

50p

April 2024

**Easter**

**GREETINGS  
FROM  
LUDLOW  
METHODIST  
CHURCH**



**GT The Garden Tomb**

## Easter Greetings

HE is RISEN! HE is risen INDEED!  
Happy Easter to you all.  
Jesus Christ is ALIVE!

As I write this letter the sun is shining, and the buds are breaking out on the trees in my garden.

The cherry blossom is in full bloom and the purple buds on the magnolia tree are just beginning to break.

There are wonderful signs of hope all around us, the green blade rises from the seemingly dead seed.

I wonder what the garden was like on the glorious Day of Resurrection, when Jesus rose from the dead?

Did Mary Magdalen notice the carpet of green grass, the delicate pinks of Geranium and Saxifraga: the bold purples of the Violas: the striking yellow of the trumpet flower, velvet to the touch, did she notice them through her veil of tears?

And then Jesus calls her name, "Mary" and she rushes to embrace him, though she cannot.

Now it wouldn't matter if the garden were covered in sparkling jewels for she only has eyes and ears for her Lord. The waves of emotion that cover her from head to foot – from the depths of abject despair to the heights of elation all wrapped up in wonder and love. Jesus tells her to go and tell the disciples that he has arisen and will meet with them soon.

I wonder if her feet touch the ground as she speeds away with wings on her heels. Such joy!

And we should be joyous too, for Jesus, our wonderful, *lovelly* Jesus, has broken sin's power over us: we are forgiven and reconciled to God. Death is no more. We have life in all its fullness: life eternal: risen with Christ.

Jesus Christ is risen today – and so are we.

Bless you all.

Denise

## It's a dog's life

**W**hen our ministers move to a new appointment, have you ever thought what it means for their pets? No trouble for budgies I suppose, while cats, being so superior (you own a dog but a cat owns you, they say) probably take it in their stride, so long as the milk and KitKat keep coming. As a dog lover, I suppose I'm prejudiced, but I do think it's different for a dog.

A minister friend told me of his experience way back when the trustees decided to sell the manse and purchase a smaller and cheaper one but didn't bother to tell him. They could do things like that in the old days, my friend. Small wonder then, that Conference found better ways, and the old-style trusts disappeared. The result for my ministerial friend was that the first he knew about this was when a large van arrived to move the manse furniture (the days before ministers had their own).

I think it must be like that for the manse dog. No-one warns him/her – how could they – but one day everything changes as the boss decides to up-sticks, they put you in the car, and when you get out much later, instead of the familiar park, the doggie friends you have made, where perhaps you enjoyed a swim in the pond or river, or maybe even a beach and a swim in the sea, you find yourself in a city street, where you now have to be on a lead and breathe exhaust fumes (no joke down here, a foot or so above the pavement).

Or maybe after being used to urban life you now find yourself in the country being chased across a field by a cow, (who may have had a calf to protect- we didn't stop to check), or on a riverbank threatened by an aggressive swan. Perhaps following your instinct, you chase a bird which flies across the river, and you follow, discover that no, you cannot walk on water, and must be hauled out by a worried mistress, who then needs the assistance of a helpful passer-by to bring you both up the steep bank on to the path (the Breadwalk). Yes, it's a dog's life alright.

In all these things you are completely in the hands of others and have little say in the matter, yet your years together have shown you that wherever you are and whatever the circumstances, you are safe with your master. Stay close, and all will be well. And that goes for humans as well as dogs.

*Maurice Coleman*

## Who burned down the White House?

Who hasn't heard of the White House, the official residence of the President of the United States of America, the most powerful nation on the planet? But it wasn't always known as the White House!

### The War of 1812

The causes of the war are as varied as they are obtuse, but are largely due to Great Britain's war with France and its consequences, particularly trade. America enjoyed trading with France and Britain, yet France introduced the Berlin Decree in 1806 which designated ships entering British ports as enemy vessels. Britain responded in 1807 with Orders of Council, that required neutral ships to obtain a licence at English ports before trading with France or its Colonies. In a tit-for-tat response, later that same year France strengthened the Berlin Decree by authorising the capture of any neutral ship that had been searched by the British. American ships were now caught between a rock and a hard place, whichever way they turned they would fall foul of French or British law. At the end of that same year President Jefferson pushed Congress into passing the Embargo Act, which forbade all export shipping from American ports and most imports from Britain.

The farce didn't end there. The Royal Navy continued to stop American merchant ships on the high seas, and press-ganged alleged Royal Navy deserters, adding thousands of American citizens to its crews. In 1807 a British warship fired on an a United States Navy frigate, Chesapeake, and seized four of its crew, three of whom were American citizens. This act alone nearly started a war, Britain apologised.

President Madison declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812.

America attacked Canada because it was British and believed that there would be little, if any, resistance and that the 'people would rally around our standard'. They were in for a shock. Britain, however, was heavily engaged with the war against France on the Iberian Peninsula and the conflict continued between Canada and America with little help from Britain. Bonaparte's defeat in 1814 finally gave Britain the opportunity to send a force to respond.

A small force of nearly 4,500, commanded by Major General Ross, landed some 50 miles south of Washington, on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 1814. There was no cavalry and no horses to pull the artillery. Consequently, only three small cannons, which would prove to be largely ineffective,

were taken manhandled by sailors taken from the various ships of the fleet. Moving towards Washington the force encountered little resistance until approaching Bladensburg, perhaps eight miles short of the capital.

It was here that the British met their strongest resistance. The Americans had 10,000 men, including 2,000 cavalry, against the British 4,500. President Madison was amongst the American force, although it appears that he suddenly found urgent affairs of state to deal with elsewhere once battle was joined. The British Redcoats took a great deal of casualties from the American cannon and musket fire, but they had soon outflanked their enemy. After a three hour struggle the Americans withdrew to the far side of Washington, leaving the city virtually defenceless.

The tactics of the battle aren't the aim of this article. However, it's worthwhile mentioning that members of the British Light Brigade received a Battle Honour (*Bladensburg*) for their heroism during the attack. One of those regiments was the 85<sup>th</sup> Foot who would eventually merge with the 53<sup>rd</sup> Foot to become our county regiment – The King's Shropshire Light Infantry. During the retreat the British seized some 12 cannon and two pennants – to lose those was a disgrace in any army! The Americans later made no mention of these pennants, although one is in the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum and the other in the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst.

With Washington now open, General Ross rode into the city under a flag of truce to negotiate surrender terms. He was fired on and his horse killed. This blatant disregard for a flag of truce enraged the British who set about sacking the city, as well as putting to the sword those responsible for the shooting. Many of the civic buildings were burnt, as well as ships in the harbour; cannons destroyed and other munitions blown up. Entering the President's residence – the Executive Mansion- the Redcoats found a feast laid out for the 'victorious' American soldiers. They promptly ate this before setting fire to the building.

They say that history is written by the victors, and at this point we must decide which version to believe. The British version is as above, written immediately after the event. According to them the mansion was quickly whitewashed to hide the smoke damage, much of the fire having been extinguished due to heavy rain shortly afterwards.

The American version, written some 35 years later would have you believe that the mansion had always been white!

Their version makes no mention of General Ross' horse being shot or of the loss of their two regimental pennants. They don't deny that Washington was sacked but say '*It is a matter of history and lasting reproach to the British nation, that in all the rules of civilised warfare,*



*General Ross proceeded to destroy and lay waste .... In a most wanton manner ....*'. Conveniently forgetting the American destruction of York (modern

Toronto) in 1813, but that's another story.

The American force was made up largely of militia – volunteers – who had other things to consider than fighting the British. Even so, it's difficult to understand why, with over twice as many soldiers as the opposing force, they didn't put up a stronger resistance considering they were defending their capital city.

Whether the Executive Mansion had always been white, it's been known as the White House ever since. The war came to a conclusion with the *Treaty of Ghent* in February 1815.

Ron Gittings

Source: *The History of the Corps of The King's Shropshire Light Infantry, Volume 2*

### A quote from Eleanor Roosevelt:

I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalogue:

'No good in a bed, but fine against a wall.'

### Prayer Spot

God and Father of us all,  
we dare to ask that we may pray as Jesus prayed.  
May we stand with others not in judgement, but in love.  
Deliver us from our prejudices, hatreds and unkind thoughts,  
that we may pray for them in the Spirit of your Son.  
Make us the truly human family you meant us to be.

Source : Love answering Love, by Neil G Richardson

### Shropshire and Marches Circuit Circuit Meetings 2024

- Monday 15 April (forum)
- Monday 17 June (business)
- Monday 9 September (business)
- Monday 21 October (forum)
- Monday 2 December (business – Minutes: Sue Taylor)

***Meetings will be via the Zoom platform.***

### Quiz night

Geoff Farmery will be hosting another quiz on Friday, the 12th April at 7pm. No charge but donations to Church funds will be gratefully accepted.



## 50 years of ABBA!

Fifty years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1974, the Swedish pop group ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest with their song Waterloo. It was the first time that Sweden won the contest. ABBA went on to be one of the most successful groups in music history.

The victory, in Brighton, was just the first step on the road to conquering the world, as far as pop music was concerned. The songs, written mainly by Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson, were matched by the passion, exuberance and good looks of singers Agnetha Fältskog and Anni-Frid 'Frida' Lyngstad, who later married them – and even later, divorced them.

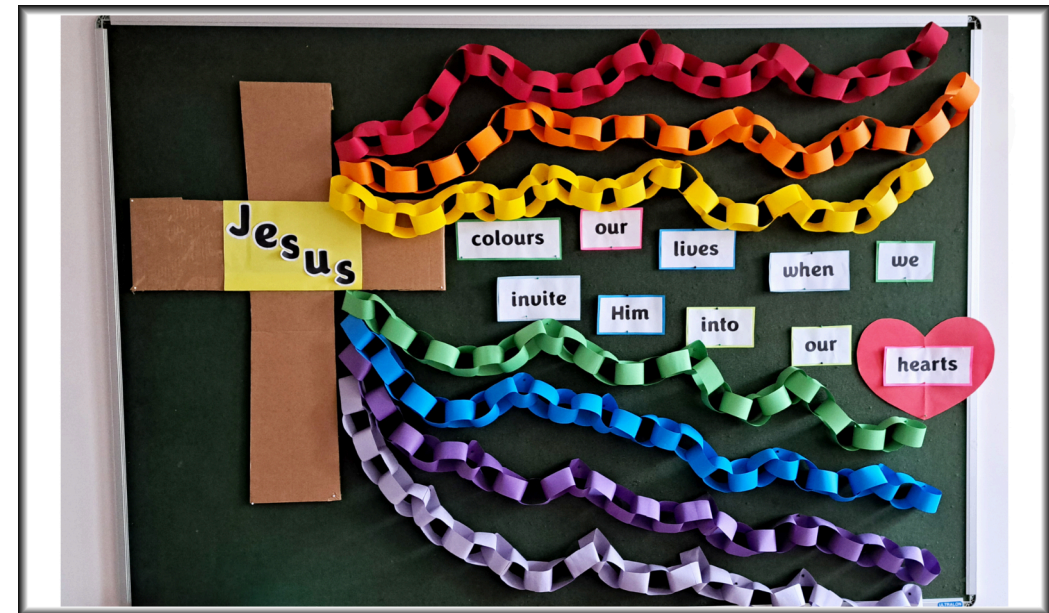
The name of the group came from the initials of the four Christian names. Some have suggested a link to the biblical Abba and looked for Jewish themes in their songs, but this is wishful thinking. While Anni-Frid (who was born Norwegian) may be Christian, Björn is definitely an outspoken atheist. In fact, ABBA is the name of a Swedish canned fish company that had to give permission for the singers to use it – a decision they are unlikely to have regretted.

Both Waterloo and ABBA achieved worldwide superstar status quickly – no small feat for a group performing in a language that is not their own. The film ABBA – the Movie and the musical Mamma Mia and its sequel, featuring their compelling songs, were huge successes. It is estimated that the musical has been seen by more than 60 million people worldwide.

ABBA hit the jackpot again when their revolutionary new project, ABBA Voyage, launched in 2022. In it, Agnetha, Björn, Benny and Anni-Frid perform their love-songs digitally with a live 10-piece band, in a purpose-built ABBA arena at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London. Not bad for four divorcees in their 70s.

*Parish Pump*

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The Garden Room

When temptation knocks send Jesus to the door.  
Anon.

## 23<sup>rd</sup> April: St George, our Patron Saint who isn't English

The English have a patron saint who isn't English, about whom next to nothing is known for sure, and who, just possibly, may not have existed at all. But that didn't stop St George being patriotically invoked in many battles, notably at Agincourt and in the Crusades, and of course it is his cross that adorns the flags of English football fans to this day.

It's most likely that St George was a soldier, a Christian who was martyred for his faith somewhere in Palestine, possibly at Lydda, in the early fourth century. At some point in the early centuries of the Church he became associated with wider military concerns, being regarded as the patron saint of the Byzantine armies. There is no doubt that St George was held as an example of the 'godly soldier', one who served Christ as bravely and truly as he served his king and country.

The story of George and the dragon is of much later date and no one seems to know where it comes from. By the Middle Ages, when George was being honoured in stained glass, the dragon had become an invaluable and invariable visual element, so that for most people the two are inseparable. Pub signs have a lot to answer for here: 'The George and Dragon'.

However, it's probably more profitable to concentrate on his role as a man who witnessed to his faith in the difficult setting of military service, and in the end was martyred for his faithfulness to Christ.

The idea of the 'Christian soldier' was, of course, much loved by the Victorian hymn-writers - 'Onward, Christian soldiers!' The soldier needs discipline. The heart of his commitment is to obedience. The battle cannot be avoided nor the enemy appeased. He marches and fights alongside others, and he is loyal to his comrades. In the end, if the battle is won, he receives the garlands of victory, the final reward of those who overcome evil.

St George's Day presents a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to distance the message of his life from the militarism and triumphalism that can easily attach itself to anything connected to soldiers and fighting. The opportunity is to celebrate the ideal of the 'Christian soldier' - one who submits to discipline, sets out to obey God truly, does not avoid the inevitable battle with all that is unjust, wrong and hateful in our world, and marches alongside others fighting the same noble cause.

Discipline, obedience, courage, fellowship and loyalty - they're not the most popular virtues today, but that doesn't mean that they don't deserve our admiration.

*Parish Pump*

**Teme Spirit Choir**

# Our last year!

**Come and see us perform  
for the last time.**

*Check out the dates and venues  
below:*

**March 16<sup>th</sup>: Dreamers**  
*The inspirational story of Rev John Venn  
Salvation Army, Hereford*

**June 8<sup>th</sup>: FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS**  
*A Brand New Musical based on the life of Queen Esther  
St Peter's Church, Hereford*

**September: Revue**  
**7<sup>th</sup>** St Mary's Church, Tenbury Wells  
*A concert of some of our favourite music*

**November 23<sup>rd</sup>: Miracle Maker**  
*A remarkable story of a remarkable man: St Nicholas  
© Ludlow Methodist Church*

*For more information see our Facebook page*

For further details see Pip Hollins



# Green Pages

A round-up of environmental and climate-change news  
including advice about our progress as an Eco-Church

April 2024

## Going for Gold

It is now a year since we gained our ECO Church Silver Award, so we have reviewed our progress towards gaining the coveted Gold Award. There are a more things that we can still do, such as fit more LED light bulbs, install water saving devices in the toilets and ensure that all our cleaning products are environmentally friendly, but to obtain the Gold award we will also have to demonstrate to an inspector that our congregation and leadership are fully supportive of this initiative, and that, as far as we can, many of us are adopting greener principles in our daily lives.

We therefore propose to find a simpler way for everyone to measure their carbon footprint, and to suggest a programme of 'just one thing' that we could each try to do. It may take us another year before we are ready to go for Gold, but together we can do it.

## Circuit Forum

The next Circuit Forum (*an open meeting for anyone across the circuit to discuss issues that affect us all*) will be held on **Monday April 15<sup>th</sup>**. The topic for this forum will be 'Caring for Creation' and we will share what churches and individuals have done or are finding it difficult to do. Examples of best-practice from somewhere in the Circuit will accompany our discussions. Although the meeting will be held on Zoom we are planning to meet together in Broad Street as a group, using the church's AV system. Look out for more details in the notices nearer to the date.

*The Green Pages of the Ludlow Methodist Church monthly magazine are brought to you by the Caring for Creation Group. For more information please contact Elizabeth Wright.*

## Food Waste

If food waste were a country, it would be the world's third largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the USA! Food waste contributes 8-10% of total man-made greenhouse gas emissions (*IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*). Emissions from total food waste in the UK are equivalent to 10 million cars on the road.

Food waste occurs at all stages of the growing, selling, cooking and eating process but in the UK 70% of food waste comes from our homes. This costs the average UK family £700 a year. Shropshire residents produce an average of 486kg of waste per person per year (*Shropshire Council, 2020*). Data from Herefordshire Council in 2019 showed that:

- 37% of all household waste was food and drink.
- 59% of food waste was of a home-compostable type.
- 35% of all discarded food waste was still in its original packaging.

The first step to prevent food waste is not to buy it if you don't need it. Local advice and assistance is available to help you: **Love Food Hate Waste.com** has tips on planning meals including portion and shopping planners, food storage guides and recipes for leftovers. You could sign up to **Shrewsbury Food Hub's 'Taste not Waste Challenge'** to reduce your own food waste and save money at the same time. And don't forget that **Hands Together Ludlow's Community Fridge** is open each weekday 10am to 4pm.

Here are some actions you can take for a healthy diet, which can also reduce carbon emissions:

- Aim to be food waste free.
- Eat more plant-based foods.
- Eat less meat, but buy better quality local meat and dairy.
- Buy local, seasonal and organic produce.
- Support farmers' markets and local box schemes.
- Use local independent retailers.
- Choose Fairtrade-certified products.
- Select fish from only sustainable sources.
- Eat a healthy balanced diet with less processed food.
- Grow your own or join a community garden or food co-op

*from South Shropshire Climate Action's March Newsletter*



## Farming Sustainably in a Changing Climate

While protesting farmers across Europe make headlines by blocking roads with tractors, some of Shropshire's farmers are finding ways to meet the environmental challenges of farming today. In February, Market Drayton Climate Action and Ashley Young Farmers joined together for a 'Sustainable Farming Panel' to hear three local farmers describe the methods they use.

*"We want to put climate groups, farmers and the community in conversation with each other to discuss sustainability and climate crisis solutions which will be feasible for farmers,"* said Rowan Cookson, chair of Market Drayton Climate Action.

The panel comprised: Charlotte Hollins from community-owned Fordhall Organic Farm in Market Drayton, organic dairy farmer Thomas Richardson and Kate Mayne, an adviser on sustainable agriculture who leads the North Shropshire Farmers Group.

Kate stressed that agriculture is affected more than any other sector by *"the monster that is climate change, which throws us challenges day in and day out to do the things required by government"*.

Thomas has planted 16,000 hedgerow whips over the last three years, as part of his 14 km of hedgerows. He has also developed rainwater harvesting on his farm.

Charlotte described the pasture-based rotation approach at Fordhall Farm which has diversity as a fundamental principle.

Larger scale system changes could include:

- Development of the energy infrastructure so that more farm roofs could be used for solar panels.
- High standards of all food production should be established in law to prevent cheaper imports from countries with lower animal welfare or environmental standards.
- Subsidies should be more flexible to reflect local conditions.

Answering a question about how farmers might adapt to less meat and dairy, the panellists agreed that there will be changes in farming over the next 30 years and a cultural shift about food.

*Nancy Stewart, Zero Carbon Shropshire Green News, March 2024*

## The benefits of closed-loop gardening

Having a garden is an excellent way to help protect the environment and minimise the effects of climate change. Gardens protect biodiversity by providing food and habitat for bees and other pollinators, help to improve air quality and reduce energy consumption. Closed-loop gardening practices allow us to think about how natural cycles work and create a system where we put in as little as possible. These include:

1. Compost made from kitchen scraps and plant trimmings can enrich the soil and provide essential nutrients.
2. Mulch made from organic materials, including straw and leaves, typically used to cover the soil's surface. Mulch helps to improve the soil structure and contributes to the organic matter in the soil.
3. Rainwater harvesting using water butts to reduce reliance on mains water supplies and help to conserve water resources.
4. Crop rotation helps to prevent soil depletion and reduces the risk of pest and disease build-up
5. Planting a variety of crops together (called polyculture) improves pest control, soil health and overall resilience.
6. Natural pest control using beneficial insects and companion planting helps control pests and minimises dependence on chemical pesticides and harmful fertilizers.
7. Save seeds from mature plants to help promote crop diversity and reducing reliance on commercially produced seeds.

Closed-loop gardening allows us to reduce consumption, including potting mixes, composts, and top soils, which may have high carbon costs in their production, packaging and distribution. A reduction in the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides minimises the chemical run-off into waterways thereby improving water quality.

Healthy soils act as carbon sinks, sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and mitigating climate change. Growing food locally and sustainably reduces the carbon footprint associated with the transportation and distribution of food. This all helps to develop more sustainable and environmentally-friendly ways of gardening. It enables us to have beautiful, self-sustaining gardens that help to make us and the environment happy.

*Jamie d'Souza, Happy Eco News*



## All in the month of April

It was:

300 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1724 that the German composer Johann Sebastian Bach's St John Passion was performed for the first time, at a church in Leipzig.

Also 300 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1724 that Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher was born. One of the leading philosophers during the Age of Enlightenment.

200 years ago, on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1824 that Lord Byron died. One of the greatest British poets and a leading figure in the Romantic movement, he died of sepsis/fever while fighting for Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire. Aged 36.

175 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1849 that American mechanic Walter Hunt was granted a US patent for his invention of the safety pin. He immediately sold the rights for \$400, which is about \$12,000 today. The company he sold it to made millions from it.

150 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1874 that Johann Strauss II's operetta Die Fledermaus was performed for the first time, in Vienna.

125 years ago, on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1899 that Duke Ellington, American jazz/swing pianist, composer and orchestra leader, was born.

100 years ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1924 that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios (MGM) was founded when Metro Pictures, Goldwyn Pictures and Louis B Mayer Pictures merged.

Also 100 years ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1924 that the British Empire Exhibition opened in Wembley, London.

90 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1934 that British inventor Percy Shaw patented the Cat's Eye reflective road stud. He set up a company to manufacture them in 1935 and in 1937 he was awarded a government contract to mass produce them for national use.

75 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1949 that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was founded.

Also 75 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1949 that the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical South Pacific was opened in Broadway.

70 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1954 that in a news conference about Communism in Indochina, US President Dwight D Eisenhower explained his 'domino theory'. He said that if one country in a region came under the influence of Communism, then the countries surrounding it would follow. He and later presidential administrations

have always believed this.

Also 70 years ago, on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1954 that the Soviet Union transferred Crimea from Russia to Ukraine. In 2014 Russia annexed Crimea, but it is not recognised internationally, and a number of sanctions were imposed on Russia as a result.

65 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1959 that Frank Lloyd Wright, American architect and writer, died. Regarded as 'the greatest American architect of all time.'

60 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1964 that twelve men convicted of carrying out the Great Train Robbery in England in August of 1963 were jailed for a total of 307 years. They were given some of the longest sentences in British criminal history.

40 years ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1984 that British police officer Yvonne Fletcher was shot dead during a demonstration outside the Libyan Embassy in London. This led to an 11-day siege by the police.

30 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1994 that the Rwandan genocide began, when a plane carrying Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundian president Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down by extremists. Civil war broke out the following day, and between 500,000 and one million people were massacred during the next 100 days.

Also 30 years ago, on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1994 that the first post-apartheid multiracial elections were held in South Africa, with 18 million blacks eligible to vote for the first time. Nelson Mandela was elected president, and took office on 10<sup>th</sup> May.

25 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1999 that Libya handed over to the United Nations two suspects in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie. They were taken to the Netherlands to face trial. One was found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment, only to be released in 2009 because he was dying of cancer. The other suspect was acquitted.

20 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 that Google launched its free email service, Gmail.

10 years ago, on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014 that the Boko Haram Islamic terrorist group kidnapped 276 female students from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Nigeria. Some of the girls escaped, some were rescued, or have been reported dead. But over 100 are still missing, fate unknown.

*Parish Pump*

## The Treasure of Easter!

It's amazing what treasure can be unearthed with metal detectors! In this season of Easter, let's rediscover the greatest unburied treasure of the Resurrection.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that God *'has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.'* (1 Peter 1: 3,4). What does he say about this treasure?

On the one hand, it is the *reason for hope*. Peter was writing to Christians in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) who faced persecution under the Emperor Nero. In an uncertain world we know that Jesus suffered, but by His resurrection has secured eternal life for us. This inheritance not only guarantees life now, but also for eternity, as it *'is kept in heaven for you'* (4). Do we share this confidence? D.L. Moody, the 19th Century American evangelist, spoke of the time when people would read his obituary: *'Don't believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now'*.

On the other hand, this treasure is a *source of joy*. This unburied treasure fills us *'with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.'* (8,9). We face all kinds of trials in our lives, but God uses them to refine our faith and character, *'These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.'* (7).

We reflect this treasure by developing the Jesus' character and becoming more holy, obedient and loving.

*'Christmas is the promise, and Easter is the proof!'*

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## From Uncle Eustace...

### On why a church should always resist change

The Rectory

St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I am not the least surprised you have got yourself into trouble; innovation is never to be encouraged. New ideas tend to cause revolutions. The move from incandescent lightbulbs to energy saving ones may ultimately change the Church of England.

Change is something everyone claims to be in favour of – provided it has no measurable effect on their own lives. I remember as a young curate once suggesting that at the Harvest Supper, tables might be enlarged so that eight people could sit together rather than the traditional six, thus helping more people get to know one another. The response would have been similar if I had suggested we travel to London to murder the Prime Minister. I was firmly told that tables for six had been perfectly adequate for parishioners in Queen Victoria's day. For the rest of my curacy, I was regarded as a revolutionary, to be watched carefully.

So, at your last visit to our church, to suggest that our 11am Mattins might be moved to 10.30am, in order to encourage those who wanted to have more of the day free to themselves, certainly lobbed a hand grenade among the post-Service coffee cups. The only person who was mildly in favour was Colonel Wainwright, who quickly realised that it would give him an extra half-hour at the gin and tonics before lunch.

Should you ever feel that people lack imagination, you should watch them in action when they find reasons for resisting an unwelcome suggestion. One said that the time couldn't be moved, since it would then be too early for the local bus – omitting to mention that none of our congregation travel to church by bus and that the service doesn't run on Sundays anyway. Another pointed out that it would confuse those who didn't attend church – not explaining why if they never attended, it mattered what time the Service was. A third, rather touchingly mentioned that it wouldn't give the rector time to enjoy his breakfast after the rigours of the 8am Service.

Your suggestion did, however, serve one useful purpose; it brought our congregation together in united opposition. They may not necessarily always know what they are for, but they certainly know what they are against. For that, I thank you.

Your loving uncle

Eustace

## Tales from the Royal Marines

### The Royal Visitor

During my time in the Royal Marines Commandos we were visited by a variety of VIPs, including members of the Royal Family.

One day a certain tall 'Royal' visited and was programmed, among other things, to visit the Galley (Kitchen) and talk to the men who worked there.

Men working in the Galley were always referred to by all the other Royal Marines Commandos as 'Chef', although their correct name was 'Cook'.

The visitor entered the Galley and moved towards a line of men he was going to meet. They were all dressed from head to toe in 'Whites' and it was obvious, to anyone, what all of them were.

Stopping opposite one young man the Royal Visitor said,

"Good Morning, what job do you do?"

The man replied, "I'm a Chef, Sir".

The tall Royal looked confused and after a pause of 10 seconds he said,

"There's no such thing as a Chef in the Royal Marines, you're a Cook!"

"Sorry Sir", said the young man a bit red in the face, "I'm a Cook".

The Royal then moved on to the next man, who was a lot older, and said, "Good Morning, and what do you do?"

"I'm a Cook Sir", replied the man.

"Very good", said the Royal, "And how long have you been a Cook?"

"About 5 seconds, Sir!!!" replied the man.

When the Royal left the galley, the area erupted into very loud laughter and the story quickly circulated around the unit.

*Maurice John Hargreaves  
The Man in the Manse*

## Coffee & Chat

During the Covid lockdowns we started a new weekly meeting on Zoom so that we could get together when we were unable to meet in-person. We called it 'Coffee & Chat' and it proved to be a vital lifeline for some of us, so much so that these Zoom meetings have continued every Wednesday morning since. A big thanks must go to Brian Dawson who championed this venture and was able to host the Zoom technology most of the time.

When the Covid restrictions were lifted we added an occasional in-person meeting in the community lounge at Guy Thornycroft Court. Very often we were joined by more people than we saw regularly on Zoom.

We have now reviewed the need and practicality of continuing to meet on Zoom in this way, and we all agreed that meeting together face to face was so much better than staring at a computer screen! So our last Zoom Coffee & Chat meeting took place on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

From now on we will continue to meet at Guy Thornycroft Court once a month, and we hope that others may feel able to join us, particularly if you're not comfortable with technology.

This is not a Bible study or a prayer meeting, but is, as the name suggests, an informal opportunity to meet Christian friends for a conversation over a cup of coffee. We usually include a short reflection prepared by one of the group or we share what God has been doing in our lives since we last met, concluding with a prayer. But the main focus of the morning is to enjoy one another's company.

**Dates for the next few meetings are as follows: 11<sup>th</sup> April, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 15<sup>th</sup> August and 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 10.30am. Please note the new day: Thursday mornings.**

We would love to see you even if you haven't been before. Transport can be arranged if you need it (please talk to Mike Owens or Lindsay Beavon). Coffee and tea will be provided, but please bring something to nibble and share if you can.

MO





Flower arrangement by Christine Paulden

### ***Some of your favourite things:***

What are your favourite things? Why are they so special to you?

Choose upto three items from this list and, in no more than 50 words, tell our readers why they are so important to you:

- Your favourite Bible verse
- Your favourite hymn
- Your favourite book (other than the Bible!)
- A place where you feel close to God (a tricky one!)
- Your favourite film or television programme
- Your favourite song
- Someone in history who inspires you
- A memorable journey
- Your favourite holiday destination

With pride of achievement The Gore Production Company takes pleasure in announcing the arrival of the new 2024 models:

Gore identical baby girls:

Millie Amelia and Sophia Olivia Gore

**Models released:** 17.1.2024

**Designer and Chief Engineer:** Chris Gore

**Production Manager:** Maxine Gore

**Technical Assistant:** Inosha Bambaranda

**Production area:** Oxford TFP Fertility Clinic

**First in the series:** Millie Amelia Gore

**Weight:** 5 lbs 5 oz

**Time released:** 9:14am

**Second in the series:** Sophia Olivia Gore

**Weight:** 5 lbs 7 oz

**Time released:** 9:14am

**Features:** Audible squealing

Economical feeds

Water cooled exhausts

Changeable seat covers

The management guarantees that no other models will be released this year!

### **The announcement of Penny Gore's new grandchildren**