

Kingston Parish & Church Magazine



October 2020

Village Diary

While the Village Hall is open again – subject, of course, to the current Government restrictions – few activities are being scheduled.

There are, however, two Pub Nights booked on Saturdays October 3rd and 31st (Halloween) with John Easy's pizza available to take away and eat in.

Wheelie bin collection dates

Wednesday 7 th October	Blue and Green bins
Wednesday 14 th October	Black bin
Wednesday 21 st October	Blue and Green bins
Wednesday 28 th October	Black bin

Editorial

Please read Paul Wright's article about reading during the lockdown. He is asking for responses to the question, "And what did you read during the lockdown?" Paul himself delved back in time while my reading was focused on one particular Twentieth Century writer (see below). Please send your reading lists and comments to either Paul or myself for inclusion in next month's magazine.

A big Thank You to those who organized the outdoors Harvest Festival service on September 20th and special thanks to the villagers who decorated the church in such resplendent fashion. Their efforts can be seen on this month's cover and in a special presentation inside this issue.

Peter Holly pjholly45@gmail.com 01223 264 556

Vicar's Letter

Is there life on Venus (as David Bowie didn't quite sing)?

The announcement that a particular chemical has been found in the atmosphere on Venus has raised the possibility that life may be there. The temperature on Venus' surface is hundreds of degrees, and the clouds are made of sulphuric acid, but maybe, just maybe, life is more than we thought, and could exist high in the atmosphere.

Scientists are naturally cautious and sceptical, so they are trying to think of every other possible reason the chemical might be there, but life is a possibility which wasn't there before, and it's exciting.

When I was in my teens, I went to a lecture by the astronomer Sir Patrick Moore, and in questions at the end, someone asked him if he would comment on the religious consequences if life were found on Mars. His answer was very short: "No."

I'm happy to dive in where Sir Patrick refused to go: if we find life on Mars, or Venus, or Enceladus (one of Saturn's moons) or anywhere else, the religious consequence will be to give thanks to God for the wonders of the universe.

Which is easier to imagine: life in an impossible environment, hinted at by a few parts per million of a chemical which we can only detect with extremely sophisticated equipment – or life after death, recorded by the eye witnesses to Jesus' resurrection?

Those who saw Jesus alive again were naturally cautious and sceptical – which is why Jesus spent a lot of time proving that he was not a ghost. But eventually the evidence of their eyes, and ears, and hands convinced them, and it changed their lives completely.

Ever since, people have tried to think of every other possible explanation for what Jesus' first followers said they saw and experienced. Nobody has ever come up with an alternative which holds water.

If you are excited, as I am, by the merest hint at life on 'impossible' Venus, now is the time to think again about the 'impossible' rising of Jesus from the dead. Maybe, just maybe, life is more than you imagined.

Revd. Steve Day

Church opening

The church is open for private prayer on **Wednesdays** and **Saturdays**, from 9.30 to 5pm. Please use the hand sanitiser provided and keep to the social distancing guidelines.

Church services for September

Morning Prayer ZOOM Chapel: Mondays to Saturdays at 8.15am

Compline ZOOM Chapel: Thursdays 9.00pm

Telephone service on Mondays at 5.00pm

Church Services at Kingston

Sunday 4th October Holy Communion 8.30am

Sunday 18th October Family Service 10.30am

NB Two services this October. Face masks are required for members of the congregation for services indoors. At Holy Communion no wine will be administered; the officiating priest will bring the wafers to members of the congregation.

See www.papworthteamchurches.org for more details.

Church cleaning

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

Church flowers and brasses

Sunday 4 th October	Lee Steele
Sunday 11 th October	Christine Stone
Sunday 18 th October	Christine Allison
Sunday 25 th October	Janet Clear

Annual Church Meetings: 7.30pm, Thursday 15th October

The annual church meetings have been delayed since April as a result of the Covid lockdown. They will be held this month in church on the 15th, beginning at 7.30pm. Social distancing will be observed. At the *Annual Meeting of Parishioners* it is the ancient right of all the registered electors of the parish to nominate and vote for the annual election of two churchwardens. There then follows the *Annual Parochial Church Meeting*, at which the Parochial Church Council officers and members are elected by those on the church electoral roll. Annual reports and the presentation of the annual accounts will be made. Finally, there will be a routine *PCC meeting* to discuss current business.

Church Finances

The PCC is extremely grateful to all those who responded so generously to last month's appeal for contributions to church funds. Some £2,000 of donations have been received.

Pew cleaning

All the pews in the nave have now been cleaned and polished. Many thanks again to Jack and Elizabeth Diggle, James, Janet and Sam Clear, Peter Stokes. Patrick Thompson, Lee Steele, Linda Rimmer and Kay Forsythe for helping with this. The north side floorboards will now be treated for woodworm.

Harvest 2020

This year's Harvest Festival on the 20th September was held outdoors in the churchyard and proved to be a great success. It helped that the last Sunday of summer was such a beautiful, balmy day and that Patrick Dailly was back in Kingston to play the keyboard for us, after nearly six months' absence. The service was taken by the Revd Nigel Pearson and the readings were given by James Clear and Kay Forsythe. As always the church was beautifully decorated for the occasion. Everyone present agreed that this was something that we should do again, irrespective of any coronavirus.

Wall paintings report

Mark Perry has now sent us the completed Nave Arcades Wall Paintings Conservation Report. Anyone who would like to see this please contact me and I can send a digital copy.

Peter Reynolds.

New Arrivals

A warm welcome to Louise and Brett Barnes and their daughter Violet, who is just 16 weeks old. The family moved to Cromwell Cottage (Town Farm, Tinkers Lane) at the end of August from Bassingbourn.

Linda Rimmer

Congratulations

Congratulations to:

Maya Bassford who is to read Biology at Reading University
and

Karen Bedford, who is to study Nutrition at Nottingham University

Joan Reynolds

The Farmland Museum & Denny Abbey

is offering free admission to all visitors for the remainder of 2020. We are open every Thursday-Sunday from 11am until 5pm. Last entry is at 3.30pm. You will need to book your timed ticket in advance at

<https://www.dennyfarmlandmuseum.org.uk>.

Bookings can be made in advance or on the day you plan to visit. Bring a face covering.



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Harvest 2020: Nigel and Patrick



Harvest 2020: the congregation

MARK STEELE

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

HOUSE NAMES IN KINGSTON

House names in Kingston provide a rich source of interest during walks around the village. Many record a previous function (Old Post Office, Old Rectory, Old School House), while others are descriptive (House on the Green, Barn House, Thatches) or are nostalgic reminders of former homes (Wainstones, Throckenholt etc).

There has been some renaming of old buildings, one of which next to the church was The Rose and Crown public house and White House on Field Road which was The Chequers. Moat House Farm was originally Library Farm. Of course, many cottages originally lacked a name or a number and in the early censuses just were given a vague location such as "near the church" or "on the Main Street".

Prior's Cottage takes the name of the Prior family who go back at least as far as the first national census in 1841 and ran a grocery store there.

Walker's Field is an enigma as no Walker appears in the censuses and even Charlie Richmond does not know how it got its name.

Many villages have a Tinkers Field, presumably where gypsies and others who made their living as pedlars, tinkers and hawkers used to camp. Travelling either on foot with a basket or barrow, or using a horse and cart or wagon they supplied goods and services often not available otherwise locally. They set up shop at fairs and markets or simply wandered the streets, banging a drum or ringing a bell and calling out what they had for sale. As late as the 1980s a knife grinder came on his bike, which was adapted to drive a sharpening stone by pedal power, but he cycled back home after work.

South Sea House is a gem, name wise. It was built in 1850 by Captain Richard Male, master mariner, who is buried in the churchyard and described in the 1851 census as a ship owner, merchant and farmer of 200 acres. The name South Sea provides a clue and a search of whaling ship records produces John Male, third mate on the whaleship William Nicol who is referred to as the uncle of Richard Male of Cambridgeshire. I think it is a reasonable guess that Richard was a whaleship captain and owner who made his money in the South Atlantic.

Paul Wright



Book of the Month

Patrick Leigh Fermor

This time around it's more author of the month than book of the month. When the television chef and restaurateur Rick Stein travelled from Venice to Istanbul he stopped off at Patrick Leigh Fermor's former home set in an olive grove near Kardamyli in the Mani Peninsular, southern Peloponnese. Leigh Fermor, as it turns out, was one of Stein's favourite authors and travel writers and, while visiting the home, he was treated to Leigh Fermor's favourite dish, moussaka, made by the writer's former housekeeper. In true Rick Stein style, he infectiously enthused about the author and the dish which he ate as an alfresco meal outside on the shaded patio. I'm not sure I had heard about Patrick Leigh Fermor before but I certainly noted down his name and decided, when possible, to follow up on his writings. And the recent lockdown gave me the opportunity to do just that.

I started, naturally enough given my interest in the Second World War, with his exploits in Crete, fighting with the Cretan resistance against the occupying German forces. His adventures, as told in "Abducting a General – the Kreipe Operation", included living rough in caves and shacks for months on end and culminated with him leading the Anglo-Cretan team that abducted Major General Heinrich Kreipe and spirited him away to Egypt. This is a book full of admiration for the local resistance fighters whose families and neighbours paid dearly for their daring deeds. This is not his best book but is typical of the genre.

Reading Artemis Cooper's biography "Patrick Leigh Fermor: An Adventure" (surely she missed off the "r" in adventurer), you get the sense of a life led fully and passionately. She starts in 1934, when at the age of 18, Leigh Fermor undertook his famously intrepid walk from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople (as he liked to call it). Expelled from the King's School, Canterbury, for holding hands with a pretty local lass and then spending a couple of years on the London party circuit, he was now determined to kick his life into gear and make something of himself. So he embarked on the "Great Trudge" as he called it. Traversing the Rhine and Danube river basins, in just over a year he walked through nine countries, taught himself three languages, and hobnobbed with shepherds and dukes, feeling equally at home in hayricks and country mansions. In Michael O'Sullivan's new book "Patrick Leigh Fermor: Noble Encounters between Budapest and Transylvania", the author focuses on one segment of the journey (through Hungary and Transylvania) and describes in detail how Leigh Fermor hit the jackpot and found himself being transferred from country house to country house and becoming the best of friends with all kinds of

noble family members. It's intriguing how a poorly dressed, slightly dishevelled nineteen-year-old traveller was able to hobnob with Hungarian royalty and parliamentarians and be the receiver of so much largesse. It must have been a combination of factors, says O'Sullivan, including the traveller's charm and wit, the Hungarians' liking of anything English and Leigh Fermor's veiled suggestion (echoing his mother) that his Irish family roots may have connected him with Hungarian noble family ties. It was, says O'Sullivan, a curious cocktail of geniality and genealogy. He had a natural interest in, and curiosity about, the history of these ancient families and he had charm and good manners; to the old he was attentive and polite and to the young he was exciting and handsome.

As Artemis Cooper describes, after the war Leigh Fermor travelled widely and embarked on a career as a travel writer. He produced books on the Caribbean and on his stays in monasteries and his explorations all over Greece. It was his later books, however, which to my mind stole the show. Some thirty years after the events he settled down (literally) and wrote up the stories of his trans-European travels. In three books, "A Time of Gifts" (published in 1977), "Between the Woods and the Water" (1986) and "The Broken Road" (published posthumously in 2013), he reached the pinnacle of his writing skills, producing three fascinating descriptions not only of his travels but of the history, topography and cultural traditions of the lands he traversed. Poignantly, given the ravages of war and Communist repression, like Joseph Roth and Stefan Zweig before him, he was describing a Europe and a ruling class that were soon to disappear in the mists of mid-Twentieth Century history. According to Artemis Cooper, it was "in these books, which took many years to write, he created a vision of a pre-war Europe which, in its beauty and abundance, has never been equalled". As Michael O'Sullivan has pointed out, while attaining such literary heights, Leigh Fermor wasn't beyond using some poetic license. In "Between the Woods and the Water", for instance, the author describes an incident where he was loaned a horse (Malek) to get from one country estate to another, but the facts of the case don't match Leigh Fermor's description. Apparently, admitting to his biographer that he fabricated the romantic element of this story, he impishly added to his confession, "You won't let on, will you?" This is somehow typical of the man. In his defence he was writing decades after the event and his memory must have been fading but he was not above embellishing the truth to add to the drama of the piece. While a consummate prose writer (some would say the best of travel writers) he wasn't beyond taking liberties if it added to the dramatic effect.

Another criticism of his books about his early travels in the 1930s is that he practically ignored the rising threat of Nazism in central Europe, particularly, say his

critics, as he wrote the books twenty years after the war was over. The Nazi threat is mentioned in passing and, of course, he fought in the war itself and was decorated for his bravery. While writing up his exploits in later life he was trying to keep faith with his preoccupations as an eighteen-year-old and, above all, as a naturally-inclined historian, report on the Europe that was fast disappearing. As a chronicler of this old Europe, he was downcast by the loss of so many friends and their culture in the war. While talking about the rich friendships he made in Transylvania in "Between the Woods and the Water", he laments that:

"Every part of Europe I had crossed so far was to be torn and shattered by the war; indeed, except for the last stage before the Turkish frontier, all the countries traversed by this journey were fought over a few years later by two mercilessly destructive powers; and when war broke out, all these friends vanished into sudden darkness. Afterwards the uprooting and destruction were on so tremendous a scale that it was sometimes years after the end of it all that the cloud became less dense and I could pick up a clue here and there and piece together what had happened in the interim. Nearly all of them had been dragged into the conflict in the teeth of their true feelings and disaster overtook them all."

And when he sat down to talk with Jewish fellow-travellers in Rumania, they agreed that "the Jews had other grounds for wariness...In Germany, meanwhile, terrible omens were gathering, though how terrible none of us knew. They came into the conversation and – it seems utterly incredible now – we talked of Hitler and the Nazis as though they merely represented a dire phase of history, a sort of transitory aberration or a nightmare that might suddenly vanish, like a cloud evaporating or a bad dream". In 1933/1934 Leigh Fermor wasn't the only person who down-played the Nazi threat and this honest confession partly explains his lack of emphasis of the size of the threat even in books written after the event. But the point remains, however, that these books were never intended to be about the war. He was merely fulfilling his purposes on going on the Great Trudge in the first place: to learn about Middle Europe, its history, its cultures, its peoples, its topography, and to have fun along the way – and, in so doing, to discover something about himself. And when writing the books decades later, he wanted to honour the lost countries, the lost friends and their lost homes he had visited. Even his one book about the war is less about the abduction of a German general and much more about the Cretan people who fought and died alongside him. He was definitely a people person.

Patrick Leigh Fermor certainly had a zest for life. He's remembered for his laughter, his singing (in multiple languages), his joie de vie. He lived life to the full. A BBC journalist once described him as "a cross between Indiana Jones, James Bond and

Graham Greene". When expelled from school, his housemaster said he was "a dangerous mixture of sophistication and recklessness". Nothing takes away, however, from the quality of his writing, particularly his travel writings later in life which rank with the best.

Peter Holly

Join the BMI Can Do It movement

Do you want to live a healthier, happier life? An exciting healthy living movement has launched in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, helping you eat well, sleep well and move more.

Driven by the local NHS, BMI Can Do It has been developed specifically for local residents like you to support your journey towards a healthier lifestyle. The movement is supported by an investment of up to £1m by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and includes exciting healthy living challenges as well as a suite of resources to help you take practical steps towards a healthier life.

Dr Jessica Randall-Carrick, a local GP and lead for Obesity and Diabetes at the CCG, explains:

"If you have a higher than recommended BMI then you are at a higher risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes, cancer, or having a stroke or heart attack. We also know that you are at greater risk of serious health consequences if you contract COVID-19, which is why we want to help encourage people to join our movement to eat well, sleep well and move more.

"We know it's not always easy, but by taking those first steps towards a healthier lifestyle you will have a positive impact on your health. That's why we are asking everyone to say BMI Can Do It and get involved today!"

You can join the movement by visiting www.bmicandoit.co.uk or by following us on social media @BMICanDoIt on Instagram and Twitter, Find us on Facebook by searching for BMI Can Do It or the hashtag #BMICanDoIt.



The new Autumn Term brochure is now available to view online at https://courses.cambridgeshireglobal.net/AvailableCoursesList.asp?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery There are both 'Blended' and 'Online' courses.



Harvest Festival Decorations



Parish Council News

Telephone box: British Telecom has identified the phone box in Kingston as one of several in the locality having had zero or close-to-zero use for many years, and depending on the results of consultation, would like to de-commission and remove it. They have started a period of consultation, with these options offered:

1. Make a case for retaining the phone box as a working phone box.
2. For a nominal cost, Kingston can adopt the phone box 'as is'. BT will remove the phone equipment, and then we can do what we like with it. It belongs to the village and we are responsible for future maintenance.
3. The phone box is removed in its entirety by BT, at no cost to us.

In order for the Parish Council to respond to the consultation, a village-wide questionnaire was sent out to survey villagers' views. There were 46 responses, with the following results:

	Number of responses	% of responses
Keep as a working phone box	3	6.5%
Retain the phone box for some other purpose	26	56.5%
Get rid of the phone box	17	37.0%
Totals	46	100%

Another question was asked: for those who wanted the phone box retained for another purpose, whether they were willing to help with the maintenance (e.g. painting) or felt the Parish Council should maintain it. Responses to this question were almost equally divided.

As there is a clear majority of those responding who wish to retain the phone box, the Parish Council has agreed that it should be retained. Most people wishing to retain the phone box wanted it to be used as a book and DVD exchange. There will be further discussion on repainting and correcting the 'lean'.

East West Rail: This is the company formed to build the new railway line between Oxford and Cambridge. The part of the line that is of interest to us is the section between Cambourne and Cambridge. It has already been determined that of the various optional route corridors, 'Option E' has been chosen. The southern boundary of the Option E corridor is very close to Kingston.

The precise alignment of the track within this broad corridor has yet to be decided. The decision will be based on survey work which is still being carried out. These surveys are currently being conducted across a wide local area to help East West Rail

to build a picture of the existing environmental conditions and other constraints that would affect potential route alignments.

Kingston Parish Council has appointed two Councillors – Sue Dagleish and Julie Conder – as a working group to attend meetings, to keep updated on any new information, and to report back regularly to the Parish Council. They attended a workshop last month which brought together representatives from EWR and local councils to discuss current progress on the selection of a final route alignment.

We are not expecting any major decisions until next year, however East West Rail is continuing to engage with all local areas along the route and we also have a nominated contact to whom we can address any additional items/concerns we would like to discuss.

Footway lights: there are five ‘footway lights’ in Kingston. They look like normal streetlights, but are different from the ones on the main roads in that firstly they belong to and are maintained by South Cambs District Council rather than Cambridgeshire County Council, and secondly, they are all on side roads and their main purpose is to illuminate the road for pedestrians rather than vehicles. The five in Kingston are positioned as follows: three in Crane’s Lane, one in Field Road, and one in Rectory Lane. The energy for these lights is paid for by Kingston Parish Council. SCDC have a District-wide programme to upgrade these streetlights from the older sodium lamps to LEDs. These are much more energy-efficient and the light output is more focussed, resulting in cost savings and less light pollution.

We have been told that the five lights in Kingston will be upgraded during October or November. In some cases, the entire unit will be replaced, in others simply the light unit is changed, depending on the condition of the column. More information can be found here: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/environment/streetlighting/changing-our-streetlights-to-leds/>

Planning:

- **20/1846/TTCA Tranquil, Rectory Lane:** an application has been submitted to carry out work on two trees. It was agreed that KPC has no objections.

Peter Stokes, Parish Clerk

Mobile libraries are returning to their regular stops, but as access to the vehicle is limited to help keep staff safe we will be providing books selected in advance.

Pre-order books from the reservation service <https://cambridgeshire.spydus.co.uk> currently FREE of charge, or the Select and Collect service to request a collection of books based on your tastes at https://cambridgeshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Select_and_Collect or call 0345 045 5225. Order as far in advance as possible and choose the mobile library as a pick up point.

Help for Villagers

We have been lucky in Kingston that the Cambridge area has (so far) not been hit by Covid 19 as severely as other places. However, the knock-on effects of lockdown have affected us all in some way. The economic effects are uncertain over the next few months as the government support schemes come to an end. It is possible that some of us may have reduced incomes or lose jobs.

The Kingston Charity is there to help any Kingston resident in need. We can provide emergency financial help to anyone who needs it. If you need help or if you know someone who needs help, please contact either Joan Reynolds or Donal O'Donnell. All help we give is confidential.

Donal O'Donnell and Joan Reynolds

Trustees Kingston Charity

News from Connecting Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire County Council

27 August 2020

Cambridgeshire leads the way for future proof digital connectivity

Cambridgeshire County Council has been recognised by the Government as a leading authority for its 'barrier busting' work to attract investment in the fastest, most reliable fibre broadband networks to support businesses and communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The work of the Connecting Cambridgeshire digital connectivity programme to 'effectively encourage the deployment of next generation gigabit broadband networks in rural and urban areas' is cited in a letter to all local authorities from the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government Simon Clarke and Digital Minister Matt Warman.

The letter highlights the importance of digital connectivity for economic growth and social inclusion, which is vital during the Covid-19 pandemic and for recovery, and encourages other local authorities to follow the excellent examples of work by Cambridgeshire and Kent county council members and officers.

The Connecting Cambridgeshire digital connectivity programme, led by Cambridgeshire County Council, is significantly improving broadband, mobile and public access Wifi coverage, whilst securing future proof full fibre and 5G networks to take advantage of emerging technology.

Superfast broadband coverage across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is now over 98% and the programme is aiming to achieve over 30% full fibre coverage by 2022, through a mix of direct intervention and stimulating the market to provide commercial coverage.

Connecting Cambridgeshire was among the first in the country to set up a dedicated Enabling Digital Delivery (EDD) service to remove barriers to the delivery of future-proof digital connectivity, with additional funding from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority. The team facilitates private sector investment for full fibre networks and next generation mobile phone coverage across the area. The EDD service is working with network providers, telecoms operators, housing developers, and council teams to resolve a wide range of fixed and mobile infrastructure issues including wayleaves, street works permits, and infrastructure problems and planning.

The service is being used as an exemplar for other local authorities, and has developed a Streetworks Guide to share learning and best practice about working collaboratively with contractors to maximise efficient use of resources and minimise conflicts, delay and costs.

The service is also providing key transport, business and housing data to help network providers plan future investments and working with major housing developers to ensure full fibre and mobile connectivity is planned for new housing developments that would otherwise have had poor coverage.

Councillor Steve Count, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "I am delighted that the 'barrier busting' work of our Connecting Cambridgeshire programme has been recognised as exemplary by the Government.

"Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has an ambitious agenda to optimise private and public sector investment in future-facing connectivity to underpin the region's economic strength, support businesses and communities, and deliver sustainable public services. Our Enabling Digital Delivery service is doing great work to ensure we attract investment in the latest digital technology and make best use of our assets.

"We could not have predicted how vital our digital networks would be to keep people connected and support those in need during these challenging times."

The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme is working with businesses and communities to help to keep everyone connected. Visit www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk to find out more about improving your broadband speeds, mobile phone network offers and funding schemes for rural businesses.

Lena Nieto



Papworth Team Ministry (C of E)

The Papworth Team Ministry Team Office:

Lower Pendrill Court
Ermine Street North
Papworth Everard
CB23 3UJ

Email: papworthteamministryoffice@gmail.com

Web: www.papworthteamchurches.org

Our Team Administrator, Chris Westgarth, works in the office normally on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings; serving the parishes of Bourn, Boxworth, Caxton, Conington, Croxton, Elsworth, Eltisley, Graveley with Papworth St Agnes, Kingston, Knapwell, Lolworth, Longstowe, Papworth Everard, Toseland and Yelling.

For enquiries about weddings, baptisms, funerals and general parish matters, please contact Chris (as above), visit the website or speak to one of our clergy...

> The Revd Nigel di Castiglione,
Team Rector – 07770 697240 -
01954 267241

> The Revd Stephen Day,
Team Vicar - 01954 264226

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Enquiries: Sarah Wright (secretary)

01223 263500 or 0787 999 1068

kingstonvillagehall@gmail.com

Record of the Month

Time Out of Mind by Bob Dylan

“Sometimes my burden seems more than I can bear
It’s not dark yet, but it’s getting there.”

In these monthly record reviews I recently lauded Shelby Lynne’s version of the song “Not Dark Yet”. This is a lovely, luminous version of a great song. When I wrote about it, however, I hadn’t yet joined the dots and realized that it’s a Bob Dylan number. Of course, it is. The words are dark and piercing, the mood is sombre, yet the tune is great and surprisingly uplifting; the overall effect is of an older person coming to terms with his/her mortality. It has “Bob Dylan” written all over it. Having worked out the track’s provenance, I went back to the album it’s on.

“Time Out of Mind” is undoubtedly one of Bobby Z’s best. Surprisingly produced by Daniel Lanois (surprisingly because Bob Dylan had already fallen out with this particular producer working on a previous album) and released in 1997, it was Dylan’s 30th studio album and, as many before it, was on the Columbia Records label. Hailed as one of his best, the LP won three Grammys including Album of the Year. Its atmospheric sound (Daniel Lanois’s specialty) is the characteristic feature of the album and even such a great song as “Make You Feel My Love” is so low in the mix that you could easily miss its magnificence. Later covers by the likes of Garth Brooks and Adele were hit records but Dylan’s version is wonderfully moody and lowdown.

Written on his farm in Minnesota and recorded at Criteria Studio in Miami, the backing band contains Dylan stalwarts like Jim Keltner, Duke Robillard, Augie Myers, Cindy Cashdollar and Jim Dickinson. The track “Not Dark Yet” was released as the first single from the album. Described by one critic as “the moody album’s centre”, the song is said to explore the singer’s own existential crisis and was influenced by the poems of John Keats. In typical Bob Dylan fashion, however, he said the record was mainly influenced by Buddy Holly! The final track “Highlands” is sixteen minutes long. After the recording session a Columbia Records executive said, “Well, Bob, have you got a short version of that song?” Dylan looked at him witheringly and said “That was the short version”.

Widely acclaimed as Dylan’s comeback album (following a lengthy fallow period of average recordings), some fans went further and claimed it as his best ever. As one commented, “It gets deeper into your soul. It’s deeply personal and serious’ (He has the) rare ability to stand apart from himself, to see his experiences from

the outside, deliver poignant, fly-on-the-wall observations which can cut the listener to the soul." It's definitely one kind of soul music.

According to those taking part in the sessions, not all the tracks recorded made the final cut. Indeed, says Jim Dickinson, the best track of the lot ("Red River Shore") was omitted. [It was included on a later collection of Dylan songs titled "Tell Tale Signs"]. And now Bob Dylan's 2020 release "Rough and Rowdy Ways" has been hailed as another comeback masterpiece: how many comebacks has he got in him?

Peter Holly

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Rediscovered Treasures On Your Bookshelves

(Reading During The Pandemic)

Paul Wright writes:

Peter Holly and I reckon that one of the upsides of the pandemic is that we have time to revisit those books sitting unopened for decades on our bookshelves that “we will get round to reading sometime”.

We thought we would ask for contributions on this theme from readers and I agreed to kick off with novels from the 18th Century Age of Enlightenment (Reason). This age saw the emergence of (I quote from Wiki) *...the senses as the primary sources of knowledge and advanced ideals such as liberty, progress, toleration, fraternity, constitutional government and separation of church and state.*

18th Century novels are often presented to unformed minds at school and neglected thereafter on the grounds they seemed dull and hard going. However, many are wonderfully entertaining and worth picking up again for their humour, satire and insight into human nature.

First off is *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, by the Reverend Laurence Sterne. My recommendation, though, is to flip through the book and put it quickly back on the shelf. It is full of blank spaces and strange drawings, seemingly produced by a madman (which may not be far from the truth) and is very hard to read. Instead go for the Audible version read by Anton Lesser, who brings to life the plot (such as it is) and wonderful humour. It is a disjointed narrative of the life of Tristram Shandy and his household of eccentrics such as his father with his absurd philosophies, Uncle Toby who constantly relives his military past, Yorrick the annoyingly loquacious clergyman and the incompetent Dr Slop. Susannah, the maid, is the only character with any common sense. If you enjoy this book, try the sequel, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*.

My second recommendation is *Candide* by Voltaire which is a brilliant satire of the Inquisition, German philosophy and European aristocracy. All this takes place in an entertaining romp through Germany, Portugal, South America and Turkey. It is similar in many ways to *Gulliver's Travels* which is also worth a reread.

Sarah Wright writes:

The Expedition of Humphry Clinker by Tobias Smollett, 1771.

I found a battered old exam copy of this book from my school days. I enjoyed it then and I enjoy it now. It is the story of an adventurous and amusing expedition taken

around Britain by Matthew Bramble a Welsh squire. He is a hypochondriac and a grumpy old man but he has such kindness and generosity. He is accompanied by his quite dreadful spinster sister, his flirty niece, his dashing nephew and last, but not least, the maid Winifred Jenkins. The book transports you to the Georgian era and introduces you to spa towns, London, country inns, local customs and much more. We cross the border to Scotland and the characters discuss the pros and cons of the Union which took place around 60 years before. You meet some wonderful characters along the way, including Humphry Clinker.

The book is written in the form of letters sent by the main protagonists. This may take a little getting used to but it draws out their characters and foibles so well, often giving accounts of the same event from their different perspective.

I do recommend the Audible version as this was the only way that I could introduce Paul to this book! The BBC dramatization, narrated by Nigel Anthony, is very good and Joanna Page (Stacey of Gavin and Stacey) makes a wonderful Win Jenkins. I guarantee it will raise a smile.

Kwirky Korner

Shanksy's Pony

A student has just completed a walk from Spain to Scotland with her beloved Shetland pony – to arrive in time for her university course. Johanna Maria is to study agriculture but could not afford the £2000 it would have taken to transport her pony Hechizo from Segovia to Dundee. Johanna and Hechizo set off on the 1500 mile journey from a farm she had been working on back in March and for seven months the twosome walked between 13 and 20 miles a day, all the while dragging a small cart containing all Johanna's possessions and only taking rest stops when the gallant pony got tired. They camped out and slept in farms and stables overnight, while increasingly attracting attention from social media. Her father helped them cross the channel by converting his campervan into an animal transporter and they arrived in England on July 13th, restarting their hike in East Sussex on August 1st and reaching Northumberland on September 3rd. According to Johanna, "Hechizo is my everything. I got him for my 18th birthday. He is very friendly but he knows his own mind...Hechizo means magic in Spanish and this feels like the journey of my life with my magic pony".

Noise Ban

Meanwhile in Bristol a so-called "silent disco" (where participants wear noise-cancelling headphones) was shut down for being too noisy. It wasn't loud thumping music that was to blame, however, but all the crowd and traffic noise before and after the event. Residents of the Owen Square Park area complained about the

noise coming from generators, vehicles and crowds which kept them awake and a dispersal order was issued.

Well that takes the biscuit

A recent survey has been used to discover the most popular great British biscuit. While variations were found in the tastes of different age groups (young people voting strongly for Oreos and older people preferring Ginger Nuts), the final results were as follows: 1. Chocolate Digestive; 2. Shortbread; 3. Chocolate Fingers; 4. Jaffa Cake; 5. Chocolate Hobnob; 6. Custard Cream; 7. Jammie Dodger; 8. Maryland Cookie; 9. Bourbon; 10. Crunch Cream; 11. Plain Digestive; 12. Viennese Whirl; 13. Rich Tea; 14. Ginger Nut; 15. Hob Nob; 16. Oreo; 17. Malted Milk; 18. Nice; 19. Fig Roll; 20. Garibaldi. As an aficionado of the Ginger Nut brigade, all I can say is “we was robbed”.

It's Bubble Time

What's happening in nearby Bourn has garnered national attention because it's now possible to stay in your bubble – in a bubble! The Willow Tree restaurant has been written up in the national publication Countrylife because Perspex dining domes have been installed in its garden area, thus making it possible to enjoy a meal out in splendid isolation. According to the article, the domes were recently installed by owner Shaina Galvin and provide a uniquely private, fun and personalized experience at a quirky and charming venue. The article continues:

As the sun was setting, the domes started to really come alive as they were caught by the early evening light, giving an intimate, cosy and almost magical feel that generated a tangible feeling of excitement from our fellow domers.

Apparently three more domes are on order and the owner is hoping to provide a Winter Wonderland effect at Christmastime. Oh, as the article emphasizes and many readers of this magazine can confirm, the food is good too!

Peregrines at Ely

Last year two peregrines set up nest on the rooftop of Ely Cathedral. We have remained very quiet about their arrival for the past year in order to give them a chance to settle in and to see if they were going to nest and make Ely Cathedral their home. We are delighted to say that they appear to have done just that! The birds are protected by laws reinforced by European legislation known as the Nature Directives.

They can live for 15 to 18 years and travel vast distances outside the nesting season but their homing instinct leads them back to their favoured locations! Some nesting sites have been in continual use by successive generations of Peregrines for hundreds of years. We hope that they continue to nest in the Cathedral's towers for years to come and hope to be able to set up a webcam so we can all enjoy watching these magnificent birds whilst not disturbing them.

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Rev Stephen Day (1st contact) 01954 264226
revdsmday@cantab.net
Rev Nigel di Castiglione (Team Rector) 01954 267241
nigel.dicastiglione@gmail.com or 0777 0697240
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James Clear (Chair, Village Hall Management Committee representative, Open Spaces) 01223 263746

Julie Conder (Vice-Chair, Finance, Webmaster)

Peter Stokes (Clerk) 01223 262207
kingstonpc.cambridge@gmail.com

Katherine Reid (Councillor, Footpaths)

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Chris Reid (Treasurer)

Sarah Wright (Secretary) 01223 263500
kingstonvillagehall@gmail.com 07879991068

Committee members: Jill Coleman, Pat Draper, John Easy, Torrie Smith, Peter Stokes, Suzy Stokes, Paul Wright