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THE LINK

Sharing Faith in Jesus Christ

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Sowing and Reaping...

Revd Stephen Griffiths, Team Rector

In the Vicarage vegetable plot we are planting and harvesting at the same time. We are getting some good potatoes (always a reliable crop in year one) and putting in some tomato plants in the hope they catch up and crop well into the autumn. It certainly feels like home now that we are producing some home-grown food and the boys love that moment when the yellow-skinned potatoes emerge from the brown earth like big gold nuggets.

Sowing and harvesting at the same time doesn't fit with the classic seasonal cycle (plant in the spring, nurture in the summer, and harvest in the autumn) but the more I read about running an allotment the more I see that all the seasons can be fruitful in their own way. I suppose it's a parable for the whole of life.

Sometimes what looks like a barren season of life turns out to be productive in ways we were not expecting. I was talking to someone recently who turned an unexpected redundancy into an opportunity to train for a new type of work and begin a new career. People often look back on times of illness and see the depth of character that they developed during what seemed like a fallow period. In contrast, periods of life that often look the most promising can return a poor harvest. Having the right

idea at the wrong time can be immensely frustrating and investing time and energy into a project that fails to take root can be discouraging. Some seeds, however, can remain dormant for a long time before germinating in the right conditions.

One of my favourite bible passages for harvest time is 2 Corinthians 9.6, *Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*

These words encourage us to share whatever we have as generously as possible, not to secure a good return for ourselves, but so that harvest brings a blessing to others. The Apostle Paul doesn't specify what we are to sow. In some cases it will be money, but in many other cases it will be our time, love, wisdom, friendship and faith. God has a habit of

multiplying and transforming the raw materials we present to him (loaves and fishes, yeast in the dough, water into wine, the mustard seed into a tree). Our part is presenting the offering. What is God calling you to sow at this time?

We can't guarantee the result of sowing a seed. The Christian journey, like gardening, involves faith. But our faith is in *the one who is able to make all grace abound to you* (2 Corinthians 9.8). Whatever the result, grace abounds. I hope this edition of The Link helps you see the many ways that we can sow faith, hope and love into our churches and communities.

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From the Editor

Ann Blackett

Welcome to the first 'proper' issue of The Link, which I hope will become very much a part of life for members of the Oakham Team Ministry. I hope we'll be reflecting the life of our communities, bringing news but also giving a Christian slant to some of the important things of the world – today we begin with the celebration of harvest, but we widen that to include our call to care for the whole of creation. Neither of these things are exclusively Christian – but there are particularly Christian ways of looking at them, which inform and inspire our response to them.

That sums up, perhaps what we're about. Many people throughout the world follow a religion, living their lives according both to the ways of the world and spiritual teaching, holding them in tension, inclining more one way than the other, but with the other making its presence known. It's a broad spectrum and while some Christians, say, can consciously live in the light of Jesus' teaching in every aspect of their lives, many others pick their way through, following Jesus as best they can while being pulled this way and that by the things they have to do for others and by the choices offered by the world we live in. We hope that in The Link we will reflect that tension, explore faith and action, consider daily life, meet real people and think about real issues, some of them quite complicated. But we want to do that in an entertaining way, thoughtful, positive and affirming. We want you to enjoy The Link, and pass it on to others.

In this issue there are several articles which look at the harvest and creation, both locally and globally. We've been able to reprint an article by Robin Roth, the CEO of Traidcraft, which looks at how climate change is affecting some the communities which supply the fair trade food and other goods we sell in churches around the benefice. There are recipes which help avoid food waste as well as being delicious, reflections on gardening and growing, and news of a 'Going Wild' initiative in Whissendine. However there are other things too – visits to Hull and to David and Margaret Pattinson's 'other' parish in Mallorca, a report on the healing ministry active in the benefice, and an interview with possibly our longest-serving churchwarden.

This week we've been shocked by the death of Michael Hinman, well-known as a Reader, a character, a writer of exceedingly direct intercessions and a man with an extraordinary depth of knowledge about many things. Much more will be said about him as we continue to remember and to celebrate his life, but I'd like to share things prayed and said at the Team Eucharist on the Thursday after his death. Michael was a child of God, a faithful Christian who served until the end of his life, who has been 'called home' by his Father and ours. We are devastated by his leaving us, but we hope and trust in God's mercy and in the Resurrection. We commend Michael to God's love, and comfort each other with loving kindness and with our faith. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

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In the Deep at Hull

Diana Dixon

The Friends of All Saints' Church – and friends! – headed north to the UK City of Culture 2017-2020 in May for a fishy experience and the most recent Minster in the country.



The Deep, Hull

Hull Minster

The outstanding outreach work and team ministry's contribution to the City of Hull by Holy Trinity Church was duly rewarded in 2017 with its elevation to minster status. A party from the villages and Oakham, including the Mothers' Union, enjoyed evensong in Hull Minster on Saturday 25 May on a trip organised by the Friends of All Saints' Church. The afternoon was given to tours of

the newly restored Minster, which is the largest parish church in England (by floor area). We were greatly impressed by its vastness and the overall appearance of space and light due to the Perpendicular style in which it was built. Parts of the building date back to the 13th century and the church has enjoyed a chequered history over the years. During the Civil War part of the transept was used as stabling for soldiers' horses. Hull's most famous citizen, William Wilberforce, was

baptised here and more recently the church fell victim to enemy bombs. With interesting monuments and some superb stained glass, especially two art nouveau gems, this is a church well worth visiting. Robert 'Mousey' Thompson (1876 -1955), the Yorkshire furniture maker who incorporated a trademark mouse carving into his work, has seven mice in the church.



We were fortunate to have excellent, informative and friendly guides. After a quiet and prayerful evensong beautifully sung by the Minster Choir, the day ended with a delicious cream tea served by the Minster Kitchen. Currently extensive archaeological excavations are taking place on the north side as the prelude to an exciting new extension to house a visitor and heritage centre at Hull's historic Minster. So certainly a place to keep an eye on for future visits.

The Deep



the bubble of a lift with swordfish and sharks swimming alongside and to see feeding time for exotic tropical fish. Above all it was an awe-inspiring experience and it was lovely to see how popular it was with families.

The whole day was marvellous and we are greatly indebted to Beryl and David Kirtland for all their hard work in ensuring that everyone enjoyed an unforgettable and well-organised day.

Photographs by Richard Adams



Our annual visit to choral evensong would not be complete without a carefully chosen cultural attraction beforehand, and this year was no exception – The Deep, Hull’s spectacular aquarium, was the venue. We were quickly disabused of the idea that it was simply a big fish tank. Yes, sea life in all shapes and sizes is there aplenty but the museum’s remit is conservation and research into all aspects of marine life. Nonetheless, it is thrilling to ride in



And Now For Something Completely Different

Venerable Gordon Steele, Archdeacon of Oakham

Following the dramas of the weeks leading up to the summer holidays - political, sporting and climactic - I hope that you have found rest and refreshment in the time that has followed, and are ready to take up afresh the challenges that lie ahead.

Whilst the church calendar begins with Advent and the secular one begins with January, I think it is safe to say that the school year is really what shapes the pattern of Church life. So we begin afresh in September - seeking to engage in targeted mission, to offer the best in worship and pastoral care, and to grow deeper in our own Christian discipleship. Whatever forms these take for you personally and in the life of that part of the Church and the Kingdom in which you are called to serve, may this be a fruitful year for you.

A question we might like to ask ourselves is: do we resume our our activities on auto-pilot - treading a familiar path, perhaps rather stuck in an established groove - or are we ready to try new

things, to leave our personal comfort zones and to take risks in the service of the One who risked everything for us?

The beauty of Church life is that we are not alone - we are in this together. Let us encourage one another to be bold, to discern what we are being called to do, and to have the courage to step out and get on with it.

Two of my Christian heroes are Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Ignatius Loyola. Both were powerful men of action.

Bonhoeffer: the German Lutheran pastor and theologian who was imprisoned and killed for his part in a conspiracy against Hitler - a conspiracy with the aim of bringing the Nazi atrocity to an end - wrote from his prison cell a meditation for the baptism of his godson, Dietrich Bethge, who is now 75 years old and an internationally-renowned cellist. In this baptism meditation, Bonhoeffer wrote:

We can be Christians today in only two ways, through prayer and doing justice among human beings. All Christian thinking, talking and organising must be

born anew, out of that prayer and action.

Ignatius Loyola, the sixteenth-century Spanish priest and founder of the International religious order the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), famously wrote:

Act as though everything depended upon you but pray as though everything depended on God.

May this new school year be one of deep prayer and bold action throughout the Diocese as we seek to tackle the challenges and opportunities that lie before us. May we be neither timid on the one hand, nor complacent on the other, but may we be ready to play our part afresh and to the full in the adventure of faith and the mission of the Church.

May God bless us as we seek, in our day, to be faithful to our Christian calling, and to be people of prayer and action - whatever from that may be called to take.



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News

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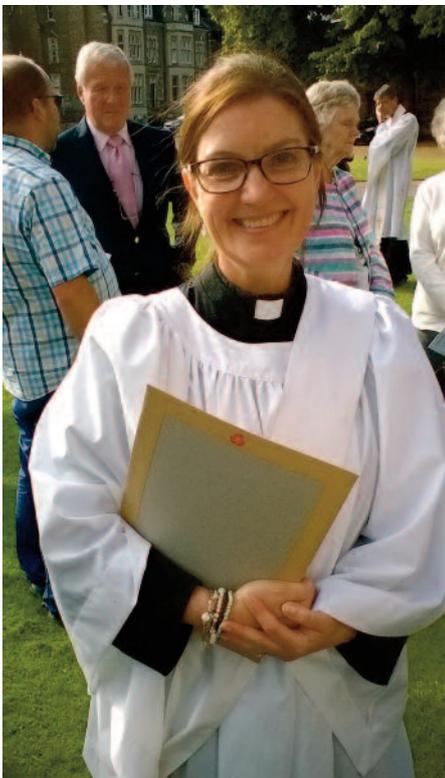


Young people aged 18 and under from Rutland are invited to use their phones and cameras to capture images of 'something special about Rutland' for the High Sheriff's photographic competition.

Details are on her website www.rutlandhighsheriff19.com and the closing dates are 31 October (for the autumn competition) and 31 January (winter competition).

One of the judges is our own Richard Adams and some of the winners from the Summer competition are already on the High Sheriff's website.

Celebrating New Ministry



Jenni Duffy, one of the most familiar faces around Oakham and Ashwell, was ordained Deacon at Peterborough Cathedral in July. Jenni has been in the benefice for more than 20 years, working in St Mary

Ashwell and All Saints Oakham, with families and in schools, starting and leading the Monday Pram Service for 13 years, leading Lent courses and too many other things to mention. As a Parish Evangelist, she was part of the Easter Experience held in All Saints Church a few years ago, when hundreds of school children visited to learn about the Easter story through stories and activities. She's not going too far afield for the next stage in her ministry – she has been appointed to the Rutland Water Benefice where she will serve as a deacon before being ordained as a priest, all being well, next year. Good luck, Jenni – our prayers and good wishes go with you!

Churchwardens' Charge!



This happy band are some of the Oakham Team churchwardens at their admission service at Peterborough Cathedral in July. The proper name for this is the Visitation of the Bishop and Charge, and it usually happens at a number of churches around the diocese and is led by either the Archdeacon of Oakham or the Archdeacon of Northampton depending on area. This year, however, the Bishop wanted to gather as many churchwardens as possible together in the Cathedral, and give his Charge – a kind of sermon encouraging them and giving the responsibility for their work. The churchwardens then promise to discharge the duties their office for the parish in which they have been chosen, 'calling at all times on the strength that God gives me'. Rather alarmingly, as Bishop Donald was speaking there were loud noises of what sounded like gunfire outside,

but all was quiet when we emerged at the end of the service, so we put it down as a mystery. From left to right: Debbie Sowter (Langham), Joy Harvey (Ashwell), Alison Long (Oakham), Ann Blackett (Oakham) and Sue Willetts (Braunston).

United Summer Gatherings



United is the name given to the New Wine annual summer gatherings which have now moved to the East of England Showground by the A1, near Peterborough. New Wine describes *United* as 'where your church can spend quality time together, to pitch in as a family, sharing food, receiving and praying for one another, and supporting each other and other churches. Experience impactful teaching, worship, a programme for all, friendships for life and transformational encounters with God'.

Several members of the benefice managed to set time aside to attend *United*/New Wine last month, reporting excellent talks and worship, friends to meet and new friends to make. Revd Deborah Marsh says 'I have been attending New Wine summer gatherings since 1994 and can honestly say that I would not be who I am today without these wonderful times and experiences of the empowering, loving, healing presence of God, with the family of God.'

The dates for 2020 are

Week 1: 25–31 July;

Week 2: 2–8 August.

Put them in your diary now and come along and experience being united with thousands to worship afresh the One who never changes.

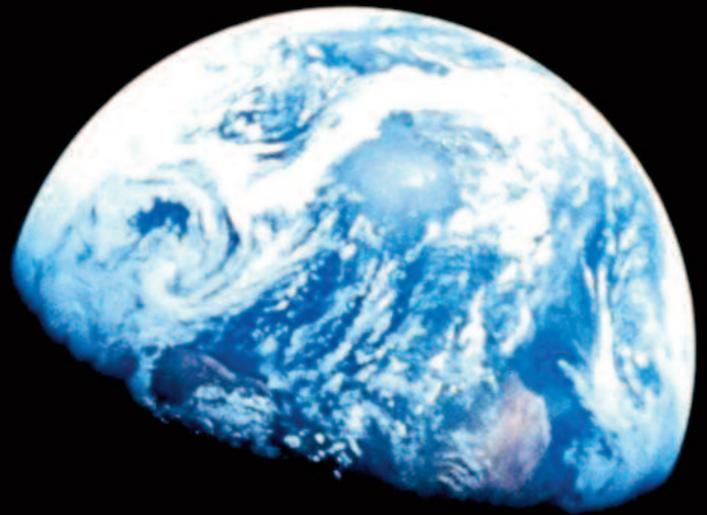
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3.22-23

Care for the earth...

Ann Blakett

It's the time of year for harvest, although we might think we've been chugging along behind all sorts of agricultural vehicles bringing it home along the lanes of Rutland for quite a while now. As the return to school gets under way – our long summer school holidays were once planned for children to help with the harvest - there's a sense of new beginnings even among people whose school days were long ago.



From 1 September to 4 October the church celebrates a season of Creation, when the focus is on God the Creator, who sustains all life. Creation is huge, larger and more complex than we can see with our eyes, just like God. So one of the ways we approach it is through the regular celebration of harvest, something rooted in our own lives wherever we come from. We all eat, and what we eat comes from the world we live in.

Once upon a time we humans trapped and killed or foraged for everything we ate. This kept us on the move, as we followed the animals we hunted. About 10,000 years ago we started to settle in households and communities, to herd animals as well as hunt them, and to grow grains and gather leaves and fruit to supplement our diet through the seasons – the beginning of agriculture (that's

prehistory made very simple). Who knows which people first ground some gritty flour and mixed it with water to make a bread baked on the stones around the cooking fire, who first noticed that some of the fruit drink they were enjoying had a bit of a kick, and worked out how to improve it?

The world we live in is unimaginably different – when we take a trolley down a supermarket aisle we can add food from any part of the world. These days we can have strawberries at Christmas if we want them. We've become used to putting out our hands and finding food there, food which we did not necessarily grow ourselves. And while in the so-called 'developed' world, there is so much food about that it's estimated that one third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted, about 1.3 billion tons per year (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation),

too many people are going hungry and starving to death because of war, politics, environmental damage and the climate emergency.

As Christians, we believe that we are called to care for the earth and everything in it, to look at creation with the eyes of wonder from the tiniest detail of insects and plants to the vastness of the night skies. We share this planet with people of all faiths and none, and there's an increasing urgency to rediscover that care, to use the earth's resources more gently and mindfully, and to change our behaviour if we have developed the habit of consuming more and more without realising the consequences. In the daily news, the environmental groups and young campaigners try to call us to our senses with terrible images of plastic in the seas, deforestation and people displaced from their homes because their crops have failed.

Contrasted against the stark, crater-marked lunar surface, the Earth is seen rising above the moon on 24 December 1968. As Apollo 8 orbited the moon, Earth is 240,000 miles away. The sunset terminator is seen crossing Africa.

Credits: NASA/Bill Anders

The Scriptures also cry out to remind us of our relationship with God and the creation he has made for us and all his creatures, as in Psalm 104:

*From your dwelling you water the hills;
earth drinks its fill of your gift.*

*You make the grass grow for the cattle
and the plants to serve our needs
that we may bring forth bread from the earth
and wine to cheer our hearts;
oil, to make our faces shine
and bread to strengthen our hearts.*

*You made the moon to mark the months;
the sun knows the time for its setting.
When you spread the darkness it is night
and all the beasts of the forest creep forth.*

*The young lions roar for their prey
and ask their food from God.*

*At the rising of the sun they steal away
and go to rest in their dens.*

*Men and women go out to their work,
to labour till evening falls.*

*How many are your works, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.*

Our care for creation, our dependence on the harvest, are intertwined with the cries of justice for our beautiful planet, its suffering land and creatures, and its future.

Responding to climate change is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God's creation, and the Church of England's environmental policy exists to enable the whole church to address – in faith, practice and mission – the issue of climate change. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, says, 'Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to the life of faith. It is a way to love our neighbour and to steward the gift of creation'.

In 2015 Pope Francis wrote a letter to the churches and the whole world, named *Laudato Si* after the prayer of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. We know St Francis' Canticle of the Creatures, *Laudato Si, mi' Signore* – 'Praise be to You, my Lord' – best as the hymn *All creatures of our God and King* but the hymn misses out his relationship with creation as brothers and sisters in the same family – Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Wind, Sister Water, Brother Fire, Sister Mother Earth. Francis of Assisi saw humans as brothers and sisters in the whole creation, all in a loving relationship – a dance, even – with God. All should be treated with equal love.

Over the summer it's been hard

to miss the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission, when two men from earth walked on our Moon while another travelled around it in a solitary orbit. We've been reminded what our world looks like from space, and how fragile it is. From space our blue-green planet can be hidden by a human thumb, but the view from earth – our view – fills our sight, beautiful and heartbreaking by turns. We've also been warned that time is short to rescue our home planet from the damage we are doing to it, in particular the rising temperatures and the plastics in the oceans and animal feed. What does a season celebrating Creation have to say to us, with so many other distractions?

A prayer from the Philippines

Lord God, creator of all the earth,
You have given us the mountains and the trees,
the water and the good earth
which supports our crops,
our animals and ourselves.

Never let us lose our love for the land,
which is our mother.

Help us to protect the land from abuse
and to enrich the soil when we abuse it.
Make our mother, the earth, fruitful again.

'Stay awake!' say the Scripture readings in church, pointing to Jesus coming again at the end of time. In three months we will be hearing them again as we come towards the end of the church year. One of the messages of the Scriptures throughout the year is that we should live as though we had very little time; not to build up what we have but to live our lives so as to store up treasure in heaven. This applies to our care for the world and its inhabitants: to do what we can now as a matter of justice, fellowship and love.



Harvesting near Pilton (photograph by Richard Adams)

Just a thought

Revd Charlotte Osborn



The word 'Brexit' first appeared as long ago as 2012, and by December 2016 it had found its way into the Oxford English Dictionary, alongside such words as 'gobsmacking', 'tombstone' (as a verb), and 'YouTuber' (a noun). As new words join, so old ones take on a new meaning, and the world turns and changes.

One Saturday evening I took my youth group to Peterborough Cathedral for an event by the name of Fire Church – two words which are not often joined together. We were ushered into a candlelit cathedral and invited to walk slowly round and sense God being present with us as He has been present to all who have sought Him for over 900 years in that space, before emerging into the cloister into a sudden blaze of noise and light and heat from the numerous loudspeakers, floodlights and burning braziers.

But in all the darkness and the quiet of centuries, and the light and life

outside in the cloisters, inside the cathedral hangs this magnificent Christ of the Cross. And its timeless Latin inscription speaks to Brexit, to gobsmacking and to tombstoning in the same way that the steady rhythm of J S Bach draws us into the depths of our souls.

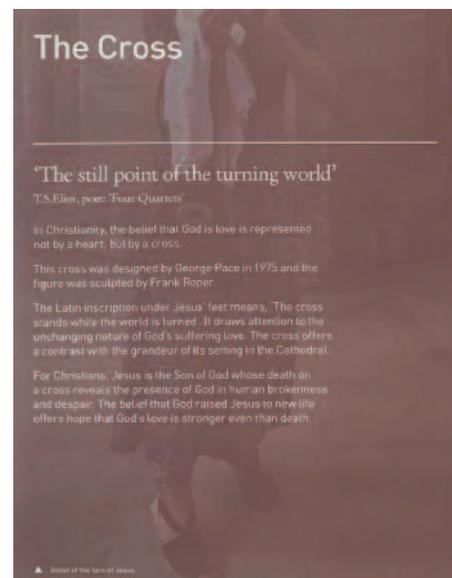
Stat crux dum volvitur orbis – the Cross stands while the world turns – conveys the comfort and the mystery of the timeless and everlasting love of God through all the changing scenes of life. The cross stands while the world turns, entering it all, seeing it all, feeling it all, and yet never changing.

For Christians believe the timeless changelessness of God in a turning world to be the place of security and safety that goes beyond the escape and temporary respite that a day on the golf course or in the garden can bring, is deeper and beyond the love shared within the heart of a human family on Mothering Sunday, and infinitely more to be valued than a priceless diamond.

In the New Testament in the letter to the Hebrews we read that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Pre-Brexit, in this current turmoil and confusion, and post-Brexit or no Brexit, God in Christ hangs over all the deliberations and the disappointment, the aspirations and the agonies, symbolising future hope and peace.

It is ironic that in Peterborough Cathedral Frank Roper's figure of Christ is depicted in gold on George Pace's red cross – colours of flame and burning fire for it may feel as if we are inside a political fiery furnace just now, in which all sense and sensibility is being consumed, all values being tested and refined, and all that is left is the destruction which follows a fire.

Yet just as the charred beams which fell from the roof of another cathedral, in Coventry, after its bombing in World War II, have been fashioned into a cross of hope, so the cross in Peterborough and in every place continues to stand while the world turns, and we can turn and look up to it and find there not only our security and safety, but our salvation.



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Food for Thought

Miranda Hall

As I write this today, I hear on the radio that one-third of the food we buy we throw away. What a waste of good food, what a waste of our money, what a waste of crops and livestock in our countryside. So could we all do better in Rutland? Are we tempted to Buy One, Get One Free or do we check our fridges and fruit bowls before we shop? Are we seduced by luscious but unhealthy options or do we plan our route round the supermarkets to avoid temptations? Do we turn the end of the loaf into breadcrumbs and freeze it, or toss it out as 'just crusts'?

Here are some quick and easy seasonal salads to enjoy for a healthier you and your family with plenty of your 'five a day' veg and fruit. If you buy bunches of herbs for cooking store any not used in a mug of water in fridge or chop and freeze for later. All recipes serve two people.

Chicken, celery orange and walnut

100g/4oz cooked chicken
2 sticks celery
1 carrot
1 orange
2 heaped tbsp walnuts
2 tbsp olive oil
1 teasp French mustard
pinch salt and pepper

Cut chicken into fingers, thinly slice celery, wash and coarsely grate carrot, finely grate rind of orange and remove peel with a serrated knife, quarter and slice. Toss all in a bowl with chopped walnuts, oil, mustard and seasoning.

Beetroot, radish, apple, raisin and pork

2 medium cooked beetroot
8-10 radishes
1 eating apple
handful of raisins
100g/4oz cooked pork or cold sausages
1 sprig fresh sage
2 tbsp olive oil
2 teasp balsamic or red wine vinegar
pinch salt and pepper

Dice or coarsely grate beetroot, thinly slice radish, quarter, core and slice apple and toss in a bowl with raisins, meat cut in fingers, chopped sage and olive oil. If beetroot has been pickled in vinegar omit vinegar and just add seasoning.

Salmon, green beans, fennel, tomato and black olives

2 portions fresh salmon
100g/4oz green beans
1 head of fennel
2 tomatoes
12 pitted black olives
2 tbsp olive oil
pinch salt and pepper

Place salmon on a small piece of foil skin side down in a frying pan and cook for 2 minutes before turning over to cook other side (the skin can be peeled off with the foil). Place in a bowl to cool. Halve the green beans and cook in boiling salted water for 4-5 minutes until just tender, drain in a sieve and rinse in cold water. Cut hard top stalks off fennel, retain fine green leaves, quarter fennel and thinly slice. Break salmon into flakes in a bowl with a fork, add beans, fennel, chopped tomato and sliced olives. Toss all together with oil and chopped fennel leaves.

Bacon, broad bean, mushroom, parsley and sourdough croutons

6 rashers of streaky bacon
1tbsp oil
6 chestnut mushrooms
1-2 slices of sourdough bread
100g/4oz frozen broad beans
handful of parsley
1tbsp lemon juice or wine vinegar
pinch salt and pepper.

Cut bacon rashers into four and fry gently in oil with sliced mushrooms. After 2 minutes turn mushrooms over and cook other side, then lift out of pan into a bowl. Turn bacon over adding bread cut in 1cm/half inch cubes and continue to cook until both are crisp. Cook broad beans in boiling water for 3-4 minutes until tender, drain and rinse in cold water then add to bowl with chopped parsley. Toss in lemon or vinegar and seasoning. Serve topped with crisp bacon and croutons.



Between Oakham and Palma

David Pattinson



David and Margaret are well-known members of the All Saints congregation and David serves across the Benefice as a Reader – but they are also regulars at another parish.

It all began in February 2004 when Margaret and I purchased a house at Camp de Mar in the south-west of Mallorca. The house has given us a parallel universe; an entry into the world of the Mallorca resident, rather than the tourist.

78 kilometres long and 96 at its widest point, Mallorca is not large, with a total population of one million. Of these some 60,000 are British expats, who come to stay in Mallorca and sometimes go back to the UK for reasons of family or health. There are, though, many expats who will never move back and it is this population that forms the backbone of the Anglican church in Mallorca.

How do Oakham and Palma compare? Well, I think Oakham folk would feel at home in Palma. The churchmanship is very similar (but stops short of 'bells and smells'). The

service is virtually the same and it's all in English, but there the similarities begin to fade.

Community

For a start the buildings: the church in Palma was built in the 1960s. Dedicated to St Philip and St James, it is plain with clean modern lines and beautifully light. A church in Puerta Pollensa, in the north of the island, forms part of the same team, but Sunday worship happens in a converted shop. We also hold a monthly Eucharist in Cala d'Or, but that is in the Catholic church. Not many churches then – it's not like a benefice of ten and it means that some people travel 40 miles to get to church on a Sunday.

Diversity

Then there's the congregation: each week there is a mix of residents,

'swallows', like Margaret and me, who 'come and go', sometimes frequently, sometimes rarely, and, finally, tourists. It's a real mix of nationalities. Robert Ellis, one of our vicars, once counted the number of different nationalities in the Sunday morning congregation – maybe it was at Pentecost – and the number was 15. Interestingly, we have quite a strong Nigerian element in the congregation and it's quite a mix of churchmanship. With such limited choice, evangelical and high Anglicans rub shoulders – not without the odd grumble.

Individuals

Not surprisingly, folk can be much travelled with a rich story to tell.

Take **George**, a retired doctor and a fellow Lay Reader (now emeritus); his grandmother was part of the Tsarist



family. On one occasion she had been travelling in Paris and was appalled by the poverty she saw. George said, 'She responded in the only way she could by instructing her servant to leave her travelling tiaras on the steps of the nearest church.'

Or **Conway**, our organist from the Welsh Valleys, with a Presbyterian background. Conway was a producer of musicals in the West End; it's perhaps why he is the quickest and liveliest organist I've ever experienced.

Or **Ken**, a solicitor, how boring! Ken turns out to be part of one of the first company teams to do business in China, back in the 1970s where, for extended periods, he formed a worship and prayer group that met to sustain faith.

Or **Judy**, the secretary, who knew Cliff Richard well enough to invite him to her 21st.

Or **Prince Charles's godmother** who made the teas at church every Sunday.

The Lay Reader Role

With permission to officiate in the diocese of Europe, I get to preach, maybe four or five times a year. There is the occasional funeral and – a real joy – I have been able to conduct a number of wedding services, although there are not so many now. We used to have around 65 weddings per year, but the number has fallen – these days there is lots of competition! How can I take weddings? Well, in Spain, as in much of Europe, priests are not licensed to perform the civil legalities of marriage. Most people have a civil marriage, where the legalities are completed, and then the religious ceremony. All the weddings we do on Mallorca are for people who have already had a marriage ceremony, usually at a UK registry office a few days before the big event.

The wedding venues are amazing: beautiful Catholic churches overlooking the sea, or tucked away in a pretty hilltop village; posh hotels with red carpets across manicured lawns; private villas with spectacular gardens, and not forgetting the beach (flip flops the order of the day, rather than polished shoes!)

Community, diversity and individuality – perhaps Palma and Oakham are not so different after all. But what Palma has reinforced for me is:

GOD is a God of a Community that takes on different forms but is the body of Christ.

GOD rejoices in diversity; a richness of experience; different backgrounds;

GOD is the God of different opinions; different views; and they can live together. Equally GOD is God of the individual – we are all loved equally by our heavenly Father.



Wholeness and Healing in the Oakham Team Ministry

Patrick Wilson and Revd Deborah Marsh

He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Luke 9.2

Past

There has been a healing ministry at All Saints since the incumbency of Alan Horsley in the 1980s; a Healing Prayer Group was established, and, though very small in numbers, the group has continued to meet once or twice a month.

During Michael Covington's incumbency, and, with the encouragement of the then curate, Jay Ridley, and his wife, Sylvia, a short healing service, with prayer and the opportunity for the laying on of hands, was established on the first Wednesday of each month in All Saints' Church. There have also been Eucharists with the laying-on of hands on Sunday evenings, once or twice a year, the most recent on Sunday 26 May.

Present

There has been recently a very considerable increase in support and interest amongst the team clergy, resulting, thanks to the initiative of Revd Deborah Marsh, in the development of a monthly Wholeness and Healing Service at 4pm every second Sunday at Whissendine. These services signal a big step forward for the healing ministry of the church, a vital concomitant of its ministry to the whole person, mind, body and soul.

It has been really encouraging, a great blessing to all who have been able to attend these services, and all are welcome. Each time, following an informal and slightly varying liturgy, in which silence and reflection are important, there is opportunity for anointing, sharing in Holy

Communion, the laying on of hands, prayer for the sick, and developing friendships. The leading of the Holy Spirit is paramount, of course, and the manifestation of this seems so far to have been in imparting a lovely atmosphere of peace and of confidence in the love and compassion of Jesus.

Future

Things never grow stale or static with our Lord, so we anticipate a developing and exciting healing ministry in the future.

For more information contact Revd Deborah Marsh (01664 474652 / 07919 385314) or Patrick Wilson (01572 723288), or just come to a 2nd Sunday Wholeness & Healing Service at St Andrew Whissendine. You will be very welcome.



Farmers told 'You are not alone'

Brian Chester

Churches across the benefice – and beyond – will soon echo to the strains of a familiar hymn as we celebrate the harvest once again:

*Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home;
all is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin.*

We gather for Harvest Festival amid flowers, fruit and, hopefully, a selection of vegetables grown on farms, allotments and in gardens over the summer. Congregations give thanks for what they have received and remember those who have not. Harvest time is also an important opportunity to remember the food supply chain that provides the vast range of items on offer in shops and supermarkets – and, especially in rural communities, the farmers whose commitment and skill is at the very beginning of what is often a long and challenging process.

Working in the open fields in glorious countryside may seem idyllic – but while farmers are resilient, life on the land can be tough particularly at this time with many uncertainties stemming from Brexit and fundamental changes proposed to the country's agriculture policy. The extent of these pressures was revealed in a recent report commissioned by the Worshipful Company of Farmers and carried out by Rose Regeneration and Lincoln University, showing that farmers face a unique set of stresses – some beyond their control – a combination of which impacts on their health and wellbeing. Never taking a break, issues of profitability, tiredness and fatigue are serious issues, added to which are an increase in rural crime and the increasing questions and tensions created over the food we eat and how it is produced.

The Farming Community Network has long recognised the need to support Britain's farming families. Charles Smith, its Chief Executive, says:

The life of a farmer is not always as tranquil and comfortable as many would believe. It involves long hours, isolation, uncontrollable factors and a

very uncertain future. We want to reach out to those within the farming community who are having a tough time and let them know that they are not alone.

The You are Not Alone project – YANA – is now focusing on those in farming who may be affected by stress and depression. The

programme has a website and in some counties a helpline which offers support while recognising that those who work in agriculture are often reluctant to seek help for depression, stress or anxiety. Clergy are among those being trained to be YANA ambassadors.

For more information see the website www.yanahelp.org



NATIONAL RURAL SUPPORT GROUPS

Directory for Farming and Rural Communities

Compiled and sponsored by
The YANA Project

The Worshipful Company of Farmers is pleased to endorse this directory of the many support groups and organisations available to help those in our farming and rural communities throughout the UK.



'Going wild' in the churchyard

Brian Chester

Churchyards – a challenge or an opportunity? Can the challenges of cutting the grass, trimming the trees, checking the gravestones and clearing the paths overshadow the opportunities that may exist on the church doorstep for encouraging wildlife and engaging with local communities?

For the past nine years the charity *Caring for God's Acre* has been promoting a national Cherishing Churchyards Week during June. Events have included teddy bear picnics, family bug hunts, dawn chorus (followed by breakfast), illustrated talks, wildflower identification, tower tours, family history, memorial recording, volunteer workparty sessions and much more. All these activities give clues to ways of bringing new purpose to managing the sacred space around each church.

The Church of England's website guidance on churchyards describes them as 'a precious resource which can make a huge difference to the country's biodiversity' – important for their habitats and as refuges for wildlife and plants. Of equal

relevance are the opportunities for being open to those who may venture into the churchyard but are hesitant about entering the building. Some people will feel connected to the churchyard as they bring flowers or care for family graves; others may be researching family history, or just welcome the chance to sit (does the churchyard have a seat?) and appreciate the surroundings, the stillness and peace. Inherent in this is a willingness to share the space openly and encourage a connection with communities – one of the main reasons behind the charity's decision to introduce a dedicated week.

Although the Alliance of Religions and Conservation closed down at the end of June, for some years it ran a Living Churchyards project. Its website reported that at least 6,000

churchyards had small plots as sacred eco-systems – without pesticides and mowing the grass only once a year so ensuring that birds, reptiles, insects and bats could thrive. The scheme had been successful, said the ARC, because it made sense, was simple to execute, was theologically sound (respecting nature) and because it enabled local people through churches, schools and community groups to be involved in a manageable environment project.

Looking through the countrywide events held this year during the 'Cherish Week' – now renamed Love Your Burial Ground – none were listed for Rutland or Leicestershire. Despite this, much guidance exists for any PCC which decides to assess the possibility of enhancing what is a 'precious resource'.

St Andrew's, Whissendine

An eye-catching example is a colourful plot now well established at Whissendine. Clearly visible from the road it cannot fail to attract the attention of passers-by, aided by a well-positioned notice which explains that St Andrew's Living Churchyard is dedicated to nature and insect life – providing forage for bees and other pollinating insects – and listing some of the flowers to be found there.

The plot, established ten years ago as a 'flowering meadow area', was the idea of Dr Sarah Furness to encourage biodiversity, wild flowers and insect life, reduce the need for mowing and 'to make something beautiful'. Dr Furness, who lives in Whissendine and is the county's Lord-Lieutenant, told The Link that she was helped by a small team of fundraisers, particularly Eileen Strick, to raise funds for wild daffodil bulbs, snowdrops, bluebells, nectoscardonum (allium), and camassia.

'I designed the area using Hogarth's 'line of beauty' – a lazy 'S' shape both as the mown path wandering through the headstones and in another direction as strips of planting. The planting was a community effort and we were assisted by local Guides and Brownies. We all worked really hard!', she said. 'I look after it now and continue to add plants and scatter seed. We were given some cowslips and acquired more. They are now seeding themselves. The ox-eye daisies were difficult to establish but are now seeding freely. Yellow Rattle, which is parasitic on grass and useful for allowing wild flowers to compete against grass, has now spread across much of the plot. It took some effort to establish.'

The plot attracts attention from passers-by and from brides and visitors – and because there is a mown path through the planting people walk and look and often then go on into the church.

'Ashwell and Langham churches are intending to establish similar areas and I have had interest expressed from much further afield too. I would love to get orchids established so if anyone has any seed or (not from the wild) plants I would be delighted to



have them,' said Dr Furness. 'I would add that when the flowering meadow was first created it caused controversy – some people said they preferred it all neatly mown. Now the village is very proud of it.'

For more information contact:

Caring for God's Acre – <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>

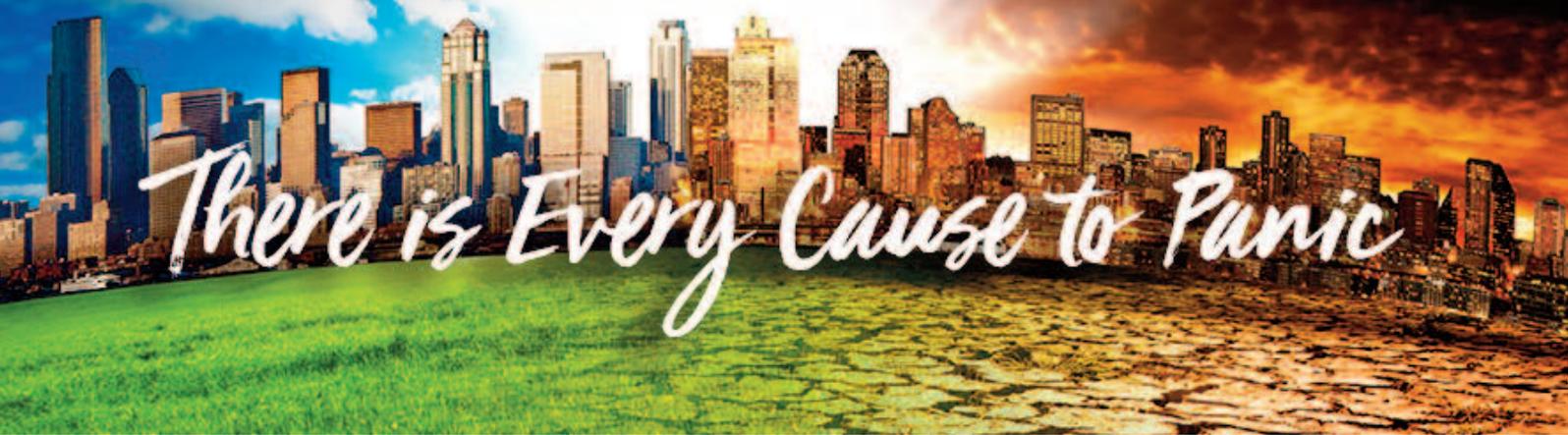
Church of England – <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/biodiversity>

National Churches Trust – <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/understanding-places-worship/land-churchyards>

Divine Inspiration tool kit (item 5) – <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/visitor-welcome-toolkit>

Follow all links at link.otm.org.uk





Update from Robin Roth, Traidcraft's Mission and Transparency Lead

When I first started at Traidcraft three years ago, I talked to several fairtrade leaders about the need for organic farming to be a part of our mission and I was bemused by their reactions. The most common were, 'Organic farming? – There's no health benefit to consumers.' And 'British consumers will never buy that story. Organic food is a middle-class, niche market.'

To say that I was non-plussed is an understatement, but I have slowly come to understand how organic farming, with all of its extraordinary benefits for farmers and planet, has been so wildly misrepresented in the UK that it seemed to exist in the no man's land between witchcraft and straight out crazy.

And now, three years later, quite suddenly everyone is talking about plastic, pollution, climate crisis, ocean degradation and fossil fuel dependency. And equally, people are also finally talking about biodiversity, organic and bi-dynamic farming, re-forestation and the circular economy as possible antidotes. This debate is hugely overdue, but it can also seem



a bit overwhelming. Quite what am I supposed to do as an individual in this sea of sudden information about the climate?

Well, on the one hand there is every cause to panic. As Greta Thunberg, the remarkable 16-year-old girl from Sweden, whose solitary school strike has turned into an international movement, said recently when she was visiting the European Parliament;

'I want you to panic... I want you to act as if the house was on fire. I have said those words before and a lot of people have explained why that is a bad idea... A great number of

politicians have told me that panic never leads to anything good and I agree. To panic, unless you have to, is a terrible idea. But when your house is on fire and you want to keep your house from burning to the ground, then that does require some level of panic.'

On the other hand, just panicking doesn't lead us to a solution, and it is imperative that we all find one.

The science behind climate change is not disputed (99.5% of all research scientists are in alignment) but it is frequently denied. Science denying will get us nowhere, of course, and scaremongering even less. What we need is a clear-eyed understanding of what we can all do as individuals and as communities.

At Traidcraft, we are thinking through what it would mean to become a 1.5°C company (1.5 degrees of warming above industrial levels is what we can still achieve without irreparably harming the ecosystems that we depend on for life – we are already at 1.1°C and rising). The answers are all small ones, but taken together they make big differences: eating less meat, eating more vegetables, eating more local food,



travelling less by car and plane. These are not huge sacrifices, but they are conscious decisions.

One of Traidcraft's core values is transparency, and you may be wondering why the theme is suddenly all about the climate?

Well, the food industry is fantastically, almost sublimely intransparent. The less you know about where your food comes from, the more corners can be cut, and the more profit can be extracted from the farmers at the start of the chain. It's time to be honest about the food we eat and what it costs the earth. Global food production is responsible for 30% of all greenhouse gases, and the single major cause of deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution and chemical pollution. A significant element of this is a consequence of mass rearing of livestock (less meat is good for you and the planet) and the use of chemical fertilisers.

By supporting small scale organic farmers who recycle their own waste products into healthy compost and who do not spray their land with excessive Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium (NPK farming), you are



genuinely supporting heroes who are fighting climate change. 'A middle class niche?', 'Of no benefit to the consumer?' Or perhaps an essential survival strategy for the planet?

Traidcraft has been working for decades to support small scale, sustainable and organic farming practice; we have even introduced compostable packaging in our Eat

Your Hat range. We know where our priorities are, we know where our food comes from and we are invested in protecting the precious communities we work with and we acknowledge their (and our) debt to the land.

We are grateful to Traidcraft for supplying text and images which originally appeared on their website.



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Remembering Rural Celebrations

Brian Chester

Does the name 'Lammas' ring any bells? The first clue is the date: 1 August; the second is a freshly made loaf. It is among a list of now largely forgotten services that were celebrated each year in rural churches.

Lammas Day is a celebration to mark the baking of the first bread from the first flour of the harvest – then brought to church to be blessed. The service is a meaningful recognition of the wonder of creation, a thanksgiving for God's faithfulness and an opportunity



to engage with the farming community. It can also be used to support a charity such as the Addington Fund which provides help for farming families who leave the industry, through no fault of their own, and in doing so, lose their homes.

Also on the list of often 'forgotten services' is **Plough Sunday**, traditionally the Sunday after Epiphany, which in times gone by marked the start of the agricultural year and was celebrated by a decorated plough being taken round the village by ploughmen hoping for beer money. Today it is an opportunity for the congregation to cry 'God speed the plough' and again involve the farming community.



Next comes **Rogation Sunday** – the Sunday before Ascension Day and the start of three days of fasting, intercession and prayer with the name linked to *rogare* – Latin 'to ask'. The Romans used it for a rite that sought to protect the crops, that evolved into blessing the crops and the first Elizabethans saw it as an opportunity to mark out parish boundaries. Some parishes follow that tradition today though not with the practice of bumping boys on boundary stones or rolling them in briars, to aid their memory!

To use an over-used, but appropriate, cliché: Food for thought.

Top Left: Lammas Loaf Owl with salt eyes, by Synthiaks – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Bottom Left: Plough Sunday at Tickhill, Yorkshire, by John Cowie – Own work, CC BY 3.0,

Top Right: The Ancient Custom of Blessing the Fields on Rogation Sunday at Hever, Kent taken February 1967, by Ray Trevena, CC BY-SA 2.0

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Seasons and Setbacks, People and Plants

Revd Iain Osborne

We have moved house recently, and taking on a new garden is always interesting: what will spring up, where does the sun fall, what is the soil like? Since we moved in early summer it is really too late to change much this year; we will see what nature and our predecessors have in mind for us.

Perhaps that is why I planted out a vegetable plot – to stamp my own mark on at least a small part of the garden. It was not a sensible thing to do in June. The lettuces are fine but, as I write in July, everything else is still working to establish itself when it should be blooming and beginning to mature a crop. The runner beans are only six inches high, the mange-tout have barely started up their canes, I seem to be mainly raising slug-food. I got my timing wrong.

Garden plants are programmed to respond to the seasons – to lengthening days and warmer soil. They know when is their right time to germinate, to grow, to bloom and set fruit. People are a bit the same. Most of us have the urge to be fruitful and productive, even if it is not through gardening. As we emerge from childhood, we dig out our own plot – setting up home, starting a family, building our skills and setting out upon a career. We have a sense that, by a certain time, we should be independent, we should be having children, we should be promoted or paying off the mortgage.

Some psychologists have built on these patterns to outline natural stages to psychological development. Karl Jung, for instance, thought that from the middle of life we turn inwards, paying more attention to spiritual things. Erik Erikson developed a more complex version, in which each of eight life-stages has its particular challenge or conflict: in adolescence, for instance, developing one's sense of identity and life-role. In old age, the challenge is to make sense of what has gone before. Erikson thought that older people who can see a pattern in what has gone before achieve a sense of integrity; while those who cannot

make sense of their life events may focus on what has not been achieved, and feel their life has been wasted.

Except that, of course, people are more complicated than plants. While there is some truth in what the psychologists suggest, there is more to say. For one thing, we don't all want the same things. And for another, we do not ripen towards fruitfulness in the same way as runner beans! My little plants having had a setback, I cannot expect them ever to grow to the stature that they would have achieved in perfect conditions. But with people, it is the other way around. The greatest joy and deepest fulfilment comes when we put self second, and devote ourselves to caring for others. People who have never failed at anything, never been disappointed, never been unrequited...; such people (if they exist) would not be properly grown up. Human beings grow through overcoming obstacles, we learn from failures, we are deepened by our sufferings.

Not always, of course. Sometimes we do not get what we want, at such a deep level that it is hard to bear the suffering – from broken relationships, bereavement, disappointment of one kind or another. Some suffering destroys people.

So what makes the difference?

Perhaps one of two things can. The first is having a sense that one's pain has some meaning. Another psychotherapist, Victor Frankl, lived through the Nazi death camps. He described in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* the way, in that terrible context, people who felt they had something to live for – some meaning in life, despite the death all around – were much more likely to survive the camps. He went on to build an approach to therapy that centred on helping people develop and discover meaning in life.

The other factor that can help people to survive suffering – and not only survive, but grow – is human companionship. It makes all the difference if we have people walking alongside us, who will listen and accept us as we are.

By September, I'll know if my veg will amount to much. And autumn, the season of harvest, is a time to consider the fruitfulness of our lives. If we seek to avoid challenge, putting our own comfort before the needs of others, we will bear little fruit. But embracing the challenges of life can help us grow towards our full stature. The most fruitful lives are watered partly by tears.



Audrey Morley

Churchwarden of Holy Trinity Church Teigh for over 50 years

Beryl Kirtland

Sitting in Audrey's kitchen overlooking a well-kept garden with lawn, herbaceous border and attractive brick farm buildings not far away, I was about to get to know much better someone with whom I have been acquainted for many years.

Audrey Fisher was married to George Morley by Canon William Alfred Mandall and Canon Frederick McDonald in Market Overton Church in 1958. Thus began her life as a farmer's wife living in Teigh in three different houses in the village.

Not being born in Rutland, how did this young woman come to meet a local farmer? Gayton, a small village in Northamptonshire, was Audrey's place of birth. On her father's return from the war, she would walk the mile into the village with him and her brother each Sunday to go to the 11am service, where he sang in the choir. So began her village life and church worship. Of her favourite childhood memories Audrey tells of watching the wild rabbits before they shot under the bramble bushes in the hope that she could catch one!

From being in the building trade, Audrey's father's studies led him to become a Clerk of Works, firstly for a

post-war housing estate in Grantham, and hence a move for the family and Audrey, where she attended Grantham Girls High School.

Following her studies at a Teacher Training College in Lincoln, Audrey went on to become a Junior School Teacher at Empingham Primary School. By this time her father had taken the job as Clerk of the Works at Rutland County Council.

When she married, the school thought it would be a good idea if she cycled from Teigh to Empingham to continue her teaching, but that was not to be. Apart from being impractical, being a farmer's wife and mother was to be a full-time job. Times were different. Married women were not expected to continue their careers.

Nearby were George's parents. Audrey's mother-in-law, Rose, soon gave her good advice. 'Don't learn to drive a tractor. Don't learn to ring the bells' – neither of which Audrey has done. However, being a Churchwarden was not an option! Joining Rose as a Churchwarden in the 1970s, Audrey continues in this capacity to the present day.

Asking about holidays, I am told that travel has been dictated by two of their three children. Daughter Carol lives in Tasmania with her family and have been visited by George and Audrey about ten times. Robert, their son, lives with his wife in the Philippines running her family's rice farm. Sometimes a meet up is planned in Dubai on the way to Tasmania. Their other son, Andrew, farms in Teigh.

Talking about church life, Audrey tells me that the Communion Service is her favourite service and that it means so much more to her now than it did. Unsurprisingly another favourite is Harvest Festival. She is most appreciative of Kevin Slingsby bringing the choir to the church on special occasions and the attendance support received from other villages.



Asked about the biggest challenge she felt the church faced, Audrey replied, 'Finance, of course, but like many rural churches it is the fall in the size of the congregation, which is made more difficult in such a small village.'

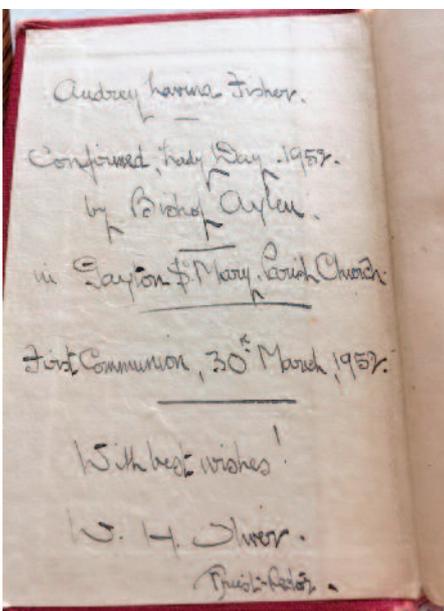
With a population of about fifty I am told there is still a good community feel with people knowing each other and that the Church is the only facility to bring the people together. However, from the few children resident, enough are persuaded to read the bible passages in the special church services.

The other churchwarden is Victoria Owen, known as 'Tor', who lives next door to the church in The Old Rectory and opens up the church each day, with Audrey walking the short distance down the road to lock up every day.

On enquiring who has had the greatest influence on her life, without hesitation the answer came, 'my husband.' Although not directly involved with the running of the farm, Audrey has led a busy and fulfilled life with hobbies ranging from horse-riding, playing hockey, sewing, reading and taking interest in all that goes on round and about her.

In summing up Audrey says that through her interests she has enjoyed a busy home life and loves living in Teigh. I am sure that everyone who is associated with the beautiful Holy Trinity Church or is a visitor from afar thoroughly appreciate Audrey's help and commitment in all she does.

For me it was a delightful afternoon in peaceful surroundings getting to know better such a dedicated person, mainstay and churchwarden of the church. Thank you, Audrey.



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Fords are an independent funeral director, who are as individual as you are. A funeral is one of the most difficult occasions you will ever have to plan. As a family run business, we have been helping customers since 1877 arrange and manage every aspect of their loved one's funeral.

— 24hr service —

— Private chapel of rest —

— Golden Charter Funeral Plans —

— Proud to be independent and family run —

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