

Kingston Parish & Church Magazine



February 2017

Village Diary

Saturday 4 th February	Pub night – village hall, 6.00pm – 10.00pm
Wednesday 1 st March	Village Coffee/Tea – Village Hall – 10:30am
Thursday 30 th March	Gesualdo Six Concert – details below

Wheelie bin collection dates

Friday 3 rd February	Blue and Green bins
Friday 10 th February	Black bin
Friday 17 th February	Blue bin only
Friday 24 th February	Black bin

Please note: It has been announced that from 27th February the majority of residents will be affected by a change to their bin collection day and/or sequence of collection. More information to follow from South Cambs.

Editorial

Into the new year the good news is that life in Kingston remains remarkably untouched by current events. With Brexit looming and Trump ascendant, hopefully things will remain pretty much the same for us. And there's much to look forward to. Now we've recovered from the Quiz and Chips night, we can focus on the Gesualdo Six Concert in March. Not many villages the size of Kingston can boast such a prestigious event. In addition the Kingston Blues Band has some upcoming gigs (see below); hopefully, before long, they'll return to play at our village hall. Pub nights, of course, are always worth a visit, especially now the kitchen area has been refurbished. And the Village Coffee Morning is being revived next month (see announcement below); all these activities and events only happen, of course, because of the efforts of our neighbours. You know who you are so give yourselves a pat on the back!

As promised you'll find some winter recipes in this issue. So if winter is getting you down, you can eat yourself silly.

Also, a big thank you to Simon Draper for his cover photo, a beautiful study of a Kingston resident.

Vicar's Letter – Walking Poles

I admit, I was skeptical. I'd heard about how good they were and how much they helped, but I thought they were just a fad – something which people who weren't that serious used as a bit of a 'pose'.

But then I tried them – and I discovered that walking poles really are great!

Early in December, my son and I spent a few days tackling the next section in our project of walking the South West Coast Path. We had a notoriously difficult section to do – Clovelly to Bude – and I thought anything which might help would be worth a try, so we took walking poles.

We did three tough days walking, with lots of very steep ups and downs, but at the price of slightly aching shoulders and arms, which weren't so used to the exercise, I avoided crocked knees and back pains. Result! I now wholeheartedly recommend a pair of walking poles to anyone on a serious walking journey.

It got me thinking what other tips I could offer to those on journeys, especially spiritual journeys.

Most people try to live good lives: caring for their families, contributing to their communities, looking out for their neighbours. These are all good things – part of living as a Christian – but they are hard to sustain without help. When the going gets steep, we feel the strain.

On the coast path, each steep climb or descent was made more bearable by knowing it was taking us nearer to our goal, and we need that on our life journey too. What are your spiritual goals for this coming year?

Then the 'walking poles': the two things which help me with the journey of being a Christian are regular prayer and Bible reading. I was skeptical about those, too! It took many years for me to appreciate the patterns of daily prayer which the Church of England offers, and even more years to gather the discipline to put them into practice, but now I find the regular times of Bible reading and prayer in the local churches to be a big help, especially in the spiritually 'steep' times.

Why don't you give it a try? Drop me a line to find out more.

Stephen Day

Church Services for February

Sunday 5th	February Holy Communion 8.30am
Sunday 12th	February Evening Prayer 6.00pm
Sunday 19th	February Family Service 10.30am
Every Wednesday:	Evening Prayer 6.30pm

Church cleaning

1 st Sunday	Peter & Suzy Stokes
2 nd Sunday	Donal & Monica O'Donnell
3 rd Sunday	Linda Rimmer
4 th Sunday	Janet Clear
5 th Sunday	Peter Reynolds

Church flowers and brasses

5 th February	
12 th February	Linda Smith
19 th February	Lee Steele
26 th February	Christine Stone

Home Communion

If you cannot get out and would like to receive Holy Communion at home please let the office know and we will arrange for the sacrament to be brought to you on a regular basis. If you are having difficulty getting to church, but a lift would make that possible please contact the team office on 01480 839933 and we will be able to help.

A short, prayerful service of

Holy Communion

is celebrated

Wednesday at midday
in Bourn Church

Anyone from around the Team or beyond is welcome to attend.



Holy Communion for Ash Wednesday

2nd March 12.00 noon

at Bourn Church

Wave Café Church

**Wednesday 1st February 7.45 for 8pm until 9pm
at Manor Farm, Bourn**



For those who are interested in exploring Christianity in a relaxed and informal way. Please come and bring a friend. For more information please contact Mike Bigg on 01480 839147.

On **Wednesday 1st March Bishop David will be at Wave**, introducing this year's Lent course - "Becoming Bigger Christians".

Announcement!! Village Morning Coffee

Some people have been wondering if it might be time to revive the monthly coffee morning held in the village hall, especially now that we have such a marvellous new kitchen and newly refurbished room at the hall.

We therefore propose to open the hall on the first Wednesday of each month, starting in March, from 10:30 am.

Please do come along for coffee/tea and a chat. We welcome all villagers who are interested. Please turn out to help make this a success.

Mikki Ellar Tel: 262887

Broadband for Kingston – further news

The problems outlined in my last article have now been dealt with - our District Councillor Tumi Hawkins has worked her magic (well done Tumi!), and we have been given a date of February for the superfast fibre broadband service to go live in the village. My personal guess is that this will be the end rather than the beginning of the month.

To be kept informed so that you can obtain the new service as soon as it is available, Connecting Cambridgeshire advise registering your postcode and contact details on their website www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/contact/. They will update you by email when the fibre cabinet serving your premises has gone live. You will then need to contact your chosen Internet Service Provider to arrange installation.

Julie Conder, Kingston Parish Councillor and village webmaster

Date	Title	Bourn	Kingston	Caxton	Longstowe
Feb 5	4 th Sunday before Lent	10.30am FHC	8.30am HC	10.30am WFA	
Feb 12	3 rd Sunday before Lent	10.30am W4A	6.00pm EP	10.30am MP	8.30am HC
Feb 19	2 nd Sunday before Lent	8.30am HC	10.30am W4A		
Feb 26	Sunday next before Lent	10.30am FW		8.30am HC	10.30am MP
Mar 2		Ash Wednesday Holy Communion 12.00 at Bourn			
Mar 5	Lent 1	10.30am FHC	8.30am HC	10.30am W4A	
Mar 12	Lent 2	10.30am W4A	6.00pm EP	10.30am MP	8.30am HC
Mar 19	Lent 3	8.30am HC	10.30am W4A		
Mar 26	Mothering Sunday	10.30am FW	10.30am FS	11.00am FS	9.30am FS

HC = traditional Holy Communion (BCP)

EP = traditional Evening Prayer (BCP)

W4A/FS = Family Service

MP= traditional Morning Prayer (BCP)

FHC= Common Worship/All Age Holy Communion

FW = All Age Worship/Morning Prayer/Prayer & Praise/Morning Worship

Kingston Blues Band playing in Cambridge and Barton

Kingston Blues Band has been busy over the winter months recording an updated CD with six new songs. We hope to have it ready for sale when we perform at *Hot Numbers* in Gwydir Street, Cambridge on the afternoon of Sunday 12 February. *Hot Numbers* is a popular coffee shop with a licence for wine and beer. There is now a second *Hot Numbers* in Trumpington Street but the one in Gwydir Street runs the jazz and blues sessions. We played at the same venue back in July and there was a good audience, mainly made up of local residents including families with young children. The music starts at 3 pm. Later in February, on Saturday 25th, we are playing at *The Hoops* pub in Barton, starting at 8pm.

Simon Draper

Seed trays and pots

If anyone is interested in plastic seed trays and pots of all shapes and sizes please contact Charlie Richmond or Linda Rimmer before the end of February when they will be disposed of. A donation to church funds will secure as many as you need – there are hundreds on offer!

Winter Recipe 1

Celeriac gratin (serves 4)

Ingredients: 1 Celeriac; 2 tomatoes; 2 oz (60g) white bread crumbs; 2 oz (60g) grated cheddar cheese; 1 oz (30g) butter. For sauce: ½ pint milk; 1 oz (30g) plain flour; 1 oz (30g) butter; 2 oz (60g) grated cheddar cheese.

Peel celeriac, quarter and cut into ½ inch cubes and put in pan of slightly salted water. Bring to boil and simmer 10-15 minutes until tender. For sauce make roux with butter and flour, adding milk gradually and then cheese. (For a richer sauce use cream instead of milk.) If you wish add a little cayenne pepper or nutmeg and some mustard to sauce.

Pre-heat grill. Place celeriac in buttered oven-proof gratin dish. Pour sauce over celeriac, cover with sliced tomatoes. Sprinkle with mixture of grated cheese and bread crumbs. Put knobs of butter on top and grill for approx. 5 minutes until golden. Serve with a green vegetable such as chard or broccoli and crusty bread. Also excellent with fish.

Peter Reynolds

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The Gesualdo Six

Thursday 30th March

Kingston Church, CB23 2NG

The Gesualdo Six are an outstanding vocal sextet directed by Owain Park. Focusing mostly on early renaissance music, they also perform works by modern composers. In 2015-16 they were the St John's Smith Square Young Artists of the Year.

www.thegesualdosix.co.uk

Buffet supper in the village hall from 6.30pm

Concert in the Church 8.00pm

Tickets £25: to include a buffet supper and glass of wine

Tickets from: Linda Rimmer

all proceeds in aid of Kingston Parish Church

Anglesey Abbey Snowdrop Season

This year the Snowdrops season runs from Monday 23 January to Sunday 26 February: the garden will be opening at 9.30am, closing 4.30pm.

Winter Recipe 2

Cheese and onion pie

For cheese pastry:

8 ounces plain flour;

3 ounces butter;

4 ounces grated cheddar cheese;

2 or 3 tablespoons water;

seasoning;

teaspoon mustard.

For filling:

2 ounces butter;

4 large sliced onions;

6 ounces grated cheddar cheese;

2 tablespoons Worcester sauce;

tablespoon of milk for glaze.

Make pastry in a mixing bowl with the sieved flour, mustard, salt and pepper, rubbing in the butter and then adding the cheese. Add enough water to make dough. Melt butter in a frying pan and cook the onions (with a clove of garlic if you wish) slowly until soft.

Line an 8 inch pie dish with half the pastry and prick with a fork. Place on top of the pastry alternate layers of cheese and onions, beginning and ending with cheese, seasoning each layer. Add Worcester sauce. Cover with the remaining half of pastry; flute the edge to seal; make a hole in the centre to allow steam to escape. Glaze the pie by brushing with milk. Bake for about half an hour until golden brown and crispy on top. Serves four or five, hot or cold.

Joan Reynolds



Bourn Primary Academy
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for your support, to a



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on



Friday 24th February

7:30pm (doors open 7pm)

(approx. finish 9pm)

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Tickets include a free drink and nibbles.

**To book tickets please call the school office on
01954 719282 between 1st & 10th February.**

Tickets will be available for collection from the school as of 20th February.

We look forward to celebrating with you.



Million Dollar Quartet

Just returned from a great concert at London's Royal Festival Hall. Not classical music this time but the opposite: good old rock and roll. On December 4, 1956, Sun records owner Sam Phillips grasped the opportunity to record his former stable-mate Elvis Presley and his current roster of Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, and Jerry Lee Lewis all playing together. Now made into a musical, the plot is thin (just the events of the evening in the studio) which is good as the music is left to stand in its own right. As the programme states, this new musical is inspired by the actual event which means that the playlist goes way beyond what was actually recorded on the evening, containing many of the hits recorded by the protagonists. If you want an evening of rock and roll played live by musicians who know what they're doing, then this it. After its slot on the South Bank, the show is being repeated around the country (Northampton and Norwich are the nearest sites to Kingston). Listening to patrons leaving the theatre, typical comments were: "So much better than today's music"; "feel-good music at its best", "brings back wonderful memories", and "that guy playing Jerry Lee Lewis stole the show". Perhaps these comments reflect the fact that I actually felt young compared to most of the audience: the performers were clearly playing "our" music. The party sitting behind us had brought "granddad" to presumably relive his youth: needless to say he spent most of the evening in sheds of nostalgic tears.

Reflecting on this concert, I had to remind myself that "it" (rock and roll) didn't start with the Beatles (or even the Rolling Stones). Actually in many cases it didn't start with these particular rock stars (the million dollar quartet) as they often reworked songs previously released by black artists. But it was these men that gave rock and roll its joie de vivre and brought white audiences into its folds. At one point in the script mention is made of this music being the "devil's music"; who was it that once said that "the devil has all the best songs"? Two thoughts here: first, I'm sure that if you added up all the songs on the other side of the argument, it would be an impressive number. Second, listening to the inane, banal words of "Great Balls of Fire" again, I'm not sure the devil can claim to have much going for him. Notwithstanding the lack of any danger, however, my mild-mannered father still felt the need to break my small collection of Elvis Presley 78s across his knee, thus, in his eyes, striking a blow for the good guys. What he clearly wasn't aware of, however, was that Elvis Aaron Presley, late of Memphis, Tennessee, recorded some of the best gospel music ever produced.

Did You Know?

Recently arrived residents of the village may hardly have noticed our ancient, one time, pigeon houses which date back to the 17th and 18th centuries. There are two and they are both partly hidden away by modern houses. One is well back, almost behind the Barn House at the far end of Cranes Lane whilst the other is along the private road from Church Lane to what was once Library Farm, so named as it was owned by Queen's College Library and is now called Moat House.

Pigeons have been bred as a source of food since Roman times and many thousands of dovecotes have been built to house them over the centuries. A great number were owned by the lord of the manor in countless villages over the country. I gather though that they were not always popular with the village workers because their own crops suffered the ravages of the excess number of birds brought in.



I have a copy of an illustrated survey which was sent to me by the Cambridge City Council and written by a Mr. E.M Davis in 1987 following a detailed assessment of all the remaining dovecotes in Cambridgeshire. At that time 51 were identified and 44 of them were listed by The Department of the Environment as Grade II listed buildings. Their use as pigeon houses tended to fade by the 19th century but many were converted to agricultural cottages as were the Kingston examples. They came in all sorts of shapes and sizes but most are easily recognised by the distinctive shape and construction of the small gables on the top of the roofs. In the case of the 'Library Farm' dovecot various features are mentioned including a reference to the internal braces which supported the long ladders which provided a means to reach and collect the young pigeons (called squabs). The tiny gablet above still contains nesting boxes which can be reached by a wooden trapdoor which is hinged by leather nailed hinges.

In 1957, after a misjudged purchase of a semi-detached Cambridge house Ann, my wife, and I cycled over to Kingston, a remote village then which very few City people seemed to have heard of, to look at a cottage for possible sale. It had been owned by a music teacher who had recently died. She had 'modernised' it by adding another extension to the original and this had provided an additional bedroom and bathroom. We found it hidden in a derelict orchard well away from the public road and extremely quiet. In those days the village had no main drainage system but there was a septic tank. Ann, a country girl, had insisted on a detached place and she decided that this strange little dwelling was for her and we were eventually able to buy it for the princely sum of. £1,500. Over 60 years we naturally made a good deal of improvements within Listed building limitations and spent quite a bit on maintenance and I like to think that we have helped to preserve one small relic of a disappearing past of old Britain!



The Cranes Lane dovecote is described in the survey as a two storey house square planned. It has a timber frame and rendered walls and a tiled roof with tablets. The doorway is 19th century. Two devoted sisters, Lucy and Zillah Custance, were born in the dovecote and lived here all their lives until they died within months of each other in 1983. Both were in their

mid-seventies. I understand that the Custance family lived in Kingston for many generations. An uncle of the sisters is remembered on a memorial tablet on the church tower, Private William Custance who was killed during the Great War.

The sisters refused to allow electricity into the house whilst mains water was carried by bucket from a standpipe some fifty yards away. They were devout church goers and I remember for years their unfailing walk to the church through the village as the church bell was ringing, every Sunday morning. Their old fashioned high ankle lace up bootees they always seemed to wear still stays in my mind.

David Heath

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Newsletter

My garden is starting already to show signs of new growth. The problem for me is I still have not finished clearing up from last year! It's happening in many areas of life. For example in Papworth Everard we are still trying to make headway finding the resources required (probably in excess of £50,000) to undertake essential repairs to St Peter's Church.

By the time you read this article Christians will be starting to think about Lent – that period of 6 weeks when some will give things up, others will try new disciplines and many will still be catching their breath only to discover Easter has come and gone!

Busy-ness is one of the scourges of life in the 21st century for some; whilst for others it may be the challenge is overcoming loneliness, how to handle very demanding challenges, the need to find a new job, living with a worrying health diagnosis and so on. Whether we thrive or feel we are barely surviving often boils down to the choices we make, if we can resist pressures we feel from others around us or coping with the unknown.

One of the appealing features of Jesus' life is the way he was ready to stop for the one person who was right in front of him, or deal with the crisis of the moment. He was a master at reacting and not being driven always by plans and strategies others had in mind for him. For Jesus this was an outworking of consciously living with an awareness of God in heaven's priorities and aligning himself to what these were. The fact that he remains the most fascinating person in human history almost 2,000 years later should provoke us to look more closely at how he lived.

My suggestion for Lent 2017 – whether or not you consider yourself a Christian – is to make time to find out more about Jesus. A good place to start is to get hold of a Bible, preferably in a modern translation, and read one of the gospel narratives > Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. You will find he had plenty to say about finding the right balance in life, facing sickness, dealing with financial needs, even overcoming untimely death.

If anyone has any difficulty getting hold of a copy of a Bible or an individual gospel, please feel free to contact us in the Papworth Team Ministry Office – email: papworthteamministryoffice@gmail.com , tel: 01480 839933.

Nigel di Castiglione

Winter Recipe 3

Ham and Corn Chowder

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 2.2 kg Ham chopped | 2 Carrots, diced |
| 2 stalks Celery, diced | ½ red pepper, diced |
| 1 cup Corn | 2 cloves Garlic, minced |
| 1 Onion, fine chopped | 1 tsp Thyme, chopped |
| 2 cups Ham broth or chicken broth | 1/4 cup Flour |
| 1 Salt and pepper | 2 cups Milk |
| 3 tbsp Oil or butter | |
| 1 1/2 pounds potatoes, diced small and optionally peeled | |

Instructions


1. Heat the oil in a large sauce pan over medium-high heat, add the onions, carrots and celery and cook until tender, about 8-10 minutes.
2. Mix in the garlic, thyme and flour and cook until the flour is lightly browned, about 2-3 minutes.
3. Slowly stir in the broth, deglazing the pan as you go, add the milk and potatoes, bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 10-12 minutes.
4. Add the ham and corn, cook until heated and season with salt and pepper.

Option: Start by cooking 4 strips of bacon, crumbling and setting aside before using the bacon grease to cook the veggies instead of the oil and then use the crumbled bacon as garnish.

Option: Omit the carrots and celery. Or Omit the red pepper.

Option: Replace the potato with cauliflower.

Option: Fry the ham until slightly crispy on the outside before adding it to the soup.



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Winter Recipe 4

Old Fashioned Goulash

Ingredients

900 gr ground beef or turkey	3 tsp minced garlic
1 large Yellow onion, diced	600 ml water
100 ml beef broth	80 ml olive oil
1 500g box tomato passata	2 cans diced tomatoes
1 T Italian seasoning	
½ Tsp Adobo paste (or to taste depending on the amount of 'fire' you prefer)	
3 bay leaves	1 T seasoned salt
½ T black pepper	300g elbow macaroni, uncooked
250g Shredded Cheddar Cheese	450g shredded Mozzarella Cheese

Instructions

1. In a large pan, saute your ground meat in skillet over medium-high heat until HALF cooked, remove from heat.
2. Add garlic, onions, olive oil & continue until meat is fully cooked.
3. Add water and broth, tomato passata, diced tomatoes, italian seasoning, bay leaves, and seasoned salt, pepper and adobo seasoning. Mix well.
4. Lower heat and cover - allow to cook for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Add in the uncooked elbow macaroni to the skillet, stir well until everything is combined
6. Cover once again and allow to simmer for about 30 minutes
7. Once cooked, remove the bay leaves
8. Add only the cheddar cheese and mix until combined
9. Add mozzarella right before serving
10. ENJOY! This is really good on a cold night with a green salad and garlic baguette.

Village Carol Singing update

The Village Carol Singing Fundraiser for the Church raised an amazing £552.50 there will also be Gift Aid added to this.

Thank you once again to everybody who supported this event.

The PCC are truly grateful.

Janet Clear

Our MP Heidi Allen's Newsletter

As this is my first newsletter of 2017 may I start by wishing my constituents health and happiness in the New Year. Let's make it the best yet!

In the twilight of 2016 I visited the Blood Donation Centre in Long Road, Cambridge for my first ever blood donation. I have to say, it was utterly painless, parking was free and I had my choice of biscuits afterwards! Giving blood is easy, very quick (I was in and out in less than an hour) and it saves lives. The blood service have come up with a great resolution for the New Year – 'don't give up, just give'. If you can donate, please go to www.blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23 to book your appointment.

I was honoured to be invited to the Gamlingay Cubs 100 year promise party. I've never been asked to do a 'wolf howl' at the start and end of a party before but I really enjoyed re-making my own pledge and seeing the excellent work of this Cub pack in action. Thanks to Steve and all the Gamlingay Cubs for having me along.

The Christmas period also gave me time to visit the Cambourne Food Bank, a poignant reminder that Christmas isn't easy for those struggling with basic needs. It is open every Thursday from 10.00-12.00 at the Old Blue School on Eastgate. You can find out how to apply for a voucher here <https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/foodbank-vouchers/> The Food Bank is run by kind, dedicated volunteers who try their very hardest to help with the many issues that bring someone to a Food Bank. I'm hoping to be able to work with them more in the future, unlocking some of the housing and benefit difficulties that are often at the heart of food poverty.

I'm delighted to share the launch of Cambridgeshire County Council's Communities Innovation Fund which gives community groups the opportunity to apply for funding for initiatives which will improve lives. If you know of a scheme that enhances your community and helps people stay safe and independent, please see www.cambscf.org.uk/ccif.html for details of how to apply.

December saw the publication of the National Schools Funding Formula from the Department of Education. I'm still analysing the data and will be writing to my schools for feedback on proposals. If you want to contribute, please make your views heard here <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/>. The consultation closes on 22nd March 2017.

I'm continuing to push for safer and more efficient roads in our region and joined the A1307 Forum last month. Constituents from Babraham or those who work at Granta Park will know the impact this road has on the surrounding region and the A505. These roads are no longer fit for purpose, so alongside an improved road crossing at Foxton, I'll be pushing these initiatives in 2017. With the city deal, devolution deal and the

£1.1bn announced in the Autumn Statement for road congestion pinch points, I am confident we can build a strong case to put to Government.

Turning to buses and trains, I'm inviting constituents to contact me about any issues they have with existing public transport services. I have been contacted by a number of residents about unreliable services, so if you too have experience of this, please contact Nicola in my office on the contact details below.

One of the best parts of my job is getting to know you at my surgeries and events. If you have a concern you think I could help with, or some feedback you'd like to share with me, please get in touch.

You can find details of my no appointment needed surgeries here www.heidisouthcambs.co.uk/residents-drop-surgeries I'll be in Comberton in February (Saturday 4 February 10.00am-12.00 noon at Comberton Village Hall, Green End, Comberton, CB23 7DY). Or you can phone 01954 212707 or email me at heidi.allen.mp@parliament.uk

Answers to January's Cambridge Quiz

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Olivia Newton-John | 11. Duxford |
| 2. Syd Barrett | 12. John Cleese |
| 3. Rowland Parker | 13. Lord Byron |
| 4. Tom Hugh-Jones | 14. Dion Dublin |
| 5. Katrina and the Waves | 15. Jack Hobbs |
| 6. Clive James | 16. Prince William |
| 7. Joe Wilson | 17. David Gilmour |
| 8. Hondo | 18. John Rutter |
| 9. Charles Darwin | 19. Kate Atkinson |
| 10. Rupert Brooke | 20. Kim Philby |

How did you score? A score over 16 makes you a true Cambridgian!

Foodbank

If you, or someone you know, is in urgent need of food because of a sudden emergency (eg change to benefits, illness, job loss etc), you/they may be able to receive 3 days emergency food supplies from a local foodbank distribution centre. The nearest is in The Ark in Cambourne. Food is distributed to those who have a foodbank voucher. Various agencies can administer vouchers, including the church. If you are in need, contact Revd Stephen Day, Bourn Rectory, 01954 264226.

Learning So Much More

Great British Railway Journeys is a BBC programme about trains. Introduced by Michael Portillo, yes, the focus is on railways but along the way you learn so much more. I would go as far as to say that this programme is one of the best things currently on television. As a former train-spotter, however, I'm probably biased. Privileged to grow up during the age of steam, in my opinion, if you haven't been standing for hours at the end of platform six at Bristol Temple Meads Station collecting engine numbers you haven't lived. When the "Devonian" train from the south-west of England to the north-east pulled in drawn by a Castle class locomotive that was the stuff that dreams are made of.

In a recent instalment of his series, Portillo is travelling from Manchester to Huddersfield. Along the way, still in the Manchester suburbs, he alights at Fairfield station to visit the Moravian church. Talking to a very informed member of the Moravian community, we learn about its history, which stretches back we are told to Jan Hus (John Huss) and his anti-Catholic movement in the early fifteenth century.

The date of his "heresy" is significant as it pre-dates the work of the likes of Martin Luther, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli by well over a hundred years. Based in the Moravian crown lands of Bohemia (then an autonomous kingdom within the Holy Roman Empire and now part of the Czech Republic), Huss objected to some of the practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church. Specifically, he wanted the liturgy to be celebrated in Czech, lay people to receive communion in bread and wine, priests to be able to marry, and the purchase of indulgences and the idea of Purgatory to be banned. This Bohemian Reformation was much more than the Catholic Church was prepared to tolerate. Huss was summoned to attend the Council of Constance at which point he was seized, determined a heretic and burned at the stake on July 6th, 1415.

Coincidentally, studying history at university in the early 1960s, I became fascinated with Huss's story and chose him as the topic of my finals thesis. Although I was intrigued with this first Protestant reformation, unfortunately texts in English were few and far between so I never thought I got the best out of my Bohemian studies. My reading, however, did help me clarify my own thinking about some of these important issues. So thank you Michael Portillo for reminding me not only of the important role John Huss played in the development of the Protestant Reformation but also the impact Huss made on the development of my own thinking. The next train to Huddersfield is on platform two. All aboard!

Winter Recipe 5

Spiced Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

Servings: 8 servings

Prep time: 0:30

Total time: 1:30

Source: Allrecipes.co.uk

Ingredients

- 1.5kg butternut squash, halved and seeded
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 large potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 125ml double cream
- 125ml soured cream (optional)
- 50g butter
- 1 leek, sliced
- 1L chicken stock
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger
- 125ml sherry
- 125ml milk

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 190 C / Gas mark 6. Pour a small layer of water in a baking dish, or a swiss roll tin. Place the squash halves cut side down on the dish. Bake for about 40 minutes, or until a fork can easily pierce the flesh. Cool slightly, then remove the peel. Set aside.
- Melt the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, leek and garlic, and saute for a few minutes, until tender. Pour the chicken stock into the pot. Add the potatoes, and bring to the boil. Cook for about 20 minutes, or until soft. Add the squash, and mash with the potatoes until chunks are small. Use an immersion hand blender to puree the soup, or transfer to a blender or food processor in batches, and puree until smooth. Return to the pot.
- Season the soup with cayenne pepper, allspice, nutmeg, ginger, salt and pepper, then stir in the sherry, cream and milk. Heat through, but do not boil. Ladle into bowls, and top with a dollop of soured cream if desired.

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