



KINGS NORTON
TEAM PARISH

THE MAGAZINE
FOR CHURCH & COMMUNITY

December 2017

£1



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What's On Guide**

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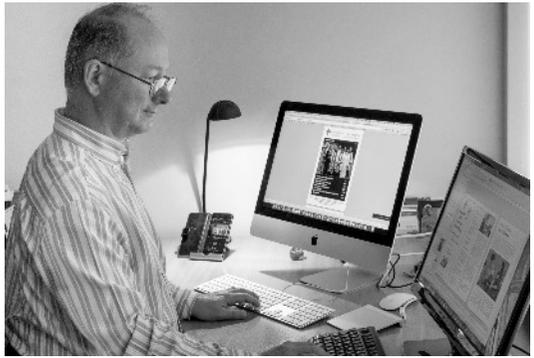
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Items for inclusion in the January
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December**.

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Have you ever had the experience of being unable to see something that was right under your nose? Not because you lost your glasses, but because you were expecting it to look quite different?

The discovery that God chose to reveal himself in human form and through human relationships can be so surprising that it can take us a while to refocus our expectations. We are looking for something else, so we fail to see what is there. If we presume that God is elsewhere or otherwise, we may, after some fruitless searching, conclude that He doesn't exist at all. Fortunately, we have Christmas to remind us of where to look.

When he grew up, the boy on this month's front cover taught His followers about the unconditional love of God and encouraged them to make it visible to others by serving their needs, particularly those of "the least". This is why the church must always be preoccupied with the concerns of those who have drawn the shortest straws in life.

But not only the church. As you read your way through this bumper edition, the many ways in which the people of Kings Norton (and beyond) are serving the needs of their neighbours will, I hope, reassure you that the Christmas spirit, the Spirit of love and service, is alive and active right across our community, from Fairway to Foodbank, through fun and fundraising and, yes, in the many church services later this month when, together, we return to the roots of The Story of Hope.

Wishing you an expectant Advent and a very happy Christmas!

The Editor

FROM THE RECTOR

A Dickens of a Christmas

Christmas festivities in Britain are mainly a Victorian invention. The Christmas tree, trimmings, numerous gifts, a secret figure arriving in the night to deliver presents to children, carol singing etc. All these have their origins in the 19th century and though some have roots in more ancient traditions, the Victorians popularised and commercialised them as the masses flocked to the expanding industrialised cities of their age. Charles Dickens played a major role in romanticising Christmas through his books and articles, especially *A Christmas Carol*. A new film about Dickens' life is shortly to be released called *The Man Who Invented Christmas*.

There is a strong Birmingham connection with Charles Dickens. He came here on at least three occasions between the 1840s and 1870s. In 1853 he held an audience of nearly 2,000 spellbound by his dramatic reading of *A Christmas Carol*. The Birmingham Journal of that time reported:

"No party this Christmas had such a treat in storytelling. And it was a long story too. For full three hours and a quarter [Mr Dickens] kept the party amused, melted with pathos; or tickled into laughter – not quite genteel combinations; but full of lusty roars, that



came warm from the heart; or stimulated to ringing cheers by the homely kindly moral teachings of the tale. But Mr Dickens did not only read the story, he acted it too. Everybody was charmed by the way in which the story was told. How Mr Dickens twirled his moustache, or played with his paper knife, or laid down his book, or lent forward confidentially, or stuffed his hands in his pockets, or twinkled his eyes as if he enjoyed the whole affair immensely, and as if the story was told

for his own especial pleasure, and delight.”

The story of the transformation and redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge from a miserly, reclusive killjoy to a warm-hearted, generous and joyful benefactor through the mysterious intervention of spirits, representing the past, present and future, is an enduring tale delighting young and old. It is in parts witty, homely and poignant and although Dickens was a sentimentalist, his stories also carried a deeply-felt message of moral indignation at the way working families and the poor were treated and exploited. He was a supporter of moral reform generally and better conditions for the poor specifically, raising funds and giving generously of his own means to many causes.

One of the reasons he came to Birmingham was to raise funds for a new educational establishment for working people. It became the *Birmingham and Midland Institute* (still going strong at bmi.org.uk) and a fine bust of their literary benefactor can be seen in the foyer. Dickens believed education should be universal and non-sectarian. He was a champion of working people and one of his readings of *A Christmas Carol* in Birmingham was publicised as only for working people and free.

Embedded in the story are references to the true nature of Christmas; its ability to lift us out of the demands and distractions of everyday living or coping and to point us to other realities, which

in turn refresh our perceptions of the world. At best, Christmas is a time of shared celebrations, renewed hope and a season when charity abounds. Scrooge’s nephew captures the essence of the special power of Christmas in his explanation to his miserly uncle of why his faith in it is undiminished.

“There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say, returned the nephew. ‘Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!”

Whatever your plans for Christmas 2017, we at St Nicolas’, Hawkesley and Immanuel churches wish you and your loved ones joy, peace and a renewed sense of hope for each other and our world.

Revd Larry Wright

This is NOT a FAIR WAY to treat the vulnerable!

*The Fairway Day Centre, at the western end of the parish of Kings Norton, is the **only** centre in South Birmingham which provides vital day care for people with physical and learning disabilities and older adults with dementia. It has been fulfilling that role for 40 years. For some local residents it is a vital lifeline. Despite this, Birmingham City Council intends to close it and, we believe, it has tried to do so without consulting the people most directly affected.*

*The result has been outrage, which we are now constructively channeling into a campaign led by service users, their families, friends and local representatives, to make you, the public, aware of the Council's motives and actions whilst petitioning them to change their minds. As campaigners, we have encountered considerable resistance but, at the time of writing, we are persevering in our goal to see Fairway Day Centre saved for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. **We need your support!***

Meet **Jackie***. She is 73 years old, has cerebral palsy and lives with her 94-year-old mum who is her primary carer and whose health is failing. During a lifetime of struggling with a debilitating condition, Jackie has been here before. Twice. Two previous day centres which she used to attend were closed by Birmingham City Council (BCC). "It is always very difficult to adjust to a new centre," she writes "and as I get older, it becomes more frightening." This time, however, Jackie is not facing a move to a new centre, for there are none left on this side of Birmingham.

Together with all the other regular service users of the Fairway Centre, Jackie received a letter on 9th September this year

in which BCC advised her that the centre would be closed. This was the first she or any of her friends had heard about it. Although the Council is now claiming that there was a process of consultation before the decision was taken, it is a claim which does not stand up to scrutiny, as a glance at our Facebook page, "Save Fairway Day Centre From Closure", will show. What Jackie was offered by way of compensation was a social work assessment review aimed at determining how her care needs would be met in future. A review. Nothing more.

John is 88 years old and suffers from dementia. At home, he is cared for by his daughter. During the three days a week which he spends at the Centre he enjoys



playing dominos, painting and chatting with his friends. His doctor has stated that he needs the stimulation and support which the Centre provides in order to maintain a reasonable quality of life. But it would seem that providing a life of quality for dementia sufferers in South Birmingham is not high on BCC's agenda.

At a meeting held on the Fairway on 26th September, **Melanie Brooks**, BCC's Interim Assistant Director for Adult Social Care & Health met a large number of our service users and their carers. According to the minutes of that meeting, she was asked about the lack of transparency surrounding the decision to close the Centre. Why, the distressed service users wanted to know, are there no records of the meetings at which the decision was taken? Why have no lists been published of the names of

those who took it? Ms Brooks responded that the meetings were not open to the public, but she could not explain why the decision had been taken behind closed doors, nor why there was no publicly-available record. There were, in fact, two meetings at which the Day Centre was discussed. The first was attended by the Departmental Leadership Team; the second was a Cabinet Members' Briefing. We have been unable to find any public records of either. It is not clear whether the decision went to Council for ratification before it was announced.

When Ms Brooks was asked why there had been no previous consultation with those whose lives are directly affected, she claimed that an instruction had been issued by the Council's executive officers "to carry out all necessary consultations".

Photo: Some of us campaigning on The Green, Kings Norton, 11th November 2017, including Councillor Andy Cartwright (Longbridge Ward), right, a supporter of the campaign, whom we have asked to present a 2,500 signature petition to the full Council.

Those conducting the consultation had been told to report their findings and should have been aware that councils are legally bound to conduct consultations before any closures are made. But as far as we can tell, the consultation never happened. Ms Brooks' visit to the Centre on 26th September was the first time that its users had been listened to by anyone in a position of responsibility.

Whether they were, in fact, listened to at all is a moot point. **Wendy Collymore**, the chair of our campaign, in a letter to **Councillor Paulette Hamilton**, Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care, on 29th September, reported that Ms Brooks "repeatedly stated that [...] she was not prepared to feed back to her team requests from service users to review the decision" despite the fact that, at the time she wrote the letter, she already had 70 signed statements from service users who are vehemently opposed to the closure. Councillor Hamilton was invited to come and see for herself. We have not yet had a response.

Meet **Angela**. Angela is 50. She has Down's Syndrome and early-onset dementia and is deaf. Angela is cared for by her mum, who spent 8 years looking for a suitable day care centre for her daughter. Angela's twice-weekly visits to the Fairway are the only times when her mum gets a break. She writes, "I love the literacy group and the Health & Wellbeing group here. All the people here and the staff are like family to me. I don't want to lose my family."

One of the few local politicians who seems to be listening to Angela and her extended family is **Richard Burden M.P.**, the Labour Member of Parliament for Northfield. On

3rd October this year, Mr Burden visited the Fairway Centre and met **Councillor Carole Griffiths**, who supports the campaign. Because he was on a tight schedule, Mr Burden did not have time to meet service users one-to-one as he had said he wanted to do, but he promised to return. True to his word, he came back and spent some considerable time listening to the individual stories of people for whom the Centre is a second home.

In a public statement, he has since written, "There is little doubt in my mind that, once again, central government cuts to Birmingham are at the root of the threat to the Fairway, but that does not make the proposal to close the centre the right response. That's why I will be pressing for a rethink on the part of the Council."

Meet **Ian**. Ian is 50 and has cerebral palsy. He lives with his mum, his primary carer, and he has been attending the Fairway Centre for thirty-one years. He is there 5 times a week. His needs are so specialised that he doubts it will be possible to find an alternative. He writes, "I simply need this day centre to feel human."

According to Wendy Collymore, in a phone call between the Council and the Fairway Day Centre, a representative of Birmingham City Council actually implied that Ian and Angela, John and Jackie and the many other service users who have lent their voices to the protest in their own defence had been coerced into doing so by those who are campaigning on their behalf. We see this as a defensive reaction to an indefensible decision. We believe that it insults the intelligence and the right to self-expression of those who rely on others to make their voices heard. Is this how we

treat those who carry some of the heaviest burdens in our society?

Meanwhile, **Dr Graeme Betts**, BCC Director of Adult Social Services, has shown signs of taking a personal interest in the furore which this controversial decision is generating. He made his first visit to the Centre on 5th October and stayed for 15 minutes, during which time he was able to speak to a handful of the people present. He was also due to attend the Kings Norton Ward Committee meeting on Wednesday 8th November but instead, he sent a note explaining that he had been advised by the Council's legal department that he should not attend in case he said something which could be used against the Council in a future judicial review.

We maintain that BCC's decision to send out letters of closure was not only heartless but unlawful. We have therefore written to Cllr Paulette Hamilton and Dr Graeme Betts as follows:

"Recognising that Birmingham City Council has failed in its legal obligations to Fairway Day Centre, we, the Campaign [...] demand that you immediately rescind the letters of closure sent out [on] 8 September 2017. Further, we expect you to issue a written apology for the trauma you have inflicted on those persons who were in receipt of this unlawful letter."

We are still waiting for a response. Meanwhile, at the time of writing, the *Save the Fairway Day Centre* campaign has collected over 1,170 signatures on our online petition, 1,600 signatures on our paper petition and 66 letters from services users and their carers. Local reaction is mounting and local politicians are coming

under increasing pressure to explain their actions. **Will you help us to increase that pressure until compassion and common sense prevail?**

For further information, type "Save Fairway Centre" into Facebook's search engine or sign the online petition at bit.ly/2zCfPqb.

The Save The Fairway Day Centre Campaigners

From the Editor:

This is obviously a complex issue which stirs up strong emotions and whose roots lie in funding decisions which affect the whole city, not just Kings Norton. The Campaign's Facebook page includes a letter dated 10th November in which the Council sets the closure of the Fairway Centre in the context of widespread and unavoidable budget cuts which will reduce the number of day centres in Birmingham from eleven to nine. In that letter, the Council claims that the Centre is only using half of its capacity. Campaigners respond by pointing out that the Council halted all referrals to the Centre in June 2016. The Council claims that it cannot afford necessary repairs to the building. Campaigners counter that the Council cannot know what repairs would cost since the building has not been surveyed in the past 18 months. The Council offers assurances about the continued provision of care... and so the debate goes on. Having given four pages to one point of view this month, in the interests of fairness and balance this magazine would be willing to print the Council's view in a future edition should it request the opportunity.

Sea, Skye & Chaplaincy

Many of you will know that, when I was in Birmingham, I was Chaplain to the Longbridge Development. Then my wife Angi, daughter Beks and I moved to live on the Isle of Skye. As I had promised to Angi, I took six months off from getting involved in any voluntary work. But then the call to chaplaincy came again and I contacted a national organisation called Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland.

What is Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland (WPCS)?

WPCS is a Christian organisation which seeks to share love and compassion practically in a way that is accessible and understandable to all. Its function is not to evangelise or make converts for any church, but it works with all secular organisations, local churches and employers in offering its services. It serves to support the Work Place Chaplains with a professional organisation offering training, uniforms and materials. The uniform consists of

polo shirts and (essential on Skye) a warm fleece and a rain mac!

Who are Volunteer Chaplains?

A Volunteer Chaplain is someone who feels called by God to offer pastoral and spiritual support to any workplace staff in need. WPCS Chaplains visit places of work to meet people in their own environment. They offer pastoral and spiritual support in the highs and lows of life and always in strict confidence. Chaplains seek to relate the Christian faith to daily life and to embody Christian values and ethics in relationships, methods and goals in the workplace and beyond.

They may also be called upon to arrange special events, for example Carols at Christmas, Sea Sunday Services or Remembrance Day events. Or, as in my case, giving a monthly *Thought for the Week* on Cuillin FM Radio.





I am based in Portree, the capital of Skye, and currently the workplace I support is Portree Harbour, the harbour staff, lifeboat crew, fishermen, sightseeing trip boat crews and all those whose livelihoods depend on going out to sea.

However, it is becoming clear that there is a need to support all the harbours and ports on the island. There are workplace issues and stresses of differing natures at Kyle and Kyleakin, Armadale, Elgol in the south and Uig ferry terminal in the north.

Sea Sunday Service is an annual event promoted by the Mission to Seafarers

and is usually held in July. I organised and presided over it this year on the quayside of Portree Harbour. All our lifeboat crew were there in their best lifeboat jerseys. Of course, we sang the old standard Boys' Brigade hymn "*Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?*" which they sang with gusto!

I have been pleasantly surprised by the welcome I have received here as chaplain, something neither the port nor lifeboat crew have had here before. I helped out at the annual Lifeboat Day in August and towards the end of the day the lifeboat coxswain, Hamish, took me aside and told me it was time for my induction. My heart sank as I envisaged that they

were going to dress me up as the lifeboatmen's mascot *Stormy Sam*. But no, he took me into the crew's mess room and said, "Here's the beer fridge and the whisky is kept in this cupboard. You've been shown once, so help yourself anytime." As inductions go I have endured much worse and I really felt accepted!

Then came the best part of the day as Hamish pronounced "Come on then. Let's get you kitted up and on to the lifeboat so we can show you what it can do." Wow! What an experience! The phrase "*boys and their toys*" doesn't come close!

We have recently been approached by the Islands' Fire Service commander to see if we can provide chaplaincy to the six retained fire service crews on the island and on the nearby island of Raasay. It is clear that there is an acceptance of chaplaincy and chaplains. So the challenge now is to recruit more volunteer chaplains and build some effective teams.

As our Lord Jesus told us, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

Stephen Plant



Harry L Marks



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Church Services & Events

Advent & Christmas 2017



Sunday 10th December (Advent 2)

- 10.30 am : St Nicolas' Day Festival Parade and Toy Service at St Nicolas' Church
- 10.30 am : Christingle Service at Hawkesley Church, Shannon Road
- 6.00 pm : Holy Communion & Prayer for Healing at St Nicolas' Church

Saturday 16th December

- 2.00 pm : "Knock, Knock", a nativity play in which you are invited to participate, at St Nicolas' Church

Sunday 17th December (Advent 3)

- The usual morning services as advertised elsewhere
- 4.00 pm : A Service of Nine Lessons & Carols at St Nicolas' Church
- No evening service at 6.00 pm

Christmas Eve, Sunday 24th December (Advent 4)

- 9.00 am : Holy Communion at St Nicolas' Church (Book of Common Prayer)
- 10.30 am : Holy Communion at St Nicolas' Church
- 10.30 am : Carol Service at Immanuel Church in Saint Nicolas' Place
- 10.30 am : Carol Service at Hawkesley Church, Shannon Road
- 5.00 pm : Crib Service at St Nicolas' Church
- 11.30 pm : Midnight Communion at St Nicolas' Church
- 11.30 pm : Midnight Communion at Hawkesley Church, Shannon Road

Christmas Day, Monday 25th December

- 9.00 am : Holy Communion at St Nicolas' Church
- 10.30 am : Christmas Communion at St Nicolas' Church
- 10.30 am : Christmas Communion at Immanuel Church in Saint Nicolas' Place
- No evening service at 6.00 pm

*Services on **New Year's Eve** (Sunday 31st December) and **Epiphany** (Sunday 7th January) follow the usual patterns and are advertised elsewhere.*

Just One Voice

The Thoughts of a Lay Minister

Many years ago, when I was still living with my parents in deepest, darkest Essex, I was asked to play the violin at the local dance school's Christmas show. One of the numbers they performed had a violin solo introduction and the lyrics of the song have stayed with me. They are words that I find very appropriate as we approach Christmas and search for ways to revisit a story that is so well known. A story told in our church for hundreds of years; a story known to young and old, to those who come to church and to those who don't. In fact it is so well known and so often retold that sometimes people forget that it is a Bible story about the Son of God.

The song is called *Just One Voice*. It was written by Barry Manilow, and no, before you ask, I'm not normally a fan! The song echoes words from Isaiah: 'A voice crying out in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord' (Isaiah 40) and 'Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7)

They are words of prophecy to prepare us for what is to come and within them the simple message of Christmas – God with us. The Christmas message of hope, that turns darkness into light, of

transformation by God's presence as a tiny baby. A tiny baby with the power to change everything.

Because the birth of a baby does change everything. Suddenly, as parents, we are responsible for this fragile scrap of humanity. It is a time that can be amazing and terrifying. This little life is literally in our hands and we are totally unprepared. Babies don't come with an instruction manual! This is why it is so important that we offer any new parents as much support as we can when they come to our churches. Our child may not be the Son of God but they are just as precious to Him.

Barry Manilow's song reminds us that God is always with us and that we are never alone. As we share the story of the birth of Jesus we are joining our voice to that of God. In fellowship together, as we face the unknown, we join hands and face our fears together with each other and with God.

Wishing you all a joyous Christmas.

Pauline Weaver





Welcome to Kings Norton



A new parish website is under development. It may even have gone live by the time you read this page. It preserves the best content of the old site while becoming mobile-friendly (it reshapes itself to fit small screens) and offering facilities we have not enjoyed before such as online booking for events, credit card donations and video.

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Kings Norton, Birmingham

Kings Norton's Olympic Rower

There's not much in our area to inspire water sports: the River Rea, usually not much more than a trickle; the canal, static and featureless, and Merecroft Pool, out of bounds to everyone apart from wildfowl. So it's a little surprising that we once produced our very own Olympic rower.

David Townsend was part of the British team that won a bronze medal in the 1980 Moscow Olympics, in the coxless fours event. It was the culmination of a passion for the sport which is still evident today.

He was born in August 1955 in the Townsend family home at 229 Rednal Road. He was the third of four children born to his mother Phyllis and his father Graham, director of a major metal product development company in the Black Country. In 1960, the family moved to Beaks Hill Road, where David lived until he went to university in his teens.

Not particularly academic, David was a keen sportsman: "anything with a ball". He spent most of his spare time at Kings Norton Tennis Club on Grange Hill Road, where he won the boy's championship on several occasions. He still retains a deep affection for the Club. "Whenever I come back, I like to drive by and see how it is progressing," he says.

He attended Edgbaston Preparatory School on Bristol Road South until he was seven and then went to Hallfield



School, also in Edgbaston. In 1968 at the age of 13, he took up a place at King's School, Worcester. Sport was still his driving force, and he enthusiastically took the chance to play rugby and basketball. Water sport, apart from swimming, still wasn't on his horizon. "The closest I'd come was splashing about with my friends in Northfield Baths," he says.

Then he realised that there was the chance to learn rowing on the waters of the adjacent River Severn. He developed a burning ambition to row, and still can't work out why. "We used to spend most of our summer and Easter family holidays in Aberdaron on the Llyn Peninsula in North Wales coast," he explains: "Along with other

families, we had the use of some small sailing boats which were moored in the harbour, and to reach them we had to paddle out in tiny boats.”

At King’s School, he took up the sport enthusiastically, but initially without success: indeed, he was a complete flop. "I was a rabbit at it, without any natural ability," he comments. He was rapidly ejected from the under-14 crew as a lost cause, but the rowing bug had bitten, reinforced by the sheer joy of being out on the River Severn, and he was determined to get back. By the time he was 16, he had become part of the under-16s crew that won a national title, and captain of the school’s boat club.

University beckoned, but David was less bothered about the subjects he would study, or his career path, than finding the University that offered the best opportunity to row. “I had no ambitions other than to be successful in

my sport”, he said. So he chose the University of London where, in his spare time, he studied economics!

Progress from the University Boat Club to the higher echelons of rowing was swift, so that within a couple of years he was in the British coxless fours boat that qualified for the 1976 Olympic Regatta in Montreal. Unfortunately, the event clashed with his final examinations at university, but the authorities were forgiving: he was allowed to defer his finals for another year.

Though the team had high hopes of at least making the final (unlike these days, it was rare for any British competitors to win any sort of Olympic medal), because of a disastrous equipment failure the team failed to fulfil its potential. Had it done so, that might have marked the end of his rowing career, but the disappointment made him absolutely determined to do



better at the next Olympics in Moscow in 1980. Staying on at University as President of its Boat Club, he continued to pursue all the strenuous disciplines of a top class amateur rower. Success followed, when he was a member of the British team which won bronze at the annual World Rowing Championships in New Zealand in 1978, and achieved similar success the next year at the same event on Lake Bled, then in Yugoslavia.

The date with destiny in Moscow dawned. The team made the final, but realistically the best they could hope for was the bronze. East Germany and Russia, probably helped by training regimes which would now be deemed illegal, were sweeping all before them. So the bronze medals that David and his fellow crew members earned were indeed a triumph. "We were quite pleased, to put it mildly," says David: "At least we didn't come fourth, which is absolutely the worst thing that can happen to an Olympian."

Having fulfilled his ambition, David effectively gave up rowing, and focused on the small challenge of building a career. He had left University in 1978, having met Rosanne, the girl with whom he was to spend his life, but neither of them had a job. Parental insistence dictated that marriage would be irresponsible in such circumstances, so David started the trawl for work, believing that his career would be in banking. The only organisation that responded to the shoal of job applications he submitted was Barclays,

who offered him a job within days.

He and Rosanne were married in London shortly afterwards, and their marriage was blessed in January 1979 in freezing, snowy conditions at St Nicolas' Church, where his parents were regular worshippers. Five children later, after various moves around the South East, they are settled again in London.

Having retired from banking in 2007, David decided to find a way of repaying the great joy that rowing had given him. So since 2010 he has been Director of Rowing at the University of London Boat Club, a voluntary role which is nevertheless very absorbing.

He and his family come back to Kings Norton from time to time to see one of his sisters, and will probably be coming up more often in the future because one of his sons has decided to live in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. After his mother passed away nearly two years ago, David and his sisters have purchased a defibrillator, which will be presented in her memory to one of the other great loves of David's life, Kings Norton Tennis Club.

So the ties are still quite strong. David encapsulates it all quite simply: "I never forget that all the hard work and perseverance that brought me success in my rowing career, and my life in general, were disciplines I learned in Kings Norton."

Michael Kennedy



FOODBANK NEWS

Advent is a time of preparation. So often, it is regarded simply as a preparation for Christmas, for the first coming of God in human form. The traditional church view of Advent is, however, much wider than this.

The chosen readings for the Sundays of Advent are all about the *second* coming of Christ, the “end times”, when the story of Earth, as we know it, will come to a close.

The Church of England, along with several other major Christian denominations, uses a 3-year cycle of Bible readings (a Lectionary), which plans readings for the whole of the church’s year, and uses the Gospels of St Matthew, St Mark and St Luke in each year respectively, with extracts from St John’s Gospel dotted through each of the three years.

This Advent, we begin the readings in Year B of the Lectionary, and thus, many of our Gospel passages are from St Mark’s Gospel.

Our minister colleague at Cotteridge Church, the one which hosts the *B30 Foodbank*, looked at the readings for Advent in all three years of the Lectionary and made some links with the work of foodbanks.

For Advent Sunday, he has chosen a verse from St Mark’s account of the end times in chapter 13. Whilst the reading itself is all about the second coming of Christ, the verse he has extracted mentions a fig tree in spring and how the seasons give a certainty to life. One thing our “shoppers” have sometimes lost sight of is the hope of a future and

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of being able to plan for it. Their lives have, along with so many who are trapped in lives of poverty, retreated to simply surviving a day at a time. Please pray that they may return to a life where poverty does not ensnare them in a cycle of survival. Perhaps you might also buy a tin of two of fruit for the *B30 Foodbank*, to remember the fig tree mentioned in the Bible passage.

For the 2nd Sunday of Advent, The Reverend Mike has again chosen a verse from the Gospel reading: Mark 1 v 6. This verse describes John the Baptist's foraged diet. The locusts may well refer to seed pods of a local tree rather than to insects, but foodbanks are generally quite low on both! However, the wild honey can be replicated by gifts of honey, jam, peanut butter or marmalade, all of which are much needed by the *B30 Foodbank*.

For the 3rd Sunday of Advent, he chooses the Psalm of the day: Psalm 126. This is from the group of Psalms termed the "Psalms of Ascent", sung by pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for major religious festivals. It is just as relevant for Advent, when we look at returning to heaven (here referred to as Jerusalem) at the end of time. The Psalms celebrate the pattern of the sowing and reaping of seed and grain. Please join with the

psalmist in this celebration and buy an item of grain (pasta, rice, breakfast cereal, porridge oats) for the *B30 Foodbank*. As you do so, you could pray for the hope of a future that seeds always represent.

For the final week of Advent, Mike has picked a verse from the first chapter of Luke's gospel (v.53). It is from the middle of the Magnificat, the song of praise which Mary sang in response to the Angel's message that she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus. In her praise, she already seems to have grasped that the ministry of Jesus will turn the religious world of the day on its head:

"He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands"

This must be the basis of hope of every volunteer at every foodbank. Please pray for each of our "shoppers" as the *B30 Foodbank* tries to do this for them in a literal way; but also pray that we can give them a hope that there are good things to receive which are far deeper and longer lasting than a bag full of food.

Sylvia Fox

WHAT'S ON IN KINGS NORTON?

Our guide to the best of Kings Norton's lively community life starts here. In this section of the magazine, you will find:

- A list of **Societies, Clubs and Venues** active in and around Kings Norton
- A summary of the **regular services and activities** organised by the church in this parish
- A detailed **Diary of Events** organised over the coming month by the organisations listed and others.

We divide the publicity which we offer to the local community into **advertising and listings**. We charge for **advertisements** placed by local businesses who are seeking to attract paying customers. Meanwhile, in *Societies, Clubs and Venues* and the *Events Diary* we print, free of charge, **listings** of events organised by local social or charitable groups, together with their contact details and a brief description of their aims.

To add your organisation's events to our *What's On* guide for next month, contact Michael Kennedy (michaelkennedy@talk21.com) by the submission deadline shown on page 3. To advertise in the pages of this magazine, contact The Editor, David Ash (editor@kingsnorton.org.uk). Details of advertising charges are available on request or can be viewed on the magazine page of the parish website at www.kingsnorton.org.uk.

Societies, Clubs & Venues

Contact information for Kings Norton organisations and locations that offer opportunities to get together for events and/or to meet people who have similar interests.

LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS

Kings Norton History Society www.kingsnorton.org.uk, knhs@lagonda.org.uk

The Society's meetings take the form of talks covering a wide variety of subjects of historic interest, concentrating on the West Midlands region. We also run day visits to places of historical interest. Meetings are normally held in St Nicolas' Place on the last Monday of the month, unless otherwise specified, from September to May. Membership is £12.50 per annum. Talks are free of charge to members. Visitors are always welcome but a charge of £3 per talk is made.

Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve www.fknnr.org.uk, Amanda Cadman on 0121 624 3865 or 07 887 512 382

An informal pressure group to lobby for environmental improvements in and about the reserve. We organise a weekly working party on site (the Tuesday Workout from 10.30 to 1.00 pm, open to all) to manage the Reserve, to increase biodiversity and habitats and to enhance its value for both people and wildlife. We also organise a monthly walk. Dates and meeting locations are on our website.

Friends of Historic Kings Norton www.kingsnorton.org.uk, fhkn@btinternet.com, St Nicolas' Place 0121 458 1223

We raise funds for the restoration of the historic buildings that are known collectively as Saint Nicolas' Place (SNP), through membership subscription and events organised by the group. Members receive regular newsletters containing updates about SNP and listings of Birmingham-wide heritage events. Membership is £7.50 per annum or £5.00 for those not in full-time work. We also arrange guided tours of the Saint Nicolas' Place Heritage Buildings.

Friends of Kings Norton Park friendsofkingsnortonpark.blogspot.com, info.foknp@gmail.com

The Friends of Kings Norton Park and Playing Fields are a group of local volunteers who come together regularly to improve and protect the Kings Norton Park and its neighbouring playing fields. We plan activities and events which aim to make a positive difference to the recreational experience of the people who use these spaces, and we liaise with organisations, including the City Council, which organise events in the parks.

The Fields Millennium Green Trust www.fieldsmillenniumgreen.btck.co.uk, Maggie Sweet 0121 628 1247, sweetc5@sky.com

The Trust and its volunteers meet regularly to maintain and improve the Millennium Green for the benefit of the community. We work closely with the National Trust who, with their young Urban Rangers and others, organise a programme of training and conservation activities. We usually work on Saturdays fortnightly from 10.30 am to 3.00 pm, and sometimes during school holidays.

SOCIAL CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Kings Norton Society John Bowen (Chairman) 0121 458 3747

Our origins go back to Kings Norton Youth Fellowship. We still have a few who remember those days but most are much younger. We normally meet at Kings Norton Tennis Club on the fourth Friday of the month for a bite to eat, a chat and general socialising. We have the occasional walk, quiz or speaker or best of all, we organise our own entertainment. If you know a member tell them you would like to come, or call the number above.

Kings Norton Seniors' Club *St Nicolas' Parish Office, 0121 458 3289*

The Seniors' Club is for men and women aged 65 and over. We meet at Saint Nicolas' Place every Wednesday from 1 – 3 pm and have a varied programme of events.

Kings Norton Women's Fellowship *Carol Devic 0121 458 7667, St Nicolas' Parish Office 0121 458 3289*

A group for women of all ages. We meet on the first Thursday of every month from 2-3 pm at Saint Nicolas' Place and offer a variety of activities.

Kings Norton Women's Institute

The WI is now the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK. It plays a unique role in enabling women to take part in a wide variety of activities and to campaign on issues that matter to them and their communities. To accommodate the preferences of members, the Kings Norton WI activity is divided into afternoon and evening groups, each of which meets once a month at the Friends' Meeting House, Watford Road, Cotteridge.

Women's Institute (afternoon group) *Sally Saunders 0121 458 6019*. Meets every third Tuesday of the month from 2pm till 4pm.

Women's Institute (evening group) *Marion Atkin 01221 441 5817*. Meets every third Monday of the month 7 pm for 7.30 pm.

Kings Norton Rotary Club *Colin Guy 0121 444 2020, colinguy1930@yahoo.co.uk*

Rotary is an international network of clubs for business and professional men and women, both active and retired. Clubs are committed to helping local and overseas communities. The local branch meets most Tuesdays for lunch and fellowship at the Kings Heath Cricket Club, 247 Alcester Road South, Birmingham B14 6DT. Visitors are welcome at most meetings, but should contact Colin Guy in advance.

Bournville Townswomen's Guild *Sue Davis 0121 608 0646*

South Birmingham only has two local Townswomen's Guilds and the appropriate one for ladies in Kings Norton is the one based in Bournville, established 65 years ago. A flourishing Guild, it covers parishes within a five mile radius and several current members come from Kings Norton. The group meets every fourth Monday of the month at the Friends' Meeting House in Bournville from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

Kings Norton 41 Club *Michael Bunn 07 831 775 473*

We are a group of former Round Tablers which meets on the second Wednesday of the month at the KN Tennis Club for dinner and a themed talk. Any former members, or former Round Tablers, interested in joining us please make contact beforehand.

Kings Norton Supper Club *Annette Dickers, ardickers@outlook.com*

We meet every month at Kings Norton Golf Club for a two-course evening meal with coffee followed by a speaker. Membership is £12 per annum plus payment for the supper.

SPECIALIST INTEREST GROUPS

U3A (University of the Third Age) *www.u3a.org.uk, knu3a.membership@gmail.com, John Taylor 0121 458 6397*

Kings Norton's local U3A was successfully established in the first few months of this year. The U3A is a nationwide organisation based on local groups providing opportunities for retired and semi-retired people to come together and develop their interests. Run on a voluntary basis, it sees members sharing their knowledge and experience with others in interest groups through informal activity sessions covering a wide range of subjects and activities.

Spoken Trend *tom_mccann@hotmail.co.uk and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @spokentrend, Tom McCann*

Spoken Trend is King's Norton's first regular venture into 'open-mic' spoken word and performance poetry. Launched in January, it is already attracting a significant audience. It gives participants of all ages, many completely new to the activity, the opportunity to perform their own works in front of like-minded people. It takes place on the first floor of the Bull's Head pub on the last Wednesday of every month. Those wanting to perform should check in from 7.00 pm. The event is free for performers while spectators pay a £3 entry fee.

Kings Norton Photography Society *www.kingsnortonphotographicsociety.com*

Membership is open to men and women of all ages, from beginners to advanced. We meet at Kings Norton Tennis Club most Wednesday evenings from 8.00 pm-10.00 pm throughout the season (October – April inclusive) with a varied programme of events and outings.

Kings Norton Patchwork and Quilting Group *Sally Barney 07778 025725 or Deirdre Barker 07980 284416.*

We welcome people of all levels of ability. The group meets every Tuesday in term time at the Friends' Meeting House in Bournville from 10.00 am till 3.00 pm.

Birmingham Philatelic Society *www.birminghamphilatelic.co.uk, Alan Spencer 0121 459 7650*

We are a group of stamp and postcard collectors, sharing our hobby through displays, buying and selling material, auctions and visits. Everyone with an interest is welcome including beginners. Our daytime meetings start at 2.00 pm at the Friends' Meeting House in Cotteridge from Thursday March 16th 2017.

Greenlands Chess Club www.chess.com/club/greenlands, Richard Collett 0121 458 7617 or 07874 216935

We are a small, friendly chess club, meeting most Tuesdays from 7.00 pm at the Greenlands Social Club in Longbridge Lane. We have members of all standards playing friendly or competitive league chess. New members are always welcome. There is a fee of £2 per night (the first two visits are free) and annual membership is £40.

Kings Norton Fundraising Group for Birmingham St. Mary's Hospice

www.birminghamhospice.org.uk, suebarkerdavies@gmail.com, Sue Davies 0121 608 0646

We are a local group of volunteers who raise money to care for people living with life-limiting illnesses, their families and carers in Birmingham and Sandwell. We organise fundraising activities such as regular charity quizzes and stalls at local festivals. We also aim to raise awareness of the wide range of services offered by the hospice. If you can spare a few hours to help, please contact us. We meet on the second Monday of each month at Kings Norton Bowling Club.

SPORTS & EXERCISE CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS

Health Exchange www.healthexchange.org.uk, 0800 1583535

Health Exchange creates an ongoing dialogue with the Birmingham community about health and wellbeing. It advises local volunteers who wish to offer relevant activities. A Health Exchange-supported walk, lasting for up to two hours with a break, takes place every Friday from 10.30 am, beginning in the car park of Kings Norton Park. Anyone interested in joining the group should contact walk leader Sally Saunders on 0121 458 6019.

South Birmingham Ramblers www.sbramblers.co.uk

Every week we meet up in Kings Norton Playing Fields Car Park to car share to the start of our walks. These are between 5 and 11 miles on various days of the week. For our current programme, please see our website and contact the walk leader for further details. For those interested in gentler exercise, we also have fortnightly mini walks on Tuesdays of approximately 2 miles, starting at 10 am: please contact Jenny (0121 444 4094) for further information.

Active Parks, www.beactivebirmingham.co.uk, 0121 464 2012

Active Parks, part of the City Council's Birmingham Wellbeing initiative, works in partnership with various organisations in order to offer a wide variety of free physical activities across Birmingham parks. With the Friends of Kings Norton Park group, depending on the season, it offers a range of local events, from jogging to Tai Chi, normally meeting in the Westhill Road car park at Kings Norton Park.

Kings Norton Bowling Club, 129 Wychall Lane, Birmingham B38 8AH, 0121 458 1570

We are long-established sports and social club, providing members with friendly company, a bowling green and a range of indoor activities.

Kings Norton Tennis Club, Grange Hill Road B38 8RE www.kingsnortontennis.co.uk, 0121 458 2351

Our members benefit from all-year round use of tennis courts (except on rare occasions when club matches or coaching take priority) and access to members' club nights. Membership fees are lower than many clubs in the area, with discounts for couples as well as families.

Kings Norton Motorcycle Club www.evoice.org.uk/knmcc, Gordon Green 07504 676766

Formed in Kings Norton in 1944, we are a family-friendly motorcycle club with interests ranging across all types of motorcycles, from classic to modern. Some members take part in trials, scrambles, and hill climbs. We meet weekly on Thursdays at the Woodbourne Sports and Social Club in Rumbush Lane, Earlswood from 8-00 pm onwards. There is a thriving programme of social activities.

Multi-Sports Extra Gemma 07 737 415 737

A locally-based company that develops and manages a range of sporting activities to help bring people together and enhance their quality of life. Following the completion of its free weekly Learn to Skate activity in Kings Norton Park, further events are being planned and will be announced in due course.

Push Bikes www.pushbikes.org.uk/event/bournville-gentle-cycling, John & Hilary Porter 0121 477 2156

Push Bikes is a Birmingham campaign group for better cycling, encouraging people who are not regular cyclists to get on their bikes for easy and sociable outings. Routes, normally of 10 to 12 miles, are mostly traffic-free, exploring local paths and parks and going at the pace of the slowest participant. New riders are always welcome. The nearest local group to Kings Norton meets at 10.00 on Saturdays at Rowheath Pavilion, Heath Road, B30 1HH.

Black Adder Clog Morris, blackaddersecretary@gmail.com or find us on Facebook

Morris dancing is an ideal way of having fun and keeping fit. Black Adder Clog Morris is a mixed side and welcomes dancers and musicians, whether beginners or more advanced. As well as practising, we perform at open air events and meet up with other sides. We meet most Thursdays during term time at 8-10 pm in Cotteridge Church, B30 3EJ. Just turn up, or contact Fran on the above email to discuss. Your first four weeks are free. There's a small termly subscription if you join.

COMMUNITY CENTRES & VENUES

Saint Nicolas' Place, 81 The Green B38 8RU, www.saintnicolasplace.co.uk, info@saintnicolasplace.co.uk, 0121 458 1223.

Kings Norton Library, Pershore Road South, Birmingham. B30 3EU
kings.norton.library@birmingham.gov.uk, 0121 464 1532

A wide range of books, CDs and materials for all ages including community information and local history. There is also a meeting room for hire and internet access. The Library organises a range of regular events including activities for children, reading and writing groups and our regular coffee mornings. A number of other organisations hold events at the Library.

Bells Farm Community Centre, Bells Farm Close B14 5QP, www.bellsfarm.org.uk, 0121 433 3532

Greaves Hall, Greaves Square B38 9LX www.opkn.co.uk/greaveshall, 0121 448 8760

Hawkesley Community Centre, 51 Edgwood Road B38 9RN,
www.facebook.com/HawkesleyCommunityCentre, 0121 399 0122

The centre organises a number of regular activities. Each Monday, between 5.30 and 7.30 pm, we offer exciting free activities for young people aged 11-17: just turn up. We also have a weekly Wellbeing Wednesday lunch for those aged 50 and over, with a free activity, costing £5.50. Please book in advance. We also run a drop-in centre for young adults aged 18-25 for help with job applications, or just a cup of tea and a chat. You can bring children, but please ensure they are supervised.

Manningford Hall, Bells Lane B14 5RY, www.manningfordhall.com, 0121 430 6005.

MUSIC VENUES

Tower of Song 107 Pershore Road South, B30 3JC, www.towerofsong.co.uk, 0121 486 1300

We are a thriving music venue, created by a team of local volunteers and featuring music to suit all tastes. Most shows start from 8:30-9pm. Every Wednesday we have Rea River Roots and every Thursday is our Crossroads Blues Club. Please check our website for information on all events.

The Roadhouse Wharfedale Leisure Complex, Lifford Lane, B30 3DZ,
www.theroadhousebirmingham.com, 0121 246 2273

We are a successful live music venue, set up by local volunteers in 1999 after the closure of the Breedon Bar. With a capacity of 250 people and a relaxed and friendly environment, covering nearly every night of the week we host a wide range of musical genres, from acoustic to rock, from bluegrass to reggae. Please see our website for listings.

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)
2nd 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. 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 Creative Worship.

Mon & Weds	9 am	Morning Prayer
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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 Morning Worship
		2 nd & 4 th Sundays Holy Communion
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 – 12.00 noon, 6.30 pm – 8.00 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

It costs more than £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

Events Diary December 2017

Friday 1 December

- Friends of Kings Norton Park: tree surveying, tidy up and festive coffee and cake in St Nicolas' Place. Meet in the Park at 10.00 am
- Health Exchange local walk, Kings Norton Park car park, 10.30 am
- Storytime for under-5s, Kings Norton Library, 2.15-2.45 pm

Saturday 2 December

- Friends of Kings Norton Park/ Active Parks Beginners' Running (for absolute beginners up to 5km ability) and Social Group Running (for those who run regularly). Both groups 9.30-10.30 am, meet in car park at Kings Norton Park
- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start
- Saturday Book Group, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 am
- **Wolverhampton Brass Band Concert, St Nicolas' Church, 7.30 pm**

Sunday 3 December

- Kings Norton Tennis Club Christmas Lunch

Tuesday 5 December

- South Birmingham Ramblers: two-mile gentle walk, Kings Norton Playing Fields car park, 10.00 am
- Kings Norton Patchwork and Quilting Group, Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 10.00 am-3.00 pm
- Funday Tuesday for babies & under 5s, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 -11.30 am
- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve conservation workout, 10.30 am -1.00 pm (for venue see website)
- Creative Writing Group, Kings Norton Library, 1.00 -3.30 pm
- Kings Norton Supper Club, Kings Norton Golf Club, 7.30 pm: Richard Churchley 'Christmas Songs through the Ages'
- Greenlands Chess Club, 7.00 pm

Wednesday 6 December

- Coffee morning, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30 am
- Kings Norton Seniors' Club, Saint Nicolas' Place, 1.00-3.00 pm: Christmas lunch, Old Rose & Crown
- Kings Norton Local History Group, Kings Norton Library, 2.15-4.00 pm
- Kings Norton Photographic Society, Kings Norton Tennis Club, 8.00pm-10pm: Four Guys Gone West

- Rea River Roots, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Thursday 7 December

- Kings Norton Motorcycle Club, Woodbourne Social Club, Earlswood, 8.00 pm
- Crossroads Blues Club, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm
- Black Adder Clog Morris, Cotteridge Church, 8 pm – 9 pm

Friday 8 December

- Health Exchange local walk, Kings Norton Park car park, 10.30 am
- Storytime for under-5s, Kings Norton Library, 2.15-2.45 pm

Saturday 9 December

- Farmers' Market, The Green, 9.00 am-2.00 pm (with Father Christmas)
- Friends of Kings Norton Park/Active Parks Beginners' Running (for absolute beginners up to 5km ability) and Social Group Running (for those who run regularly). Both groups 9.30-10.30 am, meet in car park at Kings Norton Park
- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start
- Friends of Historic Kings Norton charity book sale, St Nicolas' Place, 10.00 am-1.00 pm
- Fields Millennium Green Trust volunteer working party, Fields Millennium Green, 10.30 am
- **Friends of Historic Kings Norton 'Seeking Santa' event, St Nicolas' Place, 11.00 am-12 noon and 2.00 pm-3pm. Tickets (£7 for one child and one adult) from the Parish Office 0121 458 1223 or from the Gift Shop in St Nicolas' Place**

Monday 11 December

- Kings Norton Fundraising Group for St Mary's Hospice, Christmas Quiz and Raffle, Kings Norton Bowling Club, 8.00-10.00 pm (£3 pp, teams of up to 6, contact Sue on 0121 608 0646)
- Kings Norton History Society, St Nicolas' Place, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm: Sue Tungate "Matthew Boulton and the Soho Mint: from Copper to Customer"

Tuesday 12 December

- Kings Norton Patchwork and Quilting Group, Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge 10.00 am-3.00 pm
- Funday Tuesday for babies & under 5s, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 -11.30 am
- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve conservation workout, 10.30 am -1.00 pm (for venue see website)
- Creative Writing Group, Kings Norton Library, 1.00 -3.30 pm
- Kings Norton Women's Institute (afternoon group), Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 2.00-4.00pm: Christmas Festivity

- U3A (University of the Third Age) Monthly General Meeting, St Joseph's & St Helen's Church Hall, Station Road, Cotteridge. Doors open 2.10 pm
- Greenlands Chess Club, 7.00 pm

Wednesday 13 December

- Coffee morning, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30 am
- Kings Norton Seniors' Club, Saint Nicolas' Place, 1.00-3.00 pm: The Shirley Singers
- Kings Norton Photographic Society: Social evening at The Fountain, Clent
- Rea River Roots, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Thursday 14 December

- Kings Norton Motorcycle Club, Woodbourne Social Club, Earlswood, 8.00 pm
- Black Adder Clog Morris, Cotteridge Church, 8 pm – 9 pm
- Crossroads Blues Club, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Friday 15 December

- Storytime for under-5s, Kings Norton Library 2.15-2.45 pm

Saturday 16 December

- Friends of Kings Norton Park/Active Parks Beginners' Running (for absolute beginners up to 5km ability) and Social Group Running (for those who run regularly). Both groups 9.30-10.30 am, meet in car park at Kings Norton Park
- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start
- **Bournville Young Singers, "From Afar Off", a concert at 6.00 pm at St Nicolas' Church. Retiring collection.**

Monday 18 December

- Kings Norton Women's Institute (evening group), Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge, 7.00 pm: Christmas Craft

Tuesday 19 December

- South Birmingham Ramblers: two-mile gentle walk, Kings Norton Playing Fields car park, 10.00 am
- Kings Norton Patchwork and Quilting Group, Friends' Meeting House, Cotteridge 10.00 am-3.00 pm
- Funday Tuesday for babies & under 5s, Kings Norton Library, 10.30 -11.30 am
- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve conservation workout, 10.30 am -1.00 pm (for venue see website)
- Creative Writing Group, Kings Norton Library, 1.00 -3.30 pm
- Greenlands Chess Club, 7.00 pm

Wednesday 20 December

- Coffee morning, Kings Norton Library, 10.30-11.30 am
- Kings Norton Seniors' Club , Saint Nicolas' Place, 1.00-3.00 pm: Carols in St Nicolas Church
- Kings Norton Photographic Society, Kings Norton Tennis Club, 8.00pm-10pm: Bring & Buy Sale
- Rea River Roots, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Thursday 21 December

- Kings Norton Motorcycle Club, Woodbourne Social Club, Earlswood, 8.00 pm
- Crossroads Blues Club, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Friday 22 December

- Storytime for under-5s, Kings Norton Library, 2.15-2.45 pm

Saturday 23 December

- Friends of Kings Norton Park/Active Parks Beginners' Running (for absolute beginners up to 5km ability) and Social Group Running (for those who run regularly). Both groups 9.30-10.30 am, meet in car park at Kings Norton Park
- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start
- Kings Norton Library open 9 am-1pm, then closed for holiday until Wednesday 3rd January

Wednesday 27 December

- Rea River Roots, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Thursday 28 December

- Crossroads Blues Club, Tower of Song, 8.30 pm

Saturday 30 December

- Friends of Kings Norton Park/ Active Parks Beginners' Running (for absolute beginners up to 5km ability) and Social Group Running (for those who run regularly). Both groups 9.30-10.30 am, meet in car park at Kings Norton Park
- Push Bikes, Rowheath Pavilion, 9.45 am for 10.00 am start
- Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve Guided Walk : meet at junction of Meadow Hill Road and Wychall Lane 10.30 am

Saint Nicolas' Place Weekly Diary

Monday

Rainbows 5.30 pm

Guides 7.00 pm

Zumba 7.00 pm (Verity 07 966 690 476)

Cantare Community Choir 7.30-9.00 pm (Rebecca 07 803 900 154)

Kings Norton History Society 7.30 pm (last Monday of the month)

Tuesday

Slimming World 9.30 am-11.00 am & 5.00 pm – 7.00 pm (Nicola 07 875 555 958)

Rhythm Time 9.30 am – 12.30 pm (Vicky 0121 447 7632)

Circle Dancing 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm (Jan Davies 0121 476 1301)

Brownies 6.00 pm- 7.30 pm

Wednesday

Extend Exercise Class 9.30 – 11.00 am

Kings Norton Seniors' Club 1.00 pm-3.00 pm (contact Saint Nicolas' Place Office)

FSK Karate 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm (07 703 754 900)

Deeley's Dragon Martial Arts 6.30-7.30 pm (enquiries@beechees martialarts.co.uk)

Thursday

Kings Norton Women's Fellowship (first Thursday of month) 2.00 -3.00 pm

Brownies 6.30 pm-8.30 pm

Total Pilates 6.30 pm-7.30 pm (Pauline Austin 07 773 782 463)

Friday

Illumination Youth Theatre 4.00 pm – 5.30 pm (ages 5-10); 5.30 pm- 7.00 pm (ages 11-18) (Melanie 07 766 724 834)

Saturday

Feel the Rhythm Dance School for children and young people 10.00 am-1.00 pm (Donna 07 788 528 504)

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2nd October	Derek John Hankinson	69	Cr.RD
4th October	Margaret Rose Hicken	78	SN.Bu.KN
11th October	Robert Maybury	73	Cr.LH
11th October	Mary Jane Birch	91	SN.Bu.LH
12th October	Sydney Norris Stringer	91	SN.Bu.KN
17th October	Joan Rita Carless	91	SN.Bu.BE
19th October	Alice May Snipe	87	SN.Cr.LH
24th October	Gladys May Hancock	99	SN.Bu.BE
24th October	John Alexander Lovell	77	SN.Bu.CY
25th October	Edna Maud Garner	81	SN.Cr.LH
27th October	Barry Arthur Quinton		In.CY
31st October	Reginald John Sumner	88	SN.Cr.LH

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,
WM : Widney Manor, **WP** : Westall Park, **YD** : Yardley

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PRE-WAR CHRISTMAS IN KINGS NORTON

No television, not much radio, no iPhones, very few cars, no online shopping? How on earth did they get through Christmas in the 1930s? Were Christmases better or worse, or neither? Michael Kennedy has talked to locals who experienced the festivities before the War, as children, of course!

They were family Christmases, perhaps to a greater degree than is the case now. But that was often more out of necessity than love! If you invited another branch of the family to come and share the festivities, even if they didn't live all that far away, they'd stay overnight, or even for two nights. That was down to the relative absence of cars and the infrequency or complications of public transport, especially during the holiday period. So if you got fed up with your cousins or your daughter or son-in-law as the great day wore on, you couldn't console yourself with the thought that they'd be going home in an hour or so!

For children (of all ages), the excitement certainly seems to have been just as intense. Even then, the large stores in the city centre were decorated with bunting and holly for what seemed like weeks before, though not as early as October as happens now. The traditional visit to see Santa was normally in Lewis's (not John Lewis) on the corner of Corporation Street and Bull Street.

Buying presents demanded a lot more effort than looking at a computer or iPhone screen and pressing a button. Going to Birmingham was a special occasion because it required so much



planning and effort, especially for people in Kings Norton. Few families had cars and the Birmingham tram network only extended as far as Cotteridge, so it had to be a Number 18a bus up the Pershore Road South, and then a tram into the centre. If bad weather prevented buses from running, then it was a long cold trudge up the hill to the tram terminus, and an even more unwelcome trudge back home in rain and snow!

Of course, best of all was waking up to and finding your presents on Christmas morning. First it was the stocking, which tended to have the more worthy gifts in them, such as pencils and pencil sharpeners. Obligatory in stockings of that time were a tangerine, an apple and some nuts.

As for big presents, there wasn't as much variety as there is now. Girls were normally delighted to receive dolls or doll-related accessories, while boys tended to receive *Meccano* sets and/or *Hornby Dublo* trains. Supporting gifts tended to be Annuals with ambitious titles such as *The World's Best Boys' Annual* or *The Best Book for Girls* while, for the younger ones, Rupert Bear had begun his reign and there was always the *Mickey Mouse Annual*. Enid Blyton was beginning to take her iron grip with her *Naughty Amelia Jane* stories. And there were jigsaws, lots of them.

Presents were sometimes the result of a combination of love and necessity. One

local resident still tearfully remembers receiving a doll from her grandma which had been ingeniously fashioned out of her own wedding dress, lovingly preserved since the Victorian era, but then bravely sacrificed.

The weather did seem to be much colder around Christmas than it is now, but that had its compensations. Without central heating, the family really did fulfil the Christmas idyll, gathering around the fireside for large parts of the day, sharing games and entertainment.

What about that entertainment? Without TV, without online games, what was there? There were, of course, board games such as *Ludo*, *Snakes and Ladders* and *Tiddlywinks*, which everyone played together. There were also parlour games such as *Hide and Seek* and *I-Spy*. But priority was given to the party piece, where everyone had to do their bit, reciting poems or singing, whether they had the talent or not. Someone recalls that, with great ceremony, a dartboard

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was hung on the back of the living room door, the one and only time the game of darts was allowed inside the house!

The centrepiece of Christmas Day, the meal, was not all that different from the one we enjoy now, because it was not until the wartime years in the 1940s that food became rationed. Turkey was still the star turn. The big difference was the way the food was sourced. Most families grew their own vegetables, so that the potatoes, the peas, the beans, the carrots and the parsnips came from the garden. In many cases, the meat was also home grown or bought from a neighbour, because far more people tended to raise their own livestock. . The Christmas pudding was, as it is now, a great treat, though only if it was studded with silver threepenny bits (nothing else would do).

Interestingly, in the 1930s, wine had not become an integral part of dinner. Men drank beer and women something non-alcoholic, though there was the promise of port or sherry at the end of the meal.

The flow of the day was unchanging. After the present opening, the men would go off to the local, either the Bulls Head, the Navigation or one of the other pubs on or around The Green, under strict orders to return by 2 pm without fail, because the meal would be ready. Any lateness was punishable by the frostiest of looks from the womenfolk and even the children who were waiting to eat. After the meal, it was an established understanding that, before anything else, the men would do the washing up while their ladies relaxed.

What about pantomimes and shows? For the reasons described, journeys into the city for the Christmas shows were infrequent, so there was great reliance on the many local cinemas, which were in their heyday. Kings Norton's own cinema opened on The Green in September 1938, and one of its earliest showings was Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* during the Christmas period. Bliss!

As for community events, St Nicolas' Church was very much the centre of affairs, with frequent carol services and bell-ringing, which was a particularly popular local activity. If you were in the Church Choir, of course, it made quite a heavy demand on your time during the period, especially on Christmas Day, when most services required choral support.

Post-Christmas exercise normally consisted of a healthy family walk, usually with a pub in mind. For many, the pub in question was not one of the local ones on The Green, which were too close. For several families, it became an unmissable part of the period to take a nice gentle, rural stroll up Primrose Hill and across the fields to The Peacock in Wythall.

Christmases in those days were in some ways very different from those of today, but in others just the same. Have a happy one!

Michael Kennedy



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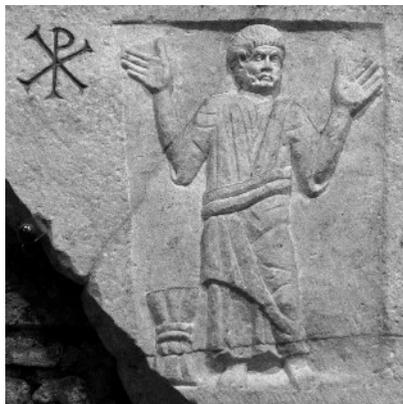


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1ST - 5TH NOVEMBER 2018

Kings Norton Team Ministry invites you to a meeting on **Sunday 21st January 2018** at **12.30 pm** in the Lady Chapel of **St. Nicolas' Church** on Kings Norton Green to hear more about the Parish Pilgrimage to Rome at All Saints' tide next year. This pilgrimage will be an exciting, packed, spiritual 5 days exploring both the well known, and more hidden, parts of this amazing city, from which Christianity spread across Europe. Fifteen places will be available.



More details will be available soon. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, speak to the Reverend Larry Wright or to Thelma Mitchell.

OCTOBER 2017

BAPTISMS

1 st October	Toby John Hazlehurst
8 th October	Oliver Jake Oldhams Jake Richard Ell Arabella Hope Priest
15 th October	Lola-Rose Grantham Abigail Faith Jean De Ward
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A New Leaflet To Support The Fund-Raising Effort

An important stage was reached during November in the effort to raise **£90,000** to repair part of the roof of St Nicolas' Church and to enable the creation of a much-needed Toy Library for local families. A new four-page leaflet was created, which is now underpinning the effort to generate support from the local community.

The leaflet not only explains the significance of the repair, but also reminds people of the vital contribution that the St Nicolas' parish team, with its army of voluntary helpers, makes to local affairs, not only in the nurturing of faith but across a vast range of other activities.

During November, copies were hand-delivered to homes within one mile of the church. The leaflet is also being distributed at key events.

Many local bakers contributed a superb array of cakes to the fund-raising Cake Stall that was part of the Friends of Historic Norton's Christmas Fayre on Saturday 11 November. Other initiatives are under development including a **'Sponsor a Carol'** event.

If you're reading this article in time, don't forget that another important fund-raising activity is the concert in St Nicolas' Church by the **Wolverhampton Brass Band on Saturday 2 December at 7.30 pm.**

If you'd like to donate to the Appeal directly, Pledge Cards are available from the Church Roof Appeal display that is located immediately inside the church. There are also collection buckets, which are destined to become a familiar sight as the Appeal progresses. Donations can also be made through our page on the *Just Giving* website at www.justgiving.com/knpcc.

You can also donate by text, by texting **STNR17 £10** to **70070**. In the near future, you will be able to give online with a credit or debit card on the newly-designed parish website.

If you'd like to play a more active role in the fundraising effort, or have any ideas for events, please don't hesitate to contact **Julie Hill** at the Parish Office on 0121 458 3289.

Correction



In our November 2017 edition, we reported that the Church Roof Fund had received a generous donation of £5,000 from the Veronica Awdry Trust. In this, we were mistaken.

We should have written that a donation of £10,000 had been received from the **Veronica Awdry Charitable Trust**, all of whose Trustees were very much in agreement with the cause, given the connection between the parish and The Reverend Wilbert Awdry, once a curate at St Nicolas' Church and the author of the *Thomas the Tank Engine* stories.



Found Santa Yet?

Local children are set to have great fun looking for Santa around our collection of Tudor buildings on **Saturday 9th December**. In this 'Seeking Santa' event, there will be clues to pick up in various secret locations and presents along the way.

The search will take about 60 minutes, and there will be two opportunities, **the first at 11.00 am and the second at 2.00 pm**.

The event is organised by the Friends of Historic Kings Norton. Tickets are priced at £7 for one child and one adult. They are available from the Parish Office at St Nicolas' Place (tel 0121 458 1223), by email at **bookings@saintnicolasplace.co.uk**, or from the Gift Shop in St Nicolas' Place.

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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.

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parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk 0121 458 3289

THE MINISTRY TEAM

Team Rector	The Revd Larry Wright
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Jane Platt
Methodist Minister	The Revd Caz Hague
Parish Lay Minister	Pauline Weaver
Readers:	David Ash, Mandy Butler, Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman, Parisa Pordelkhaki
Music Ministry	Sylvia Fox
Pastoral Care Team Coordinator	Chris Gadd
<i>Place of Welcome</i> Coordinator	Anne Hughes

THE CHURCH WARDENS

St. Nicolas' Church	Phil Burton & Julie Hill
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 Dehghani
Safeguarding Coordinator (0121 459 6185)	Clare Dean
Regular Giving	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Church Facilities Manager	Sylvia Fox
Churchyard Care	Anne Hughes
Flower Arranging (0121 486 2837)	Alison Blumer
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 : Fridays (tuition 4.45 - 6.30 pm, juniors 6.30 - 7.45 pm, adults 8 - 9 pm). Handbell practices : Mondays 3.30-4.30 pm (number notation & sheet music) and 7.00 - 8.00 pm (number notation only). Please phone first to check we are meeting.

BELL RINGING

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

Practices are held on Tuesdays from 7.45 to 9.00 pm in the church tower. Ringers of all abilities are welcome. Newcomers are particularly encouraged. If you are interested in finding out what bell ringing is all about, please contact us in advance so that we can arrange your welcome.

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

Scouts and Cubs

198th Birmingham St Nicolas'

Alan Haynes (Group Scout Leader) 07 534 615 489
onenineeight@btinternet.com

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

Beavers (6-8yrs): 5-6 pm
Cubs (8-10½): 6.15-7.45pm
Scouts (10½-15½): 8 pm

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

Hawkesley Church Primary Academy

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

Headteacher: Mr Derek Higgins

Feast Day & Fun Day for 👑 Christ The King 👑

'Jesus isn't a King, he's a baby!' shouted the three year old in church to much delighted laughter on the celebration day for Christ the King. As Christmas approaches, we are all in danger of forgetting that the infant Jesus, whose birthday we celebrate this month, as Matthew Bridges' great hymn *'Crown Him with Many Crowns'* reminds us, as well as being *'the Virgin's Son, the God incarnate born'* is also *'... Thy matchless King ... the Lord of years ... Creator of the rolling sphere ... the Lamb upon His throne'*

The Feast of Christ the King is usually celebrated across the Christian denominations on the last Sunday before Advent, this year on 26th November. Originally a Roman Catholic festival, it was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 to challenge growing secularism after WW2. Believers were reminded that *'... Christ the King is our Redeemer, all*

angels and humans are subject to Him, all power in heaven and earth are given to Him and that we were purchased 'at a great price'. The believer is urged on this day by Pope Pius to *'Let Christ reign in our hearts, to love God above all things and be instruments of justice to God.'*

The Feast of Christ the King looks forward to the end of time when Christ's Kingdom is established in fullness to the ends of the earth.

The Feast of Christ the King looks forward to the end of time when Christ's Kingdom is established in fullness to the ends of the earth. It also reminds us that the upcoming season of Advent is the time to learn how

to wait for the Lord who comes as an infant, born in a stable and yet is *'the Potentate of Time'*.

Celebrated across the denominations to a greater or lesser degree, in Australia the Feast of Christ the King has been renamed the non-gender specific *'Reign of Christ'*. In some Swedish churches it is known as the *'Sunday of Doom'*, reflecting more on the Final Judgement. As it is also the

name of a Swedish heavy metal band we might want to avoid this title!

Stir up a spicy delight on Stir-up Sunday

So where is the **fun** on this serious day? The last Sunday before Advent is also known as '**Stir-Up Sunday**' because the Collect or special prayer for the day begins, '*Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful people ...*' It became the traditional day to make the Christmas puddings. This spicy, fruity delight, or heavy, solid, uneatable afterthought to Christmas lunch divides opinion. The world is divided into 'love Christmas pudding or hate it' – like



Marmite, no in between! This meatless pudding was introduced by George I from Germany in 1714 and the tradition of the family gathering after church on Stir-Up Sunday to each take a turn to stir the heavy batter, grandparents, parents, children, everyone in the house. Oh, and it should be stirred from East to West to honour the wise men who worshipped the baby Jesus. They certainly still keep the custom going in *The Archers!*

We pack a lot into this feast day as we celebrate Christ as both King and baby. The collect for the day continues in the divine language of the Book of Common Prayer, '*... that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*' Amen to that! Enjoy the feast!

Thelma Mitchell



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The Answer's Yes!



The planting of the permanent Christmas tree on Kings Norton Green on 11th November 2017. Above, from left to right: veteran Ron Needle; The Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Cllr Anne Underwood; Richard Burden MP, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Northfield; and the Reverend Larry Wright, Rector of Kings Norton.



Thank You, Goodbye & Coffee

The Revd Stuart Dimes

It was a huge pleasure to be able to attend The Revd Stuart Dimes' last service of Holy Communion at St Anne's West Heath on 22nd October, where he has been a long-standing priest. Stuart moves on to new pastures to become the next incumbent of 3 parishes, Hampton with Bickenhill and Barston. Many thanks for Stuart's faithful work and ministry in the West Heath parish over the years. He will be very much missed by all and especially the members of St Anne's.

Fay Fearon

Bake Sale

The proceeds of the bake sale in support of the Roof Appeal on 11th

November came to £331.11. Thank you to all.

Julie Hill (Churchwarden)

Immanuel Church Fund Raising

Immanuel Church have raised £233.50 towards their mission and outreach programme. A big thank you to everyone who supported

Beverley Maynard & Evelyn Flynn

Hawkesley Church Coffee Morning

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St Nicolas Church

Roof Appeal



Our Church needs us

Part of our church roof is severely damaged and must be repaired. Our fundraising target is **£90,000** and although, we are hoping that we can secure some grant funding, we have a great deal to do ourselves. This is a huge challenge but if lots of people give even a little in lots of ways we will achieve our target.

Please donate

There are many fundraising events planned during the year so look out for the notices and please try and support where you can. These will be great opportunities for our Church family and the community to get together to support the appeal. Look out for the collection buckets and the pledge cards and ask the team about other ways to donate.

“For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have” 2 Corinthians 8:12

No More Missed Editions!



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A year's subscription comes to just **£12** unless we send your magazine to you by post, in which case the annual cost is **£20**.



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Nagasaki Remembered

Our most celebrated columnist offers a sobering reminder of what it really means to threaten one's enemies with "fire and fury".

More than 40 years ago, I was serving on the P&O liner *S.S.Chitral* which called in at the Japanese port of Nagasaki. It's a very scenic, wide, natural harbour surrounded by hills and mountains and the city itself is quite large. If you like opera, you may remember that Puccini's "Madam Butterfly" was set in a small house overlooking the bay. While we were there, I went ashore and visited the Peace Park, which is situated on high ground and which contains a large monument set in beautiful gardens.



It was a sunny afternoon and there were many groups of children in school uniform. Their teachers each carried a small flag on a pole to make sure that nobody got lost and that

each group stayed together. The park, of course, was built as a reminder of the atomic bomb which was dropped on the city in 1945.



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There is a museum in the park. It's not for the faint-hearted, for many of the photographs it contains were taken in the aftermath of the nuclear explosion. There are objects which were burnt and melted in the blast and pictures of people with radiation burns, including children.

Though it's been four decades since I visited Nagasaki, I will never forget the experience. Each person will have their own opinion as to whether nuclear weapons should have been used. Meanwhile,

modern-day hydrogen bombs are many hundred times more devastating than the two devices dropped on Japan.

As for the present day posturing of the USA and North Korea, I can only hope and pray that such terrible events never happen again. I am sure many of you will have similar thoughts.

Eddie Matthews

NAF BIRMINGHAM

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Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

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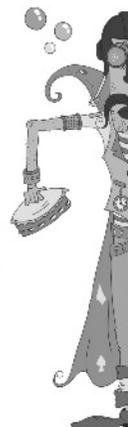
- Kings Norton Farmers Market
- Kings Norton Library
- Along the river bank with the friends of Kings Norton Park

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Sponsor a Carol, Raise a Roof!

We have two hours set aside at St Nicolas Church, on **Friday 5th January, from 2.00-4.00 pm**, for you to come and sing your favourite Christmas Carol or Christmas Hymn with a Roof Appeal Twist!

Each carol or hymn will cost a minimum of £3, all for the Roof Appeal. Please let me know your choice(s) beforehand if possible. If you can't come, but still want a carol sung, those assembled will happily sing it for you.

Let's see how much we can raise whilst enjoying Christmas hymns and carols as the 12 day season of Christmas comes to a close.

Sylvia Fox

OCTOBER 2017

MARRIAGES

21st October

Richard Maurice Franklin & Hannah Elizabeth Paton

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