



# St Mary's Magazine

July 2021

I asked a number of people if they could write something about the last 15 months. Thank you to all those who responded.

## Lockdowns ..... and some ups!

Morris Hopkins sums up his experience

In the first week of lockdown in March 2020, I went into exile in Somerset, at the foot of the Quantock Hills. I stayed with my daughter Philippa and her husband Christopher Staniland for ten weeks, returning to Alton at the end of May.

In my lifetime, there have been two great national and global crises, beside which events such as the Abdication, Suez and Diana fade into insignificance. The first was the outbreak of World War 2 in September 1939, the month I started at prep school, and the second was the outbreak of Coronavirus last year. When the war began the whole population was issued with gas masks and the barrage balloons went up; when the virus struck we all had to have face masks and curtains in theatres came down. However, there was one common factor to lift our spirits: in the Autumn of 1939 and the Spring of 2020 the sun shone every day, week in, week out.

My son-in-law is a wine merchant and the pandemic made a big dent in his business. An important part of his trade is catering at weddings and taking a stand at events such as the Exmoor Show. The bottom fell out of this market overnight. In contrast, boy, what a lot of drinking went on in private houses. I had some delightful trips with Christopher, driving through the beautiful Somerset countryside in bright sunshine to deliver cases of wine.

I spent last Christmas with Antonia's family in Purley. I was away for ten days, coming home for New Year. Some St Mary's parishioners will remember Antonia, but to remind you of when: the family moved to Alton in 1973 and Antonia was head girl at the Convent in 1977, the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. All of Antonia and Paul Tully's six children were at home most of the time I was there so it was a very jolly party. One



new experience for me, which was great fun and works well in a big family, was Secret Santa. I expect you know the rules. The name I drew in advance was that of the elder granddaughter, Caroline.



My surprise for her was a silk scarf, and my own request was for a Christmas cake to bring home. The task of baking fell to the youngest grandson, Peter, an undergraduate at Oxford. The cake was excellent and lasted many weeks.

A most welcome "up", after all the "downs" (locked or otherwise) last Summer, was the Government subsidy of hospitality, resulting in discounted meals when dining out on Mondays to Wednesdays in August. I took advantage of this as my 89<sup>th</sup> birthday fell on a Wednesday. This was the circumstance: Joanna had taken a holiday house in Wiltshire for a fortnight in August and I was invited to stay the first week, when various members of the family came and went. On the evening of my birthday seven of us had supper in Devizes at a delightful inn alongside the Kennet & Avon Canal. It was a great success. Thanks, Boris, for that bonus.

Complying with the pandemic rules is, I believe, as much a matter of good manners as it is of good health, the former contributing to the latter. The basis of good manners is consideration for other people. If what I do, or don't do, makes others uncomfortable, then this is inconsiderate, bad manners and wrong. The obvious example, in the circumstances, is the wearing of masks. I have only been wearing a mask in church and in Sainsbury's (in the presence of God and Mammon, respectively!), unless it has been a case of respecting others who happen to be masked.

Personally, I have been very laid back about all the regulations, but not careless, I hope. Yes, I do look forward to joining Eunice in Heaven, but I'm not in any hurry to go. I may be slow, but I do believe I'm quite fit for my age. My favourite prayer is "Thy will be done."

I am not going into the politics of the pandemic, except to say that I heartily endorse

the opinion of journalist Judith Woods who wrote in May 2021 “.. how dare this Government reward the nation’s patience, trust and fortitude with shameless scare-mongering?” As we all were, I was impressed with the nation’s applause for keyworkers in the NHS, although, when I was in the depths of Somerset during the first lockdown, I was so isolated that nobody would have heard me clap: better a little prayer instead.

The others deserving the nation’s gratitude are the volunteer stewards at the vaccination centres. Those I have witnessed at the centre in a hotel outside Basingstoke were doing a brilliant job on both occasions when I went for my jabs (thank you, Kevin, for transporting me). I count among those to be congratulated, Christopher and Philippa who have been volunteers at Minehead hospital, doing 4-hour shifts once or twice a week for several months.

**Zoom** Zoom has landed with a bang on the locked-down lives of many. But not in my case: Zoom has hardly impinged on me, barely denting the surface of my lockdown experience. The truth is that I’m a complete duffer with computers. I account for this by the fact that I retired early, a while before computers became universal in the workplace. Also, I never learned to type (sorry, Anne). I regret, for example, that online bridge is a bridge too far for me. Perhaps I’m too old for new tricks. My technical incompetence may be compounded because I don’t own a smart phone. Actually, to me, the word smart, as in smart meters (unnecessary) and smart motorways (madness), is anathema.

Having admitted all this, I surprised myself be being able to follow on Eunice’s old laptop, one of the U3A monthly lectures by a guest speaker. Also, I was pleased to be able to listen to two sessions of dramatic readings by members of Alton Fringe Theatre. I enjoyed this, especially hearing my daughter, Jo, a stalwart of the Fringe, delivering (from distant Reading) some Wordsworth and Shakespeare.

Of course, the greatest blessing bestowed on me by this technology has been the Mass streamed from St Bede’s, Basingstoke. I chose this church because it is one with which I am familiar, having visited several times, in particular on one of the annual occasions when Bishop Philip invites those with signifi-

cant anniversaries to a celebration at St Bede’s. In the case of Eunice and myself, it was 2017, when we had been married for 60 years.

A final thought: what will Twenty-Twenty mean to my great-grandchildren – apart from excellent eyesight or crazy cricket? Like 1348, the Black Death, and 1666, the Great Fire of London, it will be a date in their history books to be learnt by heart – and will never be forgotten for generations: 2020 the year of Coronavirus!

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Congratulations  
 To Cathie Joseph  
 On gaining her  
 Degree of Bachelor of Divinity

**More Lockdown thoughts –good and bad**

- Quieter roads, more space for nature, more incentives to go out into nature
- Kindness and consideration brought out in a lot of people and attention brought to those whose jobs are vital (primary care givers etc) who have been given some of the credit/attention they deserve
- It has made us realise what we can achieve remotely, without travelling or working in offices. Many showed interesting adaptations to what had become the usual/accepted way of working/behaving
- Difficulties with personal relationships with friends and family when they ignore the rules, do not have the vaccination and/or just lack of contact with them generally
- The minority disregarding the rules has huge implications for the health and finances of others

## A Potato Quiz

What potato(es) ....

- 1) Fly aeroplanes?
- 2) Play Bagpipes
- 3) Are a member of an island nobility?
- 4) Is a musical composition?
- 5) Was a monarch?
- 6) Is a mountain?
- 7) Served in WW2?
- 8) Are ahead of the others?
- 9) A rainbow colour next to orange and a ruler?
- 10) Very imposing?



Tom Barbour

*Editor's note*

*Good to see Tom getting back to normal.*

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## More Lockdown Thoughts

- ◆ Free movement was no longer possible, we were all under 'lock and key!'. Thankfully the sun shone and the garden beckoned.
- ◆ Family, friends and neighbours were excellent at providing food and telephone calls. An added blessing was my ability to access Mass on-line, as I had recently bought a phone which allowed this and I had been shown how to use it.
- ◆ I could follow J'Adore and poetry evenings on Zoom. Otherwise I would have been totally out of touch.
- ◆ No St Patrick's Day and no Easter celebration and very few 'outside' visitors made lockdown eerie especially when so many were dying and we were so aware of how awful this virus really was.
- ◆ When the 2nd lockdown occurred, it seemed worse as if there was no letup, and the weather didn't compare to that of 2020. By then I could go to Mass, thank to Fr James and his stewards; I could also do my own shopping! Even

though I felt as if I were in a strait jacket at times. I thank God for the vaccines which have given hope to so many people.

- ◆ Many people lost their jobs including three of my family, who joined me in September. Hopefully that will change when the lockdown ceases. We live in hope for better times ahead.

Dymphna Wilson

## Blessings

Very early one morning I woke to find myself being cared for by kind ministers of Divine Love in a room beside the ancient pilgrim road to Compostela.

These kind carers came from Africa, the Caribbean, the Philippines, elsewhere and here.

Jesus—bless everyone at the Royal County Hospital, beside that pilgrim road, in Winchester, and all who care for others in any way.

Tom Barbour

## Kitchen Garden

In 2020, a group started working the six raised beds in the St Mary's Presbytery kitchen garden. In the first year, vegetables included squash, brussels sprouts, peppers, chilli and salad produce like rocket and tomatoes. We also transplanted a good clump of mature rhubarb.

One of the beds was given over to flowers such as daffodils, gladioli, dahlias and Zinnias good for church decoration.

Weeds, other greenery and plant material brought from home provided compost and the heaps continue to be nurtured.

Weeding is a constant necessity, particularly of seedlings from the many trees around the garden.



This year's crop will include broad beans sown last Autumn, together with runner beans, leeks, kohlrabi, brussels sprouts and chard sown and planted out in Spring. Salad crops include rocket, spring onions, tomatoes and radishes. Onions, cabbages and cauliflow-

er are waiting in seed trays to be planted out.



Next year may see a start to potatoes if all the old plants, a likely source of disease, are eradicated.

Flowers continue to be an interest, with the perennial bed supplemented by pots with the likes of hosta, roses and meadow flowers to attract the bees.

All our work is monitored by robins and blackbirds who feast on the seed and mealworms we provide. Sadly they do not see off the pigeons or cats against whom netting provides some protection. Fingers crossed, we appear mercifully free of slugs.

We would be grateful for donations of any plants, vegetables or flowers that parishioners could let us have. Thank you.

### **Shops of Bygone Alton**

Here we are again, on the corner of Cross & Pillory and the High Street, where now there are shops i.e hearing centre, carpet shop and empty mobile phone shop, was once the FIRE STATION housing, I think, two engines. Behind that building were public loos, long gone.

MRS WARRENS 2nd hand shop was in the area of PAT FROST carpet shop, when that area was a row of houses.

On the opposite side of the High St., where the FACTORY shop used to be, was the MILK BAR, with a bar and stools for enjoying delicious milk shakes etc.

Moving on down this side, roughly where ICELAND is situated, was ARTHUR HAY'S electrical shop, selling and installing televisions, aerials etc, now we buy one from Sainsbury's and just take it home and plug it in. It was a very old shop with a really dodgy floor.

Of course, ICELAND used to be WOOLWORTHS some eleven or more years ago. WOOLIES before that, occupied the MOUNTAIN WAREHOUSE site. PORTERS, as far as I can recall, has always been a newsagents.

On the corner of TURK ST & HIGH ST, where the GRAPE TREE now occupies, was the HOME & COLONIAL grocery shop, bacon, cheese etc cut or sliced fresh on request. Written on the outside corner wall could at one time be seen these words.. OPEN A SECOND FRONT, this can be viewed on an old Alton Town video, if anyone has or can find one.

HOWITTS LEATHER SHOP to my memory has always been in TURK ST, just across the road in the 1950-1960s was SUMMERSCALES FISH & CHIP shop. I still see Ann, a daughter from the shop, quite often and we remember our school days.

Staying on this side of the street, the NAIL SALON was TRIMMING & WILLIS chemist and high of a shelf in the window were at least two huge glass bottles filled with coloured liquid. I suppose the bottles were really CARBOYS.

From this point my memory is a bit hazy as to what shop was where, except for M & Co, which was owned by Mr Ormond and was PHILLIPS HARDWARE & GENERAL STORE. Mr Ormond had quite a presence in the town and lived in Kings Rd. He used to show Lantern slides at Chawton Village Hall.

Phillips is now owned by M & Co, not rented, so it looks like one shop that will stay!!

Down as far as THE SWAN was COURTS Furniture, DRURYS—menswear and outfitters, International food, FREEMAN, HARDY & WILLIS—shoes. At the Swan the coach and horses from London used to overnight and carry on to Southampton next day.

SAVERS was once the CO-OP and at the back DICKSONS Furniture. COSTA COFFEE was the ARMY & NAVY store. If anyone has any memories of shops, please get in touch with Anne.

Pam Barbour

**Thankyou**

This last year has been sad and traumatic for so many families, with loved ones in hospital and no visiting. This was brought home to me when my own brother, after 10 weeks in 3 different hospitals, one Alton Community and then an Assessment place, passed away. We were used to seeing each other at least once a week but in all those 10 weeks I could not visit. It was heart-breaking and difficult to come to terms with.

Friends have been the good news for all their support, prayers and love.

## Year of the Eucharist

As we enter the Year of the Eucharist called by Bishop Philip, we can look at our own stained glass windows dedicated to the Eucharistic.



These can be found behind the tabernacle and, from the left, depict 'The Wheat & Grapes', these are the fruits of the land, gathered by man and made into bread and wine. The fruits of our labour become our offering to God.

'The Chalice and Host' and 'The Lamb, Pelican and Eagle'. The pelican is shown wounding her breast to feed her young. This has always been taken as an image of Christ's redemptive sacrifice.



The Eagle was believed to be able to gaze at the sun without injury. It is also the symbol of St John the Evangelist who wrote the 4th Gospel and the book of Revelation, both of which have references to the Eucharist.



## Laudato Si Group

Our small group meet regularly and maintain contacts with other groups throughout the Diocese. It is sometimes difficult to think about all the things that need done or all the people that need help but as Mother Teresa said "Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest to you."



We hope there is support in the parish and would very much like to hear any ideas you have.

A parish audit was carried out, which shows that we (or rather Fr James) is very committed to saving energy and having efficient systems within the church and presbytery.

At a diocesan Laudato Si meeting we were informed that the every parish in the Diocese is now using 100% renewable energy.

There are items we can look at once the hall is open again for use, such as using more Fairtrade goods.



Within the grounds, water is collected from the garage roof for use in the garden and wildlife is encouraged to visit, there is a small 'wild' area in the garden full of bluebells, and we hope to have a larger area given over to wild flowers in the front.

We are good at recycling materials such as glass and paper and also recycling books within the parish.

There are things we hope to implement as a parish and others that individuals might take on.

The Pope's encyclical covers a wide, all encompassing picture but as he says;

**'Inseparable is the bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace'.**

## CaFod Summer Funraiser

Take on an active challenge for CAFOD this summer in celebration of the return of international sporting events! Run, cycle, swim, play tennis or football, or anything else that you love doing. You can do it on your own or with your family! You'll be helping people around the world who are suffering because of climate change.

More information from the CaFod website.

## Traidcraft Shop

If you are looking for Fairtrade Goods or Sustainable Fashion, you might be interested to know that the Traidcraft shop is having its Summer Sale.

<https://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/>

## Alton Eco Fair Sun 11th July

The weather stayed dry, if not sunny and there was plenty to see at the public gardens. Various wildlife groups were present, including RSPB and Hampshire Wildlife.

It takes a lot of work to set up something like this so it was good to see lots of people wandering around. The Quakers and St Lawrence groups had stalls so perhaps we could do something next time.

There were inspiring talks from young people on the need for action and information on waste, recycling and re-using materials.

One thing I learned was that if you have an old feather pillow that is no longer in use,

you can add the feathers to the compost heap. (Perhaps in several goes rather than all at once.)

### **Apostleship of the Sea**

In his address for Sea Sunday, Pope Francis urged governments, ship owners and organisations to make sure that seafarer's welfare and safety are protected, and their human rights protected.

It is estimated that last year in September, possibly 400 000 seafarers were stuck at sea because of travel restrictions due to the pandemic. Although this has reduced to half that number, many are being asked to work beyond their contracts.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the current crisis is that the global trade of goods has been hardly affected at all. But this has come at a cost for seafarers unable to return home for many months.

The Apostleship of the Sea provided practical, emotional and spiritual support for many. Funds raised enable them to continue this support.

### **World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly**

Pope Francis inaugurates the first Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on 25th July this year. The pope says that we should cherish the elderly and that there is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel and passing on the traditions of the faith to the young.

Bishop David Oakley, who chairs the Bishops' Conference Committee for Marriage and Family Life, recently thanked the older generation for their long fidelity to the Catholic Church and how they play a key role with their prayerful intercession.

He described them as the 'Intensive Prayer Units' of the Church!

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Bishops' Conference, is echoing the Pope's words to young people encouraging them to talk to their grandparents if they want to be a sign of hope for the world.

Promoting the important connection between generations, Cardinal Nichols said:

"Elderly people get isolated, grandparents often get forgotten. But a day of prayer will help us to remember that we are gifts to each other because we are gifts of God. And if we give thanks for those gifts, we'll appreciate them."

### **Honours**

Sophie Andreae, an architectural historian who has worked tirelessly to protect and promote historic Catholic churches and heritage, has been made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to heritage.

### **50 Catholic Churches to See Before You Die**

Written by Elena Curti, this illustrated book gives us 50 catholic churches that are among the great architectural treasures of England and Wales but yet hardly known and rarely explored.

### **Giving Thanks For Summer**

Father, Creator of all, thank You for summer!  
Thank you for the warmth of the sun  
and the increased daylight.  
Thank You for the beauty I see all around me  
and for the opportunity to be outside and enjoy  
Your creation.  
Thank You for the increased time I have to be  
with my friends and family,  
and for the more casual pace of the summer  
season.  
Draw me closer to You this summer.  
Teach me how I can pray  
no matter where I am or what I am doing.  
Warm my soul with the awareness of Your  
presence  
and light my path with Your Word and Coun-  
sel.  
As I enjoy Your creation, create in me  
a pure heart and a hunger and a thirst for You.

- *Author Unknown*



- Potato Quiz Answers  
1. Arran Pilots 2. Maris Pipers 3. Jersey Royals  
4. Melody 5. King Edward 6. Ben Lomond  
7. Home Guard 8. Sutton's Foremost 9. Red King  
10. Majestic

### **PPC**

Fr James

Anne Bothwell,

David Hudec,

Steve Joseph

Kevin Matthews

Andrew Croom-Johnson

Cathie Joseph,

Gill Matthews

David Parkinson