaths beside the local canal have become a much-valued recreational resource during the past year's lockdowns. If a canalside walk has become part of your routine in recent months, you may have found yourself wondering about the purpose of the buildings to be found there (see front cover). Michael Kennedy's investigation (p.28) will answer many questions and provides fascinating insights into Kings Norton's industrial past. Our industrial present, meanwhile, continues to raise urgent questions about our abuse of the planet we call home. It's not just our canals which are littered with plastic waste and there are, thankfully, a few scientists who are determined to do something about it (p.24).



Together with my fellow contributors, may I wish you all the joys of Spring and a very happy Easter.



LARRY WRIGHT

Easter & Enchantment

WHY ARE WE SO FASCINATED by stories about mystery and magic? Why is fantasy so enduringly popular? The Revd Larry Wright offers some clues.

I've noticed recently that the use of the term "re-enchantment" has become a fashionable means of attracting the attention of jaded minds. While looking for a particular book title on the internet I found a variety of titles beginning with the term "Re-enchanting..." followed by The World, The Forest, Religion, Feminism, The Church and Theology.

As usual, with internet searches, one is then "nudged" (I think that's the technical term) to other references such as articles, videos, conferences and so on. It seems that we are losing or have lost the concept of our world having elements of enchantment threaded through and within it.

"Enchantment" is an evocative word but not one in common



The Revd Larry Wright is the Rector of Kings Norton Team Parish

use, so maybe these writers and thinkers have a point. As a word, "enchantment" describes both feelings of intense pleasure and delight or being under a magical spell. Perhaps it's the sense of magic mixed with bliss which we all, at some level, long for.

Foundations of magic

The popularity of books, films and computer games based upon fantasy never ceases to grow. They're loaded with magic, enchantment and high points of delight: Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, Dungeons & Dragons and the like. The Walt Disney empire was built upon foundations of magic and enchantment and Mr Disney believed that his films were as much for adults as for their children

What's noticeable about all Disney tales, fairy tales and fantasy stories is the elements of darkness, dread and jeopardy involving the central characters. The stories which we grow up with, watch with our families and tell our children at bedtime become part of our cultural heritage, morality tales for each generation. Heroes and villains, dark magic and good magic, fantastic creatures, last minute salvation and happy endings take us into another world of stirring action and adventure. Their enduring

grip upon our imagination is evidence of a deep human need for stories which help to guide us through the pressures of growing up and establishing our values for living well.

Ancient echoes

While the characters of these tales may be original, the stories themselves are not. Most fantasies and fairy tales have their beginnings in the ancient stories recorded in the historical texts of civilisations long gone. Epic legends and myths which defined peoples and spread with them as they migrated or conquered. Most of these ancient accounts were religious because gods and the supernatural were a constant feature of their lives. The modern fantasy and fairy tales are what remains, stripped of gods, the supernatural reduced to magical alternatives controlled by those with special powers.

The Bible is a rich source of stories, poetry, history and prophecy and includes most of the elements found in ancient epic narratives. The difference is that the Bible is unapologetic about God, miracles, salvation, death, darkness and, for Christians, the new life which comes from believing in Jesus Christ. Reading modern fairy tales from a Christian perspective



† The popularity of fantasy never ceases to grow.

can actually enrich our understanding of them. Seeing the connections between the enchantment of fairy tales and the epic stories of our Bible is what prompted the author C.S. Lewis to write the *Narnia* books.

Easter 2021 will be one of the most remarkable for many years as we emerge from the darkness, fear and dread of the pandemic into a lighter, brighter future.

The Secret Garden

Our curate, Catherine, has recently beguiled us with



snippets from the children's' novel, The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett, one of the classics of children's literature. It's the story of a child finding hope and healing through nature and the lessons which nature teaches about life. It's also a story of enchantment. Mary, the central character is drawn to a vision of something enticing, seemingly just out of reach yet visible in the distance though unobtainable. Through perseverance, she enters the Secret Garden.

Gardens in the Bible

Gardens feature in the epic Bible stories of human progress under God. The Garden of Eden symbolises the ideal relationship between humanity, creation and the creator. The Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed before his arrest, torture and execution, symbolises the apparent futility of faith in the face of cruel oppression and injustice. The Easter Garden symbolises the triumph of justice, life and love over the forces of death and destruction. To live and engage with the promise of "life in all its abundance" is to understand intuitively that we will encounter all three experiences represented by these gardens in our lives.

As Easter approaches, the promise that life will return to

"normal" seems just around the corner, visible but not yet obtainable, just like Mary's partial vision of her secret garden. The hope engendered by even a partial vision still offers new life, promise and abundance; a compelling force for good.

The Easter Garden

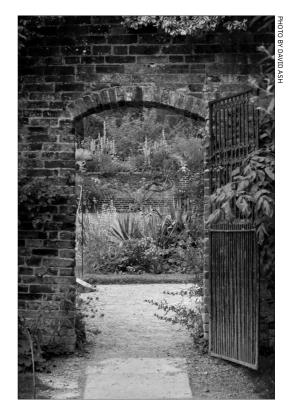
According to St John's Gospel chapter 20, another Mary encounters Jesus in a garden in a new way after his death. She doesn't recognise him at first. She has lost hope and is in despair. Jesus represented all she had hoped for in life and he's dead to her, or so she thought. Yet something happened which caused her to reimagine the boundaries between life and death. Death was not the end for Jesus or his message. The garden flourished. A strange new thing happened.

One of the more enchanting quotations from "The Secret Garden" regarding belief and faith may have been written with Easter in mind.

"At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to hope it can be done, then they see it can be done. Then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago."

Have a blessed Easter!

"The Easter Garden symbolises the triumph of justice, life and love over the forces of death and destruction."



PAULINE WEAVER

The Boy, The Mole, the Fox & The Horse

Author and illustrator Charlie
Mackesy was attempting to make
sense of his own feelings when he
drew a picture of a boy talking to a
horse and posted it to his Instagram
account. "What's the bravest thing
you've ever said?" Asked the boy.
"Help," said the horse. This simple
message was soon printed out and
pinned to the walls of workplaces,
hospital wards and treatment centres,
providing inspiration for those
struggling with their own dark times.



PAULINE IS THE LAY MINISTER AT ST NICOLAS' CHURCH, KINGS NORTON

ave you read the book "The Boy the Mole, the Fox and the Horse"? I was lucky enough to receive a copy from my daughter for my birthday. I have to say that it is one of the most beautiful, gentle, most inspiring and positive books I have ever read. I think every household should have a copy. We should read it again and again and read it to our children and our grandchildren.

It is a book that is very much needed at the present time. As we emerge from the restrictions, isolation, pain and loneliness of the last year, we know that the impact on people's mental health is going to be huge. It is something which we will be dealing with for many years to come. The book reminds us of the things that matter: love, friendship, kindness and cake!

The importance of cake

Cake is always good, and it is especially good when shared with others. Making cakes for someone or receiving them is a great way of showing that we care and are cared for. I have received several such gifts delivered to my door in the past year and they have been welcomed and enjoyed, as my expanding waistline will testify. You can even send cake by post!

We know that sharing cake after a service in church is an important time when we

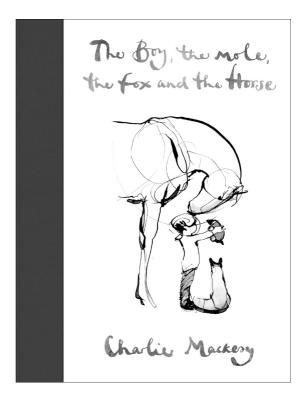
share news, spend time together and care for each other. I look forward to the time when we can do that again. We will have so much to catch up on, so many conversations to have. I can't wait to catch up with the children and all their news. They have all grown so much, and I don't just mean in stature.

One of the pages of the book has these words: "'What is the bravest thing you've ever said?' asked the boy. 'Help' said the horse."

I hope that this is a message we can all hear: that asking for help is brave and that we are here to help. You are not alone. Please ask for help if you need it. You matter. We care. There is always someone to talk to, someone to ask for help: friends, colleagues, family. We may not be able to solve everything but we can listen, talk, pray, and of course share cake.

Celebrating Easter differently

We will be celebrating Easter differently this year but we have much to celebrate. There is hope. The book ends with the words "Look how far we've come". We have come a long way in the past year. We have been through difficult



times, experienced things we never expected and this has gone on for longer than any of us thought. But with love, kindness and friendship, faith and cake, we have come through.

You matter

The horse says to the boy "Always remember you matter, you're important and you are loved, and you bring to this world things no-one else can."

Happy Easter!

▲ CHARLIE MACKESY'S **BEST SELLER IS RANKED #4** AND RATED 5 STARS ON AMAZON. WHERE THE **HARDCOVER EDITION CAN** BE YOURS FOR £9.00, AN AUDIO CD AND AN **AUDIOBOOK** ARF ALSO AVAILABLE.

SABINE HOFMANN



PASTOR KAI THIERBACH WITH WIFE HELEN AND SONS ROWAN, TRISTAN, GABRIEL AND SIMEON AT COVENTRY CATHEDRAL IN NOVEMBER 2020

German-Speaking Protestant Communities in the UK

Sometimes during lockdown I have felt rather torn between St Nicolas' Church and the German Church in Britain, with which I am also involved, owing to clashes of service times, and have tried to divide my time fairly between both. I thought readers might be interested to know more about the German Church.

We have had a Protestant German Pastor in Britain since 1550! In recent times, tenure has usually been of six years' duration, the respective incumbents for Birmingham & Coventry also covering the areas of Bournemouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Swansea, Llanelli, Cwmbran, Nottingham, Derby, Bristol and Bath! They are usually resident in the south-west of the country and travel monthly to each of these towns and cities in turn, though more frequently to Birmingham and Coventry.

The current Pastor's responsibilities still encompass all of the above-mentioned localities with the exception of Nottingham and Derby, which now come under the Manchester, Northern England and Midland section and thus

fall outside his remit. Each of his four localities has a Chairman and a Treasurer and there is one overall Councillor, who at present lives in Birmingham. There are currently some 226 registered members of all ages in the Pastor's areas.

He has counterparts in Britain in the form of a married couple in Edinburgh, another in Manchester, a lady in Cambridge and two representatives in London, all of whom normally meet from time to time.

Our present incumbent is Pastor Kai Thierbach, who grew up in Leipzig, Saxony. He arrived on 19th August 2020 with his wife Helen and their 4 children and settled in Bristol. He took his first service on 6th September in Birmingham, but his official Induction Service was on 1st November in Coventry Cathedral (photo left), with his family and members from Coventry, Birmingham and Bristol. On that occasion his wife Helen was at the piano and his son Simeon (2nd from left) in charge of a link for Zoom participants. As Kai comes from Saxony, the date of the destruction of Dresden (13th February 1945) is especially significant for him, the day and month coinciding with his birthday. He is also very conscious of the anniversary of the bombing of Coventry Cathedral on 14th November 1940.

Arriving here in the midst of the pandemic, Kai has naturally been unable to travel much during lockdowns, but has made great strides in getting to know his congregations by remote control through Zoom. For half an hour every evening in December he

ran an Advent Calendar consisting of 'Türchen' ('little doors'), which he provided with the help of volunteers. This went down so well that he decided to continue right through to Epiphany, and it has the advantage that he can be in touch with his faithful in all parts of the country at once instead of having to travel to only one area at a time.

In addition to these Zoom meetings, there is a weekly Sunday Service at 3.00 which everyone can join. We also have a Friday night session and, during Lent, another on Wednesday evenings. Kai spares himself no effort in seeking out pictures, musical items and film clips to illustrate his points, and takes beautiful photos, ably supported in all this by his wife Helen. The sessions are fun! In normal times, the Birmingham group meet fortnightly on Sundays in the Quaker Meeting House on the Bristol Road and, after the service, Kaffee, Kuchen (coffee and cakes) and chat are a regular feature before we disperse.

There is a quarterly magazine, the *Gemeindebrief* (community newsletter), containing all service fixtures and other events for each area, the Pastor's editorial, in memoriam notices, seasonal articles, both devotional and secular, poems, pages for children (and the voluntarily young) with puzzles and games, details of the regular German Saturday School and much more. The church has a website at www.german-church-south-and-west-and-wales.org

Kai richly deserves our support, and we look forward to meeting him and his family regularly in person once all these tiresome lockdown restrictions are lifted. Roll on the day!

ADAM THE GARDENER

Adam the Gardener Survives Cabin Fever

Monty Rubin, the writer and social equality activist said "April is the kindest month. April gets you out of your head and out working in the garden". Here is your chance to get away from lockdown with safety and then you will have the summer to admire the results of your labour from the comfort of a garden seat or maybe more than one, as I am a great believer in wooden garden seats placed at strategic intervals in the garden.

Let's kick off by looking at our **garden tree of the month**. *Sorbus aria lutescens* is the beautiful Silver Whitebeam. This close relation of the Rowan has silvery hairs on top

of and beneath the leaves and looks delightful against a dark background, particularly in late Spring. Your birds will love it for its orange berries. There is the Common Whitebeam, which grows wild on the limestone cliffs of the Lake District and this warns us that the Whitebeams may not like acid soil; but you will probably be successful in planting in to most



garden soils. It's well worth a try.

I have spent some lockdown time watching a TV programme about the garden surrounding the Lutyens house at Great Dixter. Formerly owned by Christopher Lloyd, since 2006 the garden has been in the hands of a trust, is maintained by several gardeners and has had worldwide influence on garden style. This started me thinking about how to create a garden with year-round beauty which, once settled in, will continue to be maintained by the owner without the need for a team of gardeners. I think the following might be a help.

Hardy-flowering perennials to form the backbone of the planting, planted in groups and with the taller ones at the back. Aim to have something in flower at all times of the year. Earlyflowering bulbs, again planted in groups at the front of the border. Here they will die down gracefully in time for the annual weeding. Yes, you might just get away with once a year! Erica carnea hybrids are long-lived members of the heather family and are great planted in threes at the front of your



SORBUS ARIA LUTESCENS (WHITEBEAM)

border and they only require a light trim once a year.

In between, have a straightforward lawn leaving any daisies and their like to get on with it. You might get some moss: leave it, at least it is a good green!

Mixing small shrubs at the back of the the perennial planting can be hard work as they need cutting back annually so, if possible, have your shrubbery as a separate area. It makes maintenance much easier. How about a winter fragrance shrub border to add interest to the long dark days?

Climbing roses of the newer type with yearround flowering to cover walls and fences, requiring very little maintenance and perhaps one or two berry-bearing garden trees complete this pared-down picture.

Last month, I recommended a new hollyhock and this led me to consider this splendid plant as being ideal for the back of your flower bed



HOLLYHOCKS

where its tall spires of pollen-laden flowers make it worthy of being our **Plant of the Month**. Named varieties, often double, can be had as plants and at some cost as I suspect they are produced by tissue culture. It is more rewarding, I think to raise *Alceas* from seed and the seeds are quite large, making it possible to grow them individually in plastic cell-trays and then transplant them into bigger cells with some depth to allow the tap roots to

develop. The next stage is to plant them in the open ground in late summer.

Hollyhocks are tough as they have been around in Britain since the fifteenth century and you might prefer to plant the seeds in the open ground in May. Either way, you are planting for flowering the following year as you are best to treat *Alceas* as biennial. But beware! The hollyhock may treat your plans with disdain and seed itself about your garden, often into cracks between paving stones to produce spires of satiny flowers (I have seen fine hollyhocks growing alongside the M42!). Hollyhock rust can be a problem but try the "Halo" series which are said to be fungus-resistant.

Vegetable growers can draw comfort from the nasty frosts of this winter in that surely some of the soil-borne pests will have been killed off.

Best wishes, and treat yourself to a wooden garden seat this year.



1...2...Beam Up!



At long last, the damaged oak beam which supported the roof over the baptistry in St Nicolas' Church has been replaced. It was hoisted into position in March after some careful shaping by carpenters. Its arrival opens the way for the completion of repairs to the roof. We can finally look forward to the removal of the scaffolding from both inside and outside the church.

There are over 600 varieties of oak growing in the Northern Hemisphere, many of which produce wood suitable for timber. European oak has been used for thousands of years. Wars have even been fought to secure supplies from abroad for shipbuilding and other military purposes. These days, oak is widely planted and farmed all over Europe to supply the demand from builders, joiners and architects, who prize it for a variety of practical, aesthetic and ethical reasons.

JOHN AXELSSON & TINA SUNDELIN

Afternoon naps can improve your memory and alertness

Forty winks in the middle of the day may be just what you need. John Axelsson, Associate Professor in Psychology at the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden and Tina Sundelin, Research Fellow in Psychology at Stockholm University, explain why.

Some people swear by an afternoon nap, whether it's to catch up on lost sleep or to help them feel more alert for the afternoon ahead. Even Boris Johnson supposedly favours a power nap during his work day (though the Prime Minister's staffers contest this claim). Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, and Leonardo Da Vinci were all famous nappers.

But while many of us may not feel we usually have enough

↓ The reasons why short naps are so beneficial are not well understood. But they work! time to squeeze a nap into our day, working from home during the pandemic may now afford us an opportunity to give napping a try.

Napping is a great way to feel more rested and alert and some research shows it can benefit our cognitive function.

However, you may want to consider how long you have to sleep before heading to bed for your midday nap.



If you need to be alert right after waking up (for example, if you're catching a few extra minutes of sleep during your lunch break), so-called "power naps" of 10-30 minutes are recommended. Longer naps may cause some initial drowsiness, though they keep sleepiness at bay longer. But drinking coffee directly before a nap may help you wake up without feeling drowsy while also boosting your alertness.

Good for learning

While short naps are great for increasing energy, longer naps are both more restorative and beneficial for learning. For example, they improve activation of the hippocampus, an area of the brain important for learning and memory. A one to two hour afternoon nap is shown to benefit both your motor skills and your ability to recall facts and events.

A recent study from China has even suggested that regular afternoon napping is linked to better cognitive function in older adults. The researchers asked 2,200 over-70s about their napping habits before having them undergo a series of cognitive tests which measured things like memory and language skills. They found that those who usually napped were less likely to have cognitive impairments (i.e. difficulty in thinking) than those

"While short naps are great for increasing energy, longer naps are both more restorative and beneficial for learning."

who didn't. This was true regardless of age or level of education.

But nap length may play a role here. A similar study showed that those who usually napped for 30-90 minutes had better overall cognition compared to those who napped for longer or shorter, or who didn't nap at all.

Why naps work

The reasons why short naps are so beneficial for alertness and focus are not well understood. It's possible that napping helps the brain clean up sleepinducing waste products that would otherwise inhibit brain activity, and that they replenish the brain's energy stores. Short naps may also help improve your attention by letting particularly sleepy areas of the brain recover, thereby

preventing instability in the brain's networks.

Longer naps, on the other hand, are more restorative partly because there is time to enter multiple sleep stages, each of which supports different learning processes. For example, during REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, the brain is almost as active as when awake. This activity in different brain regions, including those important for learning and memory, may be why REM sleep supports both long-term memory and emotional memory.

During REM sleep in particular, the brain strengthens newly developed connections that are important for improvements in motor skills. Longer sleep also reduces unimportant connections, and this balance can improve how quickly and effectively the brain works as a whole.

Non-REM sleep, the sleep stage we spend most of our time in, contains both slow brain waves and sleep spindles. The sleep spindles are periodic burst-like signals between different brain areas, which are believed to reactivate and consolidate memories. Both the slow brain waves and the spindles increases plasticity, the brain's ability to learn and adapt to new experiences.

Although napping has many positive short-term effects, they are not recommended for people who suffer from insomnia. Because naps decrease sleepiness, they may make it harder to fall asleep when going to bed in the evening. Naps should also be avoided in situations where optimal performance is needed instantly afterwards, as it may take some time to fully wake up.

Other research has shown that frequent napping was related to high BMI and high blood pressure. Napping was more common in shift workers, retired people, and smokers, and in people with genes related to sleep disorders or obesity. To what degree napping was harmful or beneficial for these groups remains unknown, but it's clear that napping is more common in groups who have disturbed sleep or need more sleep.

If you're finding that your attention span is wavering in the afternoon while working from home, perhaps try squeezing a nap into your lunch break. Short naps are great at improving alertness and attention and, if you have time for a longer nap, this can support memory and learning.

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CATHERINE MATLOCK

The Secret Garden

Of Walkers Heath Park

Hidden behind bushes, shrubbery and neglected pathways lies the secret garden of Walkers Heath Park. I first discovered the garden's occluded beauty on a dog walk by wondering what could be found beyond the gap in the resilient hedges. A narrow. leaf-covered entrance opens out into a wildly peaceful area of mature conifers and deciduous trees, the beginnings of a fruit orchard and an abundance of selfseeded oaks. There is a profound stillness in this place, a clarity of birdsong, the remnants of humanity's presence in discarded dog balls and beer cans and a powerful sense of nature's capacity to hold and to heal.

On one occasion, as I walked along the main, tarmac path in the park, a young deer ran past me and took shelter in the secret garden. This felt like a confirmation of the vulnerable sacredness of this space. It is a place where prayer is easy, meditation natural, where the wildness of creation, uncomplicated and uncared for by human beings, is finding its own way to thrive. Some trees do need



THE REVD
CATHERINE
MATLOCK IS
A PIONEER
CURATE
WORKING IN
DRUIDS
HEATH

pruning, to prevent disease and overcrowding, grass needs to be cut back to allow breathing space for young shoots and brambles curbed to free life hidden beneath. However, the human need for access and control, for well-ordered neatness must not destroy the miraculous symbiosis between plants, insects and mammals.

The more residents from Druids Heath and I talk with representatives of a partner organisation. Fruit and Nut Village (http://springtolife.org/fruit-andnut-village/) the more we perceive connections between ecology and community. How diversity of horticulture in the natural environment is essential to mutual flourishing, how nurturing new plant life takes time and commitment and how the restoration of neglected spaces like the Walkers Heath garden requires understanding, wise pruning and gentle liberation. The resources for healing people and places are already present within their natures, in the depths of the soil and the soul, in the ecological



relationships and the community connections. They just need to be loved into transformation with compassionate companioning and the tenderness of time.

The secret garden of Walkers Heath has led me to rediscover Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic "The Secret Garden" and to find riches of healing symbolism in its pages that never struck me as a child. It is a story of transformation from neglect, abandonment and despair to hope, renewal and peace.

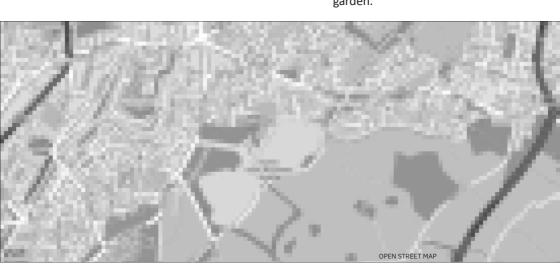
Druids Heath is an estate overlooked and disempowered for decades, known for deprivation and disrepair yet with 1 "A place where prayer is easy, meditation natural, where the wildness of creation, uncomplicated and uncared for by human beings, is finding its own way to thrive."

a wealth of gifts and potential in its people and its land. As we explore creative ways of connecting community and nurturing well-being through estate planting projects, I envisage the healing journey of Burnett's female protagonist, Mary Lennox, being replicated. Druids Heath may be a very different context from a manor in the Yorkshire Moors, but the healing of hopeless souls, through restoration of nature and human relationship, can be translated to any setting. As these projects develop, the transformational stories in Druids Heath can be told.

By the time you read this article, I hope that the Walkers Heath secret garden will have been our Garden of Gethsemane on Good Friday and the site of the Garden Tomb where Mary Magdalene encounters the risen Jesus on Easter Sunday. Such symbolism is just the beginning of the spiritual potential of this place.

Through a dear friend, I have recently discovered a book that connects the healing themes of "The Secret Garden" with Lent and Easter. The author of "Easter Garden", Nicola Slee, finds striking comparisons between Mary Magdalene and Mary Lennox, supporting verses of scripture and extracts from the book with beautiful poems and prayers. We end with some words from Nicola as she describes hope stirring within the unloved heart and soul of Mary Lennox and we pray for new life and well-being in Druids Heath.

"For Mary Lennox, the encounter in the secret garden is an encounter not only with the locked and buried past of Misslethwaite Manor, but with her own locked and wounded self. As she looks, first in stillness and wondering silence, at the wild garden trailing brown rose creepers and swaying tendrils from the branches, then walks quietly around the flowerbeds searching out signs of life in the grass-covered beds, she is seeking some essential sign of hope within herself too, a sign which shows that all is not dead within her own self and life, that growing quietly and deeply within her are the seeds of life. She greets the 'sharp little pale green points...sticking up out of the black earth' with a quiet, rapturous joy deeper than laughter; it is a recognition of the burgeoning life in Mary, a welcome to the new thing that is growing there, mirrored in the garden."



YOUR PARISH CHURCH

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 the Parish Office, which is open between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

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THE MINISTRY TEAM

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Assistant Rector	The Revd Eliakim Ikechukwu
Parish Lay Minister	Pauline Weaver
Curate (Pioneer)	The Revd Catherine Matlock
Honorary Assistant Priest	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Methodist Minister	The Revd Nick Jones
Lay Readers David Ash, Fay Fearon, Rut	h Howman, Parisa Pordelkhaki
Lay Preacher	Steve Wright
Music Minister	Sylvia Fox
Pastoral Care Team Coordinator	Chris Gadd
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St. Nicolas' Church	Peter Hay & Julie Hill
Hawkesley Church	Jim Clarke
Immanuel Church	Sue Hartley
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We are a Church of England Team Parish serving all in Kings Norton through St Nicolas' Parish Church, Hawkesley, in partnership with the Methodist Church, 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 and to be equipped for work in God's world

D uring the Covid-19 crisis, we have had to suspend all our usual activities including many church services. That does not mean, however, that church has ceased to be active. Some of our services have moved online.





When possible, there is a 10.00 am service on Sundays at St Nicolas' Church with a limited number of places. If you want to attend, you must book before noon on Friday by calling the Parish Office on 0121 458 3289.

Join in an Anglican service at home on Sundays	bit.ly/2KYtrE3
Our 9.30 am family service on Sundays	bit.ly/2K8KzTS
Our 10.00 am service from St Nicolas' on Sundays	bit.ly/3ocP1TI
Our 10.30 am service from Immanuel on Sundays	bit.ly/3oby8Jc
Occasional midweek morning & evening prayer	bit.ly/3pMgOLi

For the latest changes and updates, see the weekly newsletter, which is available on the Parish Website at www.kingsnorton.org.uk

BRUCE SUTHERLAND ET AL

Where does plastic pollution go when it enters the ocean?

Bruce Sutherland, Professor of Physics, University of Alberta; Michelle DiBenedetto, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, University of Washington; and Ton van den Bremer, Associate Professor of Engineering, Delft University of Technology.

OF THE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of tonnes of plastic waste we produce each year, it's estimated that around ten million tonnes enters the ocean. Roughly half of the plastics produced are less dense than water, and so they float. But scientists estimate that there are only about 0.3 million tonnes of plastic floating at the ocean surface, so where is the rest of it going?

Consider the journey of a plastic fibre that's shed from

your fleece. A heavy rain washes it into a storm drain or a nearby river. Does the tiny fibre settle there? Or does the river carry it out to the coast where it lingers on the seabed? Or does it continue to float further out, finally ending up in the vast open ocean?

The dizzying variety of forms plastic waste can take means that a fibre's fate is just one mystery among countless others.

Finding out where all the missing plastic ends up can help us figure out which parts of the ocean are most affected by this type of pollution and where to focus clean-up efforts. But to do that, we need to be able to predict the pathways of different kinds of plastic, which requires large teams of physicists, biologists and mathematicians working together. That's what our research team is doing. Here's what we've learned so far.

Plastic pathways

We already know that large pieces of plastic, like bottles, can float on the sea surface for years, if not centuries, taking a long time to break down.
Currents, winds and waves can, after a journey of several years, bring them to the centre of ocean basins, where they accumulate in 1,000km-wide circulating systems known as



gyres. The vast "garbage patches" that result resemble more of a soup of plastic than an island of trash.

But the fate of plastic fibres, perhaps the smallest plastic fragments to reach the ocean, is more complex. Large fibres can break up over days and weeks into even smaller pieces, due to turbulence from breaking waves and ultraviolet radiation from the sun. These are called microplastics, and they range in size from five millimetres to specks smaller than bacteria.

Microplastic on the menu

Microplastics can be eaten by fish. It's estimated that one in three fish eaten by humans contains microplastics. Tinier particles can also be consumed by zooplankton, microscopic animals that float at the

surface, which are then eaten by even larger animals, including whales.

Microorganisms can grow on the surface of microplastics too, in a process known as "biofouling" that causes them to sink. Muddy rivers, like the Mississippi or the Amazon, contain clays that settle rapidly when they come into contact with salty ocean water. Microplastics can be carried down by the settling clay, but how much this happens exactly is unknown.

Quantifying all these outcomes for each bit of plastic is an enormous challenge. What fraction ends up in fish, carried down by clay or covered in microbial slime on the sea bed? Of the fraction of plastics which make it all the way out to the open ocean, it's unclear how long it takes for biofouling

▲BOTTLES
CAN FLOAT ON
THE SURFACE
OF THE SEA
FOR YEARS, IF
NOT FOR
CENTURIES

or other forces to pull the particles well below the surface to begin their long, final descent to the sea floor.

With all these complicating factors, it may seem hopeless to predict where plastics ultimately end up. But we're slowly making progress.

If you have ever been on a boat in choppy waters, you might think you're just bobbing up and down in the same spot. But you're actually moving very slowly in the direction of the waves. This is a phenomenon known as the Stokes drift, and it affects floating plastics too.

For particles smaller than 0.1 millimetres, moving through seawater is like us wading through honey. But the viscosity of seawater has less of an influence on plastics larger than one millimetre. Each wave gives these bigger particles an extra push in its direction. According to preliminary research that's currently under review, this might mean larger plastics are carried out to sea much faster than tiny microplastics, making them less likely to settle in parts of the ocean where more marine life is found, around coasts.

This research involved studying spherical plastic particles, but microplastic waste comes in all kinds of shapes and sizes, including disks, rods and flexible fibres. How do waves influence where they end up?

A recent study found that nonspherical particles align themselves with the direction of waves, which can slow the rate at which they sink. Lab experiments have further shown how the shape of each plastic particle affects how far it's transported. Less spherical particles are more likely to go further from coasts.

A science in its infancy

Solving the mystery of the missing plastics is a science in its infancy. The ability of waves to transport large microplastics faster than previously thought helps us understand why they are now found throughout the world's oceans, including in the Arctic and around Antarctica. But finding the fibre that was pulled from your fleece is still more challenging than finding a needle in a haystack.

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Funerals Jan - Feb 2021

28 Jan	Mary Stevenson	82	SN.Cr.LH
11 Feb	Shaun Michael Price	31	SN.Bu.KN
12 Feb	Mary Margaret Field	93	SN.Bu.CY
19 Feb	Claudius Campbell	90	Bu.KN
19 Feb	Joyce Gwendoline Eacock	89	In.CY

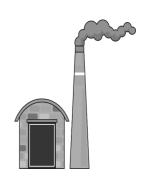
SN: Service at St Nicolas' Church, **Bu**: Burial, **CY**: Churchyard, **Crematoria** - **LH**: Lodge Hill, **KN**: Kings Norton



MICHAEL KENNEDY

Kings Norton's

Industrial Past



Even our most senior readers won't recall the time when Kings Norton had its own mini-version of the industrial revolution, with soaring chimneys belching smoke and the continuous throb and clang of factories producing key commodities for the world. But it was once like that.

You would have been able to experience most of it by a walk of just some twenty minutes alongside the Worcester-Birmingham canal, from the Lifford Lane bridge in the north (the city end) to the Wharf Lane bridge to the south.

A hundred years after the canal effectively came to Kings Norton, marked by the opening of the Wast Hills tunnel in March 1797 (see our March issue), the tranguil rural scene in that area had been utterly transformed. There were no less than three significant industrial concerns that had opened by the canal. With motor transport in its very earliest years, and rail freight not a feasible option, the canal was the only effective way of accessing the fuel that was essential for manufacturing, coal from the Black Country coalfields. The canal also allowed the inward



MICHAEL WRITES REGULARLY ON LOCAL HISTORY

transport of raw material and of finished goods out of the factory. It was also a very convenient supply of water!

The two largest of those industries were situated between the Lifford Lane Bridge and the junction of the canal with the Stratford-on-Avon Canal, by our historic Toll House.

Kings Norton Metal Company

At the city end of the stretch, on the towpath side, was the Kings Norton Metal Company (KNMC), built in 1889 and in limited operation latterly until the late 1940s. No trace exists now because any remnants were demolished and removed to allow the building of Melchett Road, the Kings Norton Business Park and its network of access roads towards the end of the last century. The Metal Company was

28 March 2021

located in the area right at the far end of the current park: its main entrance was almost exactly where the far end of Melchett Road is now.

Its owner, Thomas Baylis, bought a 27-acre canalside site in Kings Norton. His new factory included rolling mills for copper and brass and facilities for the manufacture of armament-related items such as cartridge cases and percussion caps. At peak periods of demand, its workforce of some 2,000 people operated 24-hour production of munition related material: the roar, clatter and clang of metal fabrication reverberated throughout the night

The Company developed a national reputation, so much so that it was chosen to supply high quality "blanks" to the Royal Mint for coin production. As the Mint came under pressure after World War One to increase its output. KNMC was granted a licence to produce actual coins and to give them a KN mark. In 1918 and 1919 it made some five million penny coins, each with the initials 'KN' stamped close by the date. They are collectors' items now.

Like many other locally based companies, KNMC lost its own identity, absorbed by Nobel Industries in 1918, which was in turn to become part of the ICI Metals giant. In 1928, its owners decided to transfer all of its production to a centralised

factory in Witton, near Aston. Many Kings Norton based workers travelled to the new site for their daily work.

But it didn't end there. The mothballed factory was revived in 1936 as demand for metal increased: for some years it was a major producer of aluminium sheeting for aircraft manufacture and, during World War Two, it produced radiator components for aircraft.

Sherborne (latterly Kings Norton) Paper Mill

On the opposite side of the canal, about a hundred vards further away from the city, you would see the hive of industrial activity that was the Sherborne Paper Mill, active from 1857 to 1965. It was founded by James Baldwin who, in the 1930s, had operated in a factory by Sherborne Street in Birmingham city centre. By the 1850s he needed a larger site, and purchased from the Worcester-Birmingham Canal

▼THE LIFFORD SITE, DATE UNCERTAIN. IN THE TOP RIGHT-HAND **CORNER CAN** BE SEEN THE **BRIDGE OVER** THE WORCS & **BIRMINGHAM** CANAL AND THE TOLL HOUSE.



Company part of an area in Kings Norton called New Meadow. His new factory was called Sherborne Mill after the previous site.

Unlike the Metal Company, you can still see elements of it now, notably the large Engine House (photo opposite) that powered the factory. Now, of course, it is bricked up. A chimney soared above it, visible for miles. The Engine House was located behind a long canalside wall, also still in place. Along the wall you can see six separate spaces, also bricked up, where barges loaded and unloaded

Like the Metal Company, Baldwin needed water. In peak years, the Sherborne Mill "borrowed" 30,000 gallons every hour, some from the River Rea and some from the canal. One of the ongoing bones of contention between Mr Baldwin and the canal company was that he had committed to return the water in an unpolluted state. After some years of argument about the quality of the water he was returning, he invested in a filtering and decontaminating facility.



■A MEDAL STRUCK IN 1901 BY THE KINGS NORTON METAL COMPANY FOR THE CORONATION OF EDWARD VII The mill was very successful as a national suppler of paper products including, as some readers will recall, the famous blue and white striped paper bags in which Tate & Lyle originally packed its sugar. It also developed a thriving business in the international supply of gun "wadding", which maximised the effectiveness of weapons by separating the explosive charge and the bullets or shells that the weapons fired.

At its zenith, Sherborne operated three giant paper making machines, producing 300 miles of paper a week. Much of it was transported away by canal: the company at one time had its own fleet of six horse-drawn wooden barges.

James Baldwin and his family lived for many years at Lifford Hall. He died in 1895 and his children took over. In 1926 Sherborne was sold to a consortium and renamed the Kings Norton Paper Mill. Business staved strong until after the Second World War, when plastic packing began to replace paper. The factory closed in August 1965 and the tall chimney was taken down brick by brick. Some 20 years later, one wall of the factory was used by Patrick Motors for its pioneering motor museum.

Kings Norton Brick Works

The third significant factory was located a few hundred yards further along the canal, on the



southern (Parsons Hill) side of the Wharf Lane bridge. It was the Kings Norton Brick Works, created in 1890 on the site of a brick kiln that had been built when work on the Wast Hills canal tunnel was in progress in the 1790s. The entrance was off what is now Ardath Road (then Cyril Road), where most of its employees lived.

There were three rectangular brick kilns, each with a prominent chimney, with a ten-foot-wide wharf for barges. Between the kilns was a large deep claypit which became infamous locally because it regularly flooded, posing a sometimes fatal risk to children and animals. The brick making facility also had a tall chimney, with a large drying area. Usually there were about 50 employees. The Brick Works

▲THE ENGINE HOUSE, WHICH USED TO POWER SHERBORNE PAPER MILL, STILL STANDS BESIDE THE CANAL. closed in 1967 and, as with the Metal Company, it is now impossible to visualise that it was ever there.

Perhaps those of us who live in Kings Norton now are lucky that those years of fairly heavy industry didn't develop into an established tradition of manufacturing which would have changed the still relatively rural face of the area. But it's still a fascinating period in the history of the parish.

The primary source of information for this article is "The Worcester and Birmingham Canal: Chronicles of the Cut", by the late Revd Alan White, published by Brewin Books in 2005 and available on Amazon for about £25.

THE HUNGRY GARDENER



Claire is a

ctaire is a keen kitchen gardener, ably assisted by her 5-yearold son Charles.

Wonderful Spring, new life, new beginnings. Bulbs are in full bloom and the edible bulbs are sprouting up all around us. In the nature reserve, the wild garlic is rich and in full flower, filling the air with its heady scent. If you like the smell of garlic, that is! I love it. I gather the leaves and use them as a garnish for meals at home. A complement to many meals. Add it to home-grown salads or make wild garlic pesto. It's fantastic for pasta dishes.

At our 'faraway garden'', what our 5-year-old lovingly calls our family allotment, we have some leeks and sprouting broccoli to harvest. Our first early potatoes have just been planted. Charles was very interested in the chitting

(sprouting) potatoes. He told me about the leaves that will grow. We want to grow asparagus, so in preparation the potatoes are growing there first and asparagus will be planted once the potatoes are harvested. We have moved two fruit trees near to the asparagus to help manage the moisture in the soil.

The hungry gap

April is traditionally the gardener's hungry gap when the Winter veg has finished and we are patiently waiting for the Spring veg to be big enough to eat. Our back garden is bursting into life. There are sprouting broccoli, brussels broccoli (their flowers are great to eat), broadbeans and peas. All are coming along nicely and will soon be ready. Welsh onions and Egyptian walking onions are beginning to garnish our meals. Lambs' lettuce, sorrel and wild cress have popped up everywhere. This is amazing news as Charles really likes broccoli. We still have one bed empty, the tomato bed, which will be planted in early June once the risk of frost has passed.

Sprouting season

On our windowsills around the house Charles and I have been sprouting seeds together. We used what we found in the kitchen. Some things sprouted, some didn't, but it was great fun. The chickpeas sprouted well, they were delicious when added to stir fries. I know it was Charles' green fingers that helped. He loved his dirty nails! Our mung beans didn't sprout at all, so we shall just keep trying. You can use a jar with a cloth and an elastic band over the cloth. A cotton bag with a drawstring works well too (and I found loads of these in Charles' toy box). With both methods, change the water every 12 hours and use the waste water on your pot plants. Chick peas and mung beans take about 3 - 5 days. If nothing happens, the seeds are no longer viable but perfectly softened for cooking.

Seed sowing

I love April seed sowing, as it's time to sow the delicious summer veg: courgettes, pumpkins, cucumber and sweetcorn on a sunny windowsill. This year we are going to try growing popcorn as Charles eats it a lot! Friday film night will be extra special with home grown popcorn. April is the perfect time for directly-grown seeds. The ground is warmer now, the



days are long and everything is fresh and new. Charles and I have decided to sow carrots, beetroot, parsnip, most things

in the cabbage family (e.g. kale, broccoli, cabbage, kai lan, mustard leaf), some more spring onions, flowers: calendula, chamomile, borage, Californian poppy and nasturtiums. If direct sowing leads to lunch for slugs, so be it. Try starting the seeds indoors and then, when the

Easter represents new beginnings for me. It is a time for rejoicing and looking forward.

plant is bigger, stronger and

hardened off, plant out later.

↓ Grow your own popcorn!



THELMA MITCHELL

SMALL CHANGE BIG DIFFERENCE

MARCH 2020 BC (BEFORE COVID – ALMOST!). It seems like not just a lifetime, but several lifetimes ago. We are naturally primarily concerned with the pandemic and the defeat of the Coronavirus. Yet other issues, other causes need revisiting and rethinking for the present, and for the future. One of these is palm oil.

I wrote last year in this magazine about the problems of illegal logging and palm oil production. The main thrust was that palm oil in itself is not bad. Its production is vital to the life and economy of many small communities worldwide. The ethical and practical problems, such as deadly pollution, arise where the trees are grown and the oil produced as a result of unlawful logging. This I saw at first hand during my short working period in Sumatra.

In my article,I discussed the staggering range of products which we use every day, which contain palm oil, often as the main ingredient, such as biscuits, cakes, soap, make-up, pizza, bread, noodles, ice cream, sweets, shampoo, toothpaste, lipstick, detergent and pet food. Although it is not easy, we need to consciously search out and use products which contain ethically produced, responsibly sourced palm oil (RSPO). If enough of us make these small changes to our habits the results can make big differences to the lives of others.

Waitrose, Marks and Spencer, Doves Farm, Traidcraft, Walkers and Fox's use only RSPO. "All butter" biscuits are usually palm oil free, as are Iceland own brand products. Under EU Law, which may be or not be applicable now, palm oil content must be stated and labelled but it is often declared under another name. At the moment Cadbury, Nestlé, Kerry Gold, Weetabix, Greggs, Asda and Green and Black are not using RSPO. More information on ethically produced palm oil products can be found on the ethical consumer website www.ethicalconsumer.org/ palmoil

Which brings us to Traidcraft 2021, who have introduced *Fairpalm*, described as the



34 March 2021

world's only Fairtrade organic palm oil. Traidcraft has worked with a cooperative in Ghana called *Serendipalm*, who are following sustainable, natural methods to increase palm oil production.

The trees are allowed to grow at their own pace and the resulting palm oil is completely organic. They support the training and health care of their workers. Traidcraft is also working similarly with Habitats in Ecuador in the development of Fairpalm. It is described as "the world's only fair trade, organic palm oil that protects the environment while supporting smallholder growers." Traidcraft guarantees Fairpalm producers fair pay and fair conditions. Find out more at www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/ sustainable-palm-oil.

When life returns to something approaching normal we will buy some Tradecraft cookies which contain *Fairpalm* to serve with refreshments at church so that we can try out this promise for ourselves. For all sorts of reasons that day can't come soon enough! Oh, and if you find any on sale anywhere locally, let us know.



PALM OIL FACTS

In the early 1900s, around a quarter of a million tonnes of palm oil was exported annually from South-East Asia. This figure has now risen to 60 million tonnes.

Palm oil has been part of the human diet for over 9,000 years. Archaeologists found a substance that they discovered to be palm oil in a tomb in Abydos, which dates back to 3,000 BC.

40% of palm oil production is produced by smallholders.

Figures predict that if deforestation continues at its current rate, all Indian and Malaysian rainforests will be wiped out by 2022, which is why we need to produce palm oil sustainably. When we consider that rainforests provide around 28% of the world's oxygen, this is even more of an alarming prediction.

Many of the unsustainable, non-fair-trade palm oil plantations promote child labour and violate the human rights of many workers. Often children are made to carry heavy fruit and spend long hours collecting fruit from the plantation floor.

EDDIE MATTHEWS

Hostelries



During my time at sea, I visited many different venues ashore. One pub in London's East End was most interesting to say the least. I was invited to lunch there by the personnel manager of my previous shipping company before I joined the P&O cargo division. Unfortunately, due to the Gulf War and the advent of container ships, my company had closed down, so I was out of a job. The pub was called the Grey Mariner. There was a small private dining room which was catered for by the landlord's son, a very competent chef.

After a delicious meal and fine wines, I was offered the position of Catering Officer, which I accepted gladly. As we left, the landlord pointed out a table in the lounge bar. He said that the infamous Kray Twins, Ronnie & Reggie, always sat at this table for some time each day. Needless to say, other patrons would never dare to use it!

Now to Hamburg, Germany, and a large, popular Bierhaus called the Zillertal, which was complete with an oompah band wearing lederhosen and serving girls carrying multiple steins of beer in each hand. You could dance on the tables. You could also conduct the band but, as Jolly Jack found out to his cost, this could be rather expensive as the guest conductor had to buy drinks for the band.

A visit ashore in Lisbon, Portugal, was usually accompanied by a visit to the Texas Bar. There were always a couple of "hostesses" on hand. A band played in a boat suspended from the ceiling. It was protected by a mesh fence because it was known that guests would throw bottles and glasses up at the musicians who we're not very good.

Once, when I was home on leave, my father, a schoolteacher, told me that he was going to escort some children from his school on a cruise. I think that the ship was a vessel called the Devonshire. One of the ports of call was Lisbon and I jokingly said, "I hope you don't end up in the Texas Bar." Well, some three months later, I was at sea, homeward bound near Gibraltar, I knew that Dad was at sea and so I asked Rod, our radio officer, if contact could be made. Sure enough, he chatted to the Devonshire and offered

to send a cable to them. My message read, "Hope you have got your sea legs and are having a good trip." I received a speedy reply, which read, "Sea legs are fine but you see legs better in the Texas Bar. Love, Dad." There were chuckles all round.

Now to Kobe, Japan, and a visit to the Sapporo beer house. It was a virtual copy of the German beer hall. It was amusing to see Japanese staff wearing lederhosen. There was a band too! Another venue in Japan could be found in Yokohama and was called the Peanut Bar. A Beatles tribute band blasted out hits such as "A Hard Day's Night". One had to smile, as the English words were somewhat garbled.

Let's return to something more local. Tradition has it that Saint Nicolas' Place was originally a tavern called the Saracen's Head. The Saracens, who were primarily Arab Muslims, were enemies of the Crusaders during the Middle Ages. I'm told that the Crusaders used to cut off their heads in the belief that a headless person could not go home to Allah when he died.

As we get more optimistic now about Covid and the lockdown, let us not lose our heads as we all hope and pray that life will improve for all with blessings from above.



This month, Eddie Matthews takes us on an international pub crawl, from the East End to Japan and back.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER

Date	Day	Time	Service
28th March	Palm Sunday	10.00 am	The Blessing of the Palms at St Nicolas' Church*
29th March	Holy Monday	12.00 noon	Midday Prayer online
		7.30 pm	Compline online
30th March	Holy Tuesday	12.00 noon	Midday Prayer online
		7.30 pm	BCP Evensong online
31st March	Holy Wednesday	12.00 noon	Midday Prayer online
		7.30 pm	Compline online
1st April	Maundy Thursday	12.00 noon	Midday Prayer online
		7.30 pm	Holy Communion at St Nicolas' Church*
2nd April	Good Friday	10.00 am	Outdoor Family Service in St Nicolas' Churchyard
		12.00 noon	Meditation online
		14.00 pm	Tenebrae service online
4th April	Easter Sunday	09.00 am	BCP Holy Communion at St Nicolas' Church*
		10.00 am	Outdoor Holy Communion in St Nicolas' Churchyard

Live online services can be found on the Kings Norton Team Parish Facebook page. Recordings of some of these services appear on the Parish Website within a few hours of the event.

Places at services held in St Nicolas' Church (marked with an asterisk*) are still limited and must be booked in advance with the Parish Office on 0121 458 3289 (10.00 am to 1.00 pm). Outdoor services in the Churchyard are open to all. Please dress for the weather and maintain the usual social distance. We regret that chairs are not available on these occasions.

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