



# *The Shell*



The Magazine of St James the Greater  
Leicester

Summer 2020

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

8.30 am Holy Communion    10.30 am Choral Eucharist  
6.30 pm Choral Evensong & Sermon  
6.00 in Lent

## MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION

10.30 am Thursdays  
MORNING PRAYER  
9 am Tuesday-Friday

See Calendar for variations and details of services on Saints Days

**The above services are temporarily suspended pending resolution  
of the COVID-19 situation**

## MINISTRY TEAM

Vicar

Revd Andrew Quigley MA (Oxon) MTh

0116 254 4113

Associate Non-Stipendiary Priest

Revd Jane Sharp

Honorary Associate Priests

Revd David Clark BA

Very Revd Dr Derek Hole Hon LLD Hon DLitt

Readers

Mr David Brunning MA (Oxon)

Mrs Pam Howe

Angela Jagger BA PhD

Pastoral Assistant

Sacristan

Miss Vicky Roe BPhil.Ed MA

Sheila Roberts MA

*For further information please contact:*

*Church Office, St James Hall, St James Terrace, Leicester LE2 1NA*

[office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk](mailto:office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk)    0116 254 2111

The cover photograph is of St James the Greater on a stained glass panel, 1618.  
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## From the Editor's Desk



We are all greatly incommoded, and perhaps not a little confused, by the current rules, regulations and social norms by which we now have to abide in order to defeat the COVID 19 virus.

The downside is that this issue of *The Shell* is only available electronically on the website but, unlike previous printed issues, it is all in glorious technicolour.

Our corporate church life has pretty well ground to a halt although we manage to keep in touch with one another, either by 'phone or electronic means such as Skype or Zoom, and Annabel continues to keep us up to speed with things in her weekly newsheet which is widely distributed round the parish and congregation via email.

Andy Judge, together with the musicians of St James the Greater, has worked wonders by putting together two services of Choral Evensong which can be found on YouTube. These can be located easily via the church website at [www.stjamesthegreater.org.uk](http://www.stjamesthegreater.org.uk). They have attracted a worldwide congregation so despite the current lockdown the missionary activity of St James is alive and kicking. Well done, Andy!

Andy's account of how this feat was accomplished can be found on page 8.

People are finding lots of interesting things to do during this lockdown era. Perhaps you might like to drop me a line for publication in the next issue about what you have been up to. I have been busy doing family history, both for myself and for friends and relatives.

I have also been reading a lot. I have just finished the excellent book *The Spiritual Quest of Francis Wagstaffe* (the pseudonym of the Reverend David Johnson who died a few weeks ago) which is the ecclesiastical equivalent of the *Henry Root Letters*. Wagstaffe wrote strange letters to elevated members of the Church of England, mainly bishops, and printed these in his book, together with the replies, often equally strange, which he had received: all highly entertaining!

I have just begun *Without Precedent* by Geoffrey Kirk the recently demised one time National Secretary of the Forward in Faith movement. This is an excellent book about the background to the ordination of women, which Rowan Williams found to be an "undoubtedly lucid and helpful survey, which quite rightly punctures some awful historical nonsense."

In the hope that my in-tray will be overflowing in time for the Autumn issue of *The Shell*, it would be very helpful if you could let me have your material for that by 17 August. Thank you!

Kind readers continue to ask after Hendrix's wellbeing. The news is not good I'm afraid. His lumbar sacral disease progressed to the point where medication was ceasing to be effective and he was obviously in continuous pain. On Wednesday 22 April we had to take the dreadful decision to have him put to sleep. *Sic transit gloria canis*.

Graham Jagger

[editor@stjamesthegreater.org.uk](mailto:editor@stjamesthegreater.org.uk)

## The Vicar writes ...



As I write this, we are nearing the end of Eastertide; May is nearly over and summer is close. But for me it feels as if we are locked in a strangely extended Lent, back in March when we were last allowed to gather in churches, or for that matter in pubs, restaurants, cinemas or sportsgrounds. Lenten self-denial has ballooned into an all-encompassing denial of so many of the things that shaped our “normal” life Before. “Before” feels like it needs to be capitalized, just as at some point, perhaps ever so gradually and maybe many months in the future, there will be an “After.”

The distant news from Wuhan has become the omnipresent reality of our lives, and of all the world. What started as farcical loo-roll stockpiling has reached a grim, shocking, tragedy as the UK has become the most deadly nation in Europe. I’m sure that all of us by now will know at least one person, friend or family member, who has died of Coronavirus. Even if the angel of death has passed over us at a reasonable distance, the sheer strangeness of life – the masks, the shutdowns, the disruption of daily lives and long-term plans, will have marked most of us with a kind of grief, or at least a cutting adrift from our familiar hopes and comforts.

Barred, until recently, from my own church, where the Lenten array still hangs, it has felt often to me as if we are living through a version of the witch’s curse in Narnia, where instead of it being always winter and never Christmas, it is always Lent, but never

Easter. Celebrations on Mothering Sunday, posies, family lunches, gone. The solemn celebration of Holy Week, the waiting on Maundy Thursday, the mournful Good Friday, gone. And the dawn kindling of Easter light shared and processed, the Hallelujahs echoing around the church, silent.

Surveying the empty church with the CCTV camera the lines of Shakespeare’s sonnet 73 have often come to mind: “Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang...” Not that the choir stalls are ruined, merely empty, and it was our choir that sang rather than birds.... In short, for me, and I’m sure for many reading this, it is as if something vital, the solid pendulum weight of our lives has been suddenly stilled or removed. Time is not truly standing still, but has lost its familiar markers, perhaps even its purpose.

There has been much enforced optimism, pointing out that while church buildings are closed, the Church itself is open. And this is true – the Church as God’s people, praying, caring, serving, remains open, even if curtailed. Some churches and clergy have gone into broadcasting overdrive, seeking to rival the daily briefings from scientists and politicians. Many tens of thousands more people are accessing these online services (including the astounding Evensongs our choir have put together) than would normally darken church doors when they were open. Without normal purposes or supports in work, family, friends, recreation,

and with increased anxiety, even fear, many are finding the space for, even the necessity of the spiritual life, the preciousness of prayer.

And outside the quiet streets where spring birdsong has been heard more clearly than in a generation, where clear skies free of smog and con-trails have shown us sun and moon and stars, where just walking outside for an hour a day has become a longed-for treat rather than the trudging chore that exercise used to be – outside there is for many a certain kind of “Easter-ness”. And for some who find the noise and pace, the haranguing haste of “normal” life wearying, in quiet, in solitude, in reading or gardening, or thinking, there has been a rediscovery of that hope, that new life, which would have been preached and sung in our churches.

All of this has led many to plead that when the “After” comes, we do not simply return to “Normal”, blithely slipping into the rut of noise, congestion, pointless haste and trivial concerns. This may apply to Church culture as much as to the rest of life!

Through all this, please be assured of my ongoing prayers for you, and for our community. If we have your contact details you should have heard from either me or one of the ministry team by ‘phone or email – if you haven’t, or know someone who would appreciate a call, do let me know.

I hope you have been able to access the expanded weekly news, as well as extra reflections, news and resources via the website, Facebook page and YouTube channel. I’m aware that not everyone has the connections, skills or inclination to access things digitally, and we are working

to overcome this, bearing in mind that we are not permitted to hand-deliver material because of the risk of infection transmission.

I would have liked to conclude by giving some indication as to when we might return to St James’. That is still unclear but may be some time in July. Even then though it is likely that things will be extremely disrupted and strange – social distancing is certain, which makes communion services unlikely, and singing too has been banned in churches elsewhere as studies show it is worse than coughing for infection spread.

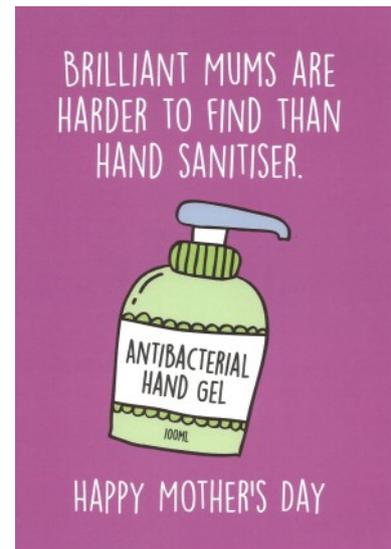
Bearing all this in mind I, and many others in the Church, are praying and reflecting to discern what kind of Church God is calling us to be at this time. The image of exile is an apposite one, and we are trying to find how we might sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land (and when singing may be banned!).

One thought-provoking criticism made by historian Tom Holland is that the church has been too quiet about its hope. In the face of disruption and death, the Easter message should have been proclaimed more loudly. It might seem unduly sombre (if in keeping with the tone of this piece) to finish with one of the Sentences read at the beginning of funeral services, but of course the message of the Christian funeral is the Easter message, one we must proclaim to a world that so badly needs to hear it:

“I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

# Ship of Fools ...

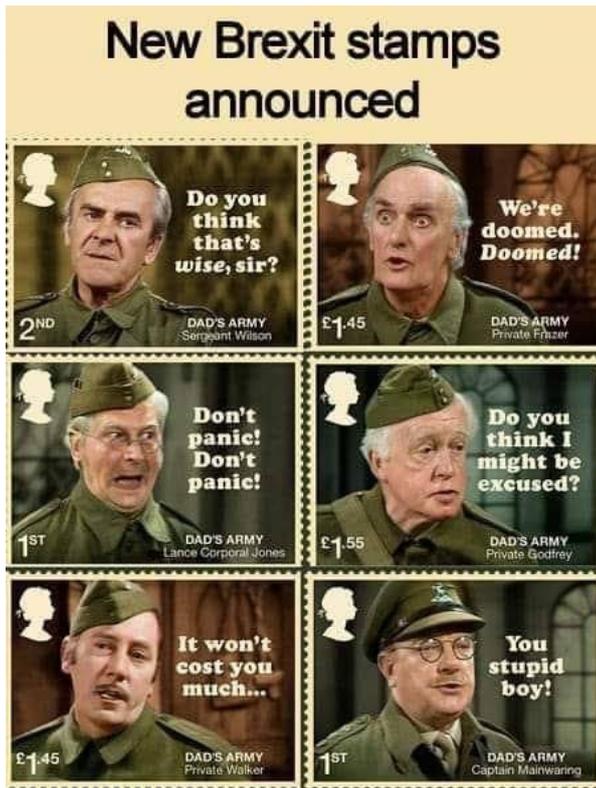
A Church Mum received this from her son on Mothering Sunday:



... and what our pets get up to!

Seen in a store near  
Lambeth Palace





Wisdom from the soldiers of Dad's Army

English organ stop



### Church service sheet typos and ambiguities

- ◆ This evening at 7pm there will be hymn singing in the park opposite the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
- ◆ Bring and share supper at 6pm – prayer and medication to follow.
- ◆ Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- ◆ Sermon this morning: “Jesus walks on the Water”
- ◆ Sermon this evening: “Searching for Jesus”

# We Wonder as we Wander ...

## Lockdown musings from Paul and Tricia Dean

During the coronavirus lockdown, our 'daily exercise' sometimes takes the form of a circular walk to and from the nearby village of Bitteswell, partly along an ancient footpath across fields. Earlier, this involved picking our way around boggy areas of ground, still waterlogged after the exceptionally wet winter. Crossing a narrow metal footbridge, protected at each end by a traditional wooden stile, gave a bird's-eye view of a swollen brook, still racing beneath our feet. How things have changed!

May has arrived, in both senses of the word. So far, the lockdown period has been blessed with balmy weather and the fields are responding with a healthy growth of pasture. One field is now populated by several shiny-coated horses and another by equally healthy cattle. The field boundaries are picked out by hawthorn trees, heavy with may blossom, which peppers the ground below with a confetti of fallen petals and fills the air with its heady scent. Horse chestnuts are resplendent with white 'candles' of blossom which augurs well for the autumn's conkers. Yet, nearby, stands the skeleton of a tree that must have been resplendent in its prime: but, what kind of tree? A more youthful neighbour, with a robust trunk and leaves to examine, suggests that these are limes. We remember the lime tree in our neighbour's garden in Leicester. Its blossom made our car windscreens sticky at this time of year ...

Passing through the village, we admire the delicate wisteria draped across the front of one of the cottages. St Mary's, Bitteswell, boasts an external niche in its south wall and, traditionally, this is beautifully dressed as an Easter garden on Good Friday. This year, the niche remained empty, save for a pot plant, accompanied by palm crosses.

Although we walk together, the nature of the terrain, coupled with the requirements

for social distancing from other walkers, often leads us to adopt a tandem formation, rather than side by side. Walking one behind the other (no distinction between who leads and who follows) makes verbal communication more difficult, so such stretches tend to be covered in relative silence. However, that doesn't stop our minds from racing and, once we're back within earshot of each other, the comments and questions spill out!

Subject matter ranges far and wide, thankfully beyond the nuts and bolts of the pandemic. We must check on the full meaning of the term 'bullock' when we get home ... Shall we be able to unearth our hoard of union flags in time to mark VE Day 75? What shall we cook for the weekly family Zoom afternoon tea? This is evolving into something of a Bake Off, with grandchildren flexing their culinary muscles in the West Midlands and our daughter-'out'-law demonstrating her mother's American recipes. Isn't it marvellous that modern technology is allowing us to accomplish so much by doing things in a new way?

Of course, we can't ignore the lockdown completely. Above all, we're grateful that our countrymen, women, and children are demonstrating the best of human nature, behaving public-spiritedly, even when social distancing is hard, looking out for each other and keeping in touch with one another. Our values are being reset and long may the new standards continue. But, do we fully appreciate that balancing the nation's books after supporting the economy through the pandemic, will take a long long time?

As Christians, we believe that we're never burdened with more than we can bear. And, as Dame Julian of Norwich once said, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." Let us take courage and keep on wandering!

# Summer Recipes

## Treacle Scones

*8 oz. Self-raising flour*

*2 oz. Butter*

*1 oz. Caster sugar*

*½ teaspoon ground cinnamon*

*2 tablespoons black treacle or golden syrup*

*Pinch of salt*

*Milk to mix—approximately ¼ pint*

Set oven to 425° F or Mark 7. Grease a baking sheet, sift the flour and salt into a bowl and rub in the butter. Mix in the sugar and cinnamon . Add the treacle or syrup and sufficient milk to make a soft dough. Turn onto a floured surface and knead gently. The dough should be fairly moist and elastic. Roll out to about ½ inch thick. Cut into rounds with a 2½ inch pastry cutter. Place on the baking sheet, brush with a little milk and bake for 10-15 minutes until golden in colour. Cool on a wire rack. Serve split in half and buttered.

*Elizabeth Bentley*

## Honey Cookies

*4 oz. butter*

*4 oz. demerara sugar*

*1 rounded tablespoon honey*

*8 oz. self-raising flower*

*Pinch of salt*

*1 egg*

Cream butter and sugar, gradually beat in the egg. Add honey then work in flour and salt to make soft dough. Add any flavourings, dried or candied fruits as desired. Roll into small balls and arrange on a greased baking sheet. Bake at 350° F or Mark 4 until golden brown.

*Phyl Clulow*

## In Quires and places where they sing ...

In the Spring 2020 issue of *The Shell* there was an article about the installation of Vicky Johnson as Precentor of York Minster. The ceremony took place in the context of Choral Evensong which included, among other things, Herbert Howells's *Collegium Regale* setting of the evening canticles. Such services are now a thing of the past and it is not clear when they will resume; so what do we do in the meantime?

Andy Judge, a computing professional and a member of St James's choir for almost four decades, got to work to put together a virtual evensong. The results of his not inconsiderable labours have been truly remarkable and have earned plaudits from a worldwide congregation: we owe him a great debt of gratitude. Here Andy describes the process which led to ...



### Evensong in Extra-Ordinary Times

It seems a long time ago now, that day in March, when the services stopped, the church buildings were locked and we all had to start getting used to a different sort of Church and a different sort of normal. This of course included the choir who were now unable to meet to practise and to sing.

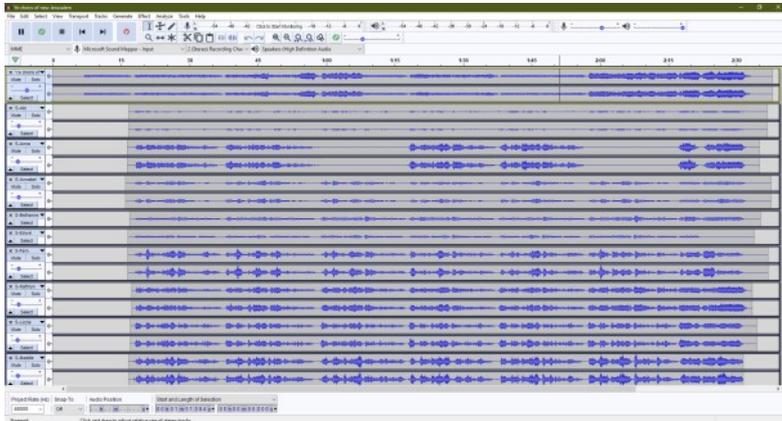
*What does a choir do when it's told that it can't meet? It carries on singing of course!*

To date we have offered two full virtual Evensongs via YouTube, one for **Easter Day** and one for **Easter 5**, in an attempt to give a little normality during these strange times. One of the most frequent questions that I have been asked is simply "*How have you done that?*", so here is a brief explanation of what has gone on behind the scenes to produce these virtual services.

I had seen a few videos online where people had recorded themselves singing multiple times and then combined the separate recordings into a single performance. I started to wonder how similar techniques could be applied to a larger group of singers and whether we, as a choir, could maybe record a hymn or possibly an anthem for Easter Day because it was looking less and less likely that we would be back in the stalls by then. (Oh, how little we knew!). Normal audio and video 'phone calls can't be used to sing as a group because there is an inherent delay that makes it impossible, but with modern smartphones and tablets most people have the means to simply video record things. Investigation and experimenting with the various pieces of software that would be required showed me that a) yes it was possible and b) timing was the key. With the help of Penny, Joe in Manchester and Pippa in Shepshed, we each individually recorded a verse of a hymn and I edited and mixed these into a short video, which I then sent to Matt Haynes to see if he would be interested in trying something similar with the choir. He was very excited and readily agreed. We decided to try a hymn and if that came together well, we would consider a full evensong.

The first step was for Matt to record the organ accompaniment. Fortunately he has a very good computerised organ at home, currently configured to emulate the organ in Hereford

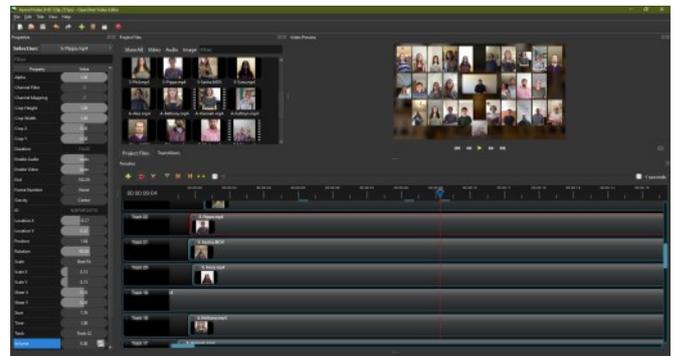
Cathedral. He then played the recording out and videoed himself conducting an imaginary choir. This was then sent to each member of the choir, who in turn videoed themselves singing their part whilst listening to the accompaniment through headphones and watching Matt conduct. This for singers is a slightly surreal experience as we are so used to hearing other people singing and blending with them. The resulting video of them singing, but only their voice being heard was then sent back to me.



Some of the Soprano voice parts

been listening to the same accompaniment track and following Matt's conducting, the rest of the hymn was automatically correct. **The moment when I had finished aligning each track individually and for the first time played all the voices together was almost magical, as the choir once again were singing together.** As a whole range of equipment had been used to make the recordings, I then had to adjust and balance the volume for each voice to create a blend and then finally added a little "reverb" to give the recording some ambience. Matt then listened and requested any musical nuances he wanted included and we soon had the first audio recording of the St James the Greater (Virtual) Choir.

The next step was to use *OpenShot* (a digital video editor). A similar process involved loading each individual video and aligning the points where the singing started, so that everyone's mouths were moving in time. This time, however, I muted the videos and included the mixed and balanced audio track from *Audacity*. Each video was then scaled down and positioned around the screen, producing the now familiar look of a virtual choir.



Creating a video



A finished video

This whole process was then repeated for each of the choral items, some taking a lot longer than others as they are musically more complex. Finally, I combined them together with the readings and the prayers from the Vicar to produce the final service and uploaded it to YouTube. In total there have been around 400 individual recordings to process taking around over 120 hours to mix and edit and using about 150Gb of disk space!

The two evensongs we have produced to date are proving to be very popular. Matt and I were interviewed for an article on the Diocesan website and we were mentioned in an article in the *Church Times*. Each of the services have been watched by around 2000 viewers — not a bad number in the virtual congregation — who have come from all over the world and elicited a lot of very nice comments, such as:

*Thank you so much for this service, so special in every way in these challenging times.*

*Technically and musically, impressive in every way. The enthusiasm of this choir and its music director shine in every piece. Lucky old Leicester.*

*Hello from Buffalo (area), New York State. As a retired organist–choirmaster, I loved every minute of it. I am amazed at the technical ability to do this and have it work out so beautifully and perfectly. That's an amazing choir and organist you have! Congratulations to every one of you. I just love the Howells and Gardiner music.*

*Thank you so much everyone who participated in this. It was lovely to have a St James' Evensong again. I found the music, lessons and Andrew's homily particularly meaningful.*

*Absolutely superb, thank you so much. I couldn't believe how together the psalm was and I loved the way the hymns were sung. The solo tuba and 32' reed made me smile in the Evening Hymn. The prayers were spot on too!*

*Greetings from Christchurch New Zealand. What an inspiring effort right from the first hymn. As a retired Cathedral DOM I was delighted to hear the Howells' Canticles again, brilliantly accompanied. Lovely ambience in the recording and co-ordination of the choir is remarkable for a virtual recording of individual voices. Superb anthem too, so well done and hoping for more!*

Will we do more? The answer to that is probably yes, but hopefully not too many more — we long to be back in the choir stalls.

Finally, the hymn that I mentioned I had used right at the start is, I feel, very apt to this whole process and sums up why we are doing it.

*Through all the changing scenes of life,  
in trouble and in joy,  
the praises of my God shall still  
my heart and tongue employ.*

You can listen to the two services as well any future ones via:

The church website: [www.stjamesthegreater.org.uk](http://www.stjamesthegreater.org.uk) or on our

YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwZ96MUUFqrNRIZmrTRH0mA>

# John Martin Brooks Earle Raven 1936-2020

## A tribute by Soo Spector and Ed Raven

### Childhood

Dad was born into a Christian family in 1936. The third born child to his parents Edward and Esther with older sisters Anne and Joan and later a younger sister Rosemary.

His father had seen service in the Great War as an army chaplain and by this time was a successful and influential Dean of St John's College Cambridge. His uncle, Charles Raven, was vice chancellor of Cambridge University. The Raven family life was centred on University and Church with many intellectual influences and opportunities.

They played family tennis on a grass tennis court of sorts marked in the garden where nearby obstructions meant a baseline shot was normally a winner. This training meant that Dad's ability to aim for just inside a line on the tennis court was breath-taking!

Sadly his father Edward died when Dad was 14.

This left Esther, later known as Gran, as an inspirational family figure for the generations that knew her, launching wonderfully thoughtful and well orientated young adults into the world.

### Young Man

Dad was a bright and diligent student, making the most of the opportunities given to him. He obtained the necessary qualification to study classics at St John's College Cambridge where he met lifelong friends including Peter Walker and Ted Eilley.



### Marriage

In 1957 a group of nurses at Addenbrookes Hospital Cambridge were organising a 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party for one of their group. They knew the event was short on boys. One of the nurses, Norma, had a boyfriend called Peter Walker. Could Peter round up some suitable boys to come to the party? Peter took Dad who met the birthday girl for the first time, a spirited nurse called Barbara Dennis.

They married in August 1960 and it's clear from the wedding photos that the academic and clerical Raven family were no match for the Dennis family who had sharper elbows and greater drive to make it to the front of the group pictures.

Over the 1960s, their three children arrived: Soo, Liz and Ed.

They moved to Leicester in 1970 and set up camp at 291 London Road – 50 happy years in the family home and place of warm hospitality to all who visited.

Dad said his greatest achievement was securing our mother. He said she might have not been right for everyone, but she was just so very right for him. And he was so correct. Her skill, care and accomplishment in nursing him, so well, to the end, at home, is testament to that. His last words were saying to Mum how much he loved her.

### **Work**

Rather than an academic career Dad was attracted to manufacturing industry and joined Courtaulds, where in 1970 he was made a director at Wolsey hosiery here in Leicester. Later in the 1980s, his job ended, and he needed to do something else.

So, with partners John Hill and John Davis he set up Ratby Garments Limited in 1983, putting 291 London Road up as security. It was not an easy time for the Leicester hosiery industry, but the partnership team complemented each other's skills. They worked hard and made a real go of it providing good employment for around 40 people in Ratby and surrounding villages. It is wonderful that some of the Ratby team are here today.

Dad was always a driven and energetic man in every aspect of his life. As children we remember him working 12 hour days as the norm and still having energy left to weed the garden, entertain friends and be an attentive father.

### **Friends**

Friends were always important and valued by Dad. He loved the company of his tennis circle from including the Serjeants, Austins, Coopers and Arlotts. He was a good tennis player apart from what we called the "Raven smash" which no matter how close to the net he stood, the smash would end up in the net. Sadly this is trait passed to the next generation of the family.

He took real delight in his involvement with Probus and really enjoyed and valued the activities and fellowship there. Indeed, he chose the red wine for after this service with his Probus friends in mind.

His other family were his St James friends. Dad would do anything for any member of St James congregation – as he loved to be useful and assist people in times of trial and difficulty. Over the last months Derek Hole visited Dad every afternoon to chat and discuss matters theological. Indeed the family thank Derek today for all the organisation and help in producing this service.

### **Memories**

Being with Dad was in itself a major ingredient for the making of happy memories. He had a gift of injecting energy, imagination and interest into the recipe of possibilities for the days together.

As a family we tended to holiday in the same places year after year, engendering a lifelong love of those places.

How well we remember Easter holidays overlooking Derwent Water in the Lake District. Our first trip up there as a rookie family of hill walkers involved getting soaked

to BELOW the skin on our first ever walk. Indeed, Ed fell into a puddle up to his middle! Back at our holiday cottage, Mum was presented with 3 wet children and sopping clothes such that poor Dad had to kit us all out in Peter Storm cagoules and walking boots the next day at George Fisher's in Keswick. Nevertheless, no matter what the weather threw at him, Dad's love of walking in the mountains was never dampened and our adventures together on the fells are some of our fondest memories.

We spent our summer holidays in the highlands of Scotland on the Rose-Miller estate making lifelong friends with the Rose-Miller Family.

This was the age before our "Health and Safety" culture. There are men sitting here today who have done Motor Rally racing with Dad, in their precious cars up the hill from Cawdor – a single track road – each with children sitting on the windowsill hanging out thrilling at the speed and daring. Dad was always Jackie Stewart and always won in our eyes!

Dad really loved all the parts of Scotland we visited. In particular, walking the golden deserted beaches and wilderness together chatting with the family and all with such good humour.

Dad was always available for a game: the playing of tennis, golf, boules and bridge, yet while he was always capable of winning he was more concerned with the time being fun for all participants.

His special thing however was the completing of *The Times* crossword. Dad with his favoured pink parker pen would orchestrate and encourage the group effort and where needed, humbly revealing his

intellectual powers.

Yet the fabric of his life was spending time with family and friends ideally with good food and wine.

### **Faith**

We've heard of Dad's faith from Derek and Glynn but we also wanted to say how you couldn't fail to recognise the fruits of the spirit with Dad, in his nature and interactions. Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

However, he did carry a mild form of hatred in his heart for select items:

He hated spreadable butter substitute and worse of all, spawn of the Devil, Elmlea cream substitute.

He bravely carried a form of disability that meant there was invariably an accident when pouring cream on his pudding, resulting in partial or full flooding.

### **Impact**

So often he was a force for positive good, navigating difficult situations with skilful diplomacy and tact and giving of his time and energy.

Dad shaped our lives and many others through his love and reason.

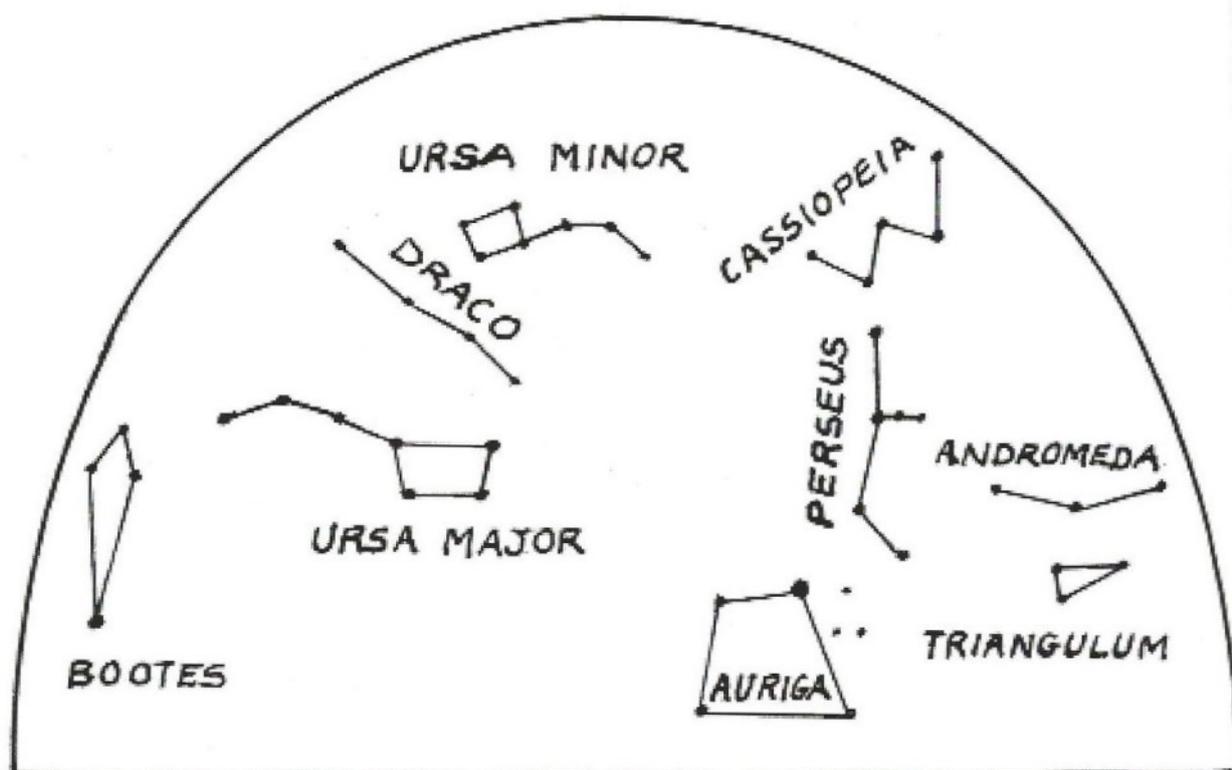
He's gone. The loss is ours. He's gone home to be with God and where, with the grace of God, we'll be reunited in time.

We're so thankful for his love and impact on us and give thanks to God for his life and pray that God holds him and all of us in his everlasting love.

# Church Tour

## A series of articles about significant features of the church — No. 1

Here is a description, written by David McDermott and taken from Alan McWhirr's book *Century to Millennium — St James the Greater, Leicester 1899-1999*, of the constellations in the ceiling of the apse.



The stars chosen for the apse depict nine well-known constellations which can be seen when looking north in our September night sky. Most famous is the Great Bear (Ursa Major) known to many as the Plough. Below and to the left lies the constellation Boötes, often referred to as the Herdsman and which contains the brilliant star Arcturus mentioned in the Bible (Job Ch 9 v 9 and Ch 38 vv 31 & 32). Above the Great Bear and to the right lies the Little Bear (Ursa Minor) with the Pole Star at the tip of its tail. Between the Bears several faint stars form part of the constellation of the Dragon (Draco). High in the sky to the right of the Little Bear and shaped like the letter 'W' lies Cassiopeia.

Beneath Cassiopeia six stars form the general outline of Perseus, famous in Greek mythology for his rescue of Andromeda, the daughter of Cassiopeia. Three stars of Andromeda lie to the right of Perseus. Below Andromeda three more stars form the Triangle (Triangulum).

Below Perseus lies one of the loveliest constellations in our sky. It is known as Auriga (the Charioteer). Its brilliant yellow star, Capella (the She Goat), is circumpolar; it never sets. It is one of the brightest stars in our sky. The small stellar triangle beside Capella is sometimes referred to as the Kids.

# Graysford Hall NOW OPEN



## *Brand new luxury senior living in Stonegate, Leicestershire*

- ◆ 25sq. metre private en suite bedrooms & couples suites ◆
- ◆ Generous all-inclusive package ◆
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## ... where angels fear to tread?

Bill trained as a Methodist minister and, in his twenties, he was sent by the church as a missionary to Kenya. As the station was short staffed, on one occasion he was left on his own in a very remote outpost for a period of time – unfortunately during that time he contracted malaria which, with no one to care for him, turned into Blackwater fever and Bill came close to death. Fortunately, he was found in time and was evacuated to England where he recuperated but was never restored to complete health and strength. Shortly after his return from Kenya, despite his weakness, he and Mary were married. Weakened by his illness, he was retired from the Methodist Church as unfit for service at the age of twenty-nine.

But Bill continued to have a burning desire to reach those people who had not had the chance to hear about Jesus. Disillusioned with his previous denomination, he and Mary were eventually sent to Papua New Guinea as faith missionaries by the House Church Movement in the north of England. They spent some time at the New Tribes Mission headquarters in the mountains helping with the work and getting to know the country, but all the time, searching for the place where God was leading them – a place where no one knew the gospel.

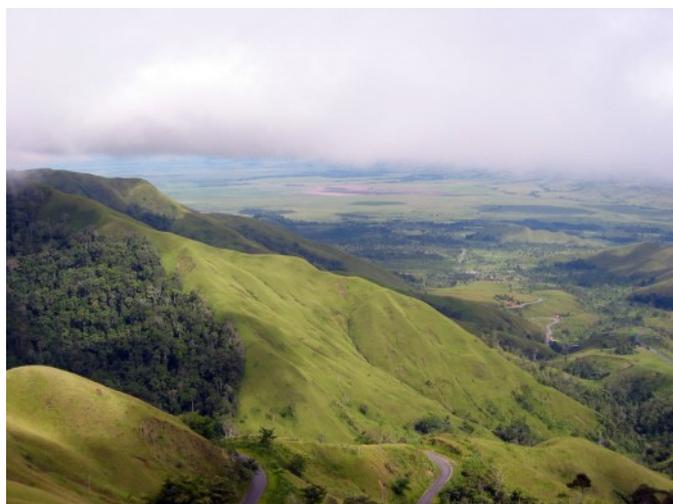
Studying maps and praying, Bill was led to consider a fairly remote and backward valley about halfway along a five-hour drive – over unmade roads crossed by many rivers and creeks – between the main coastal town and the highlands. The region had been visited in the past by the Lutheran Church so, feeling sure he had been called to this place, Bob wrote asking if it would be imposing on their work if he and his wife also went to this area. The response was that, as the two catechists sent there had been ritually murdered, no one would go there again – it was too dangerous for the church to venture

in. The area was completely under the domination of witchdoctors and the people lived in constant fear of sorcery.

Bill and Mary went to live there – they built their own house of bush materials and made friends as far as possible with the villagers. Every Sunday Bill held a Bible study – mostly no one came – and most of their time



was spent treating infected cuts and sores, helping care for mothers and babies, but also talking about the power of Jesus and how his power could overcome the witchdoctors. Mary found it particularly distressing as so many of the families were cursed and many babies died.



Every so often they would travel to the main coastal town to shop for supplies. On

these occasions they enjoyed the fellowship and friendship a small group of Christian expatriates there who got together weekly for prayer and Bible study. They also enjoyed showing hospitality to travellers along their road, providing a welcome break and refreshment for those who had to travel to the mountains. Each year they worked on their house and surroundings – one year celebrating the purchase of a ‘proper floor’ instead of split bamboo. After about ten years, at a time when they were soon to go on furlough to England, they were rather discouraged that, although they had made many improvements in the health and living conditions of their villagers, and they and their children had made good friends, no one had shown any interest in becoming a Christian – they had no baptisms.

They shared this concern with their fellowship group on a visit to town and it was

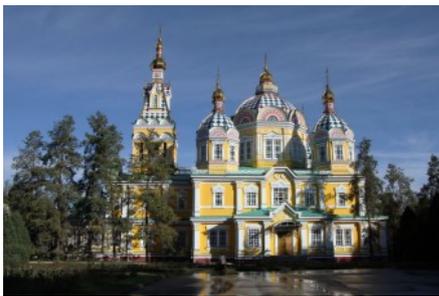
sad to see them so depressed. After they had gone home to prepare for the journey the group discussed the best way to pray for Bill and Mary. Should the prayers be for them to feel more positive, should it be for them to have a time of rest and refreshment in England and to come back renewed, or was something else the best way to pray for them? It was decided that there should be a specific prayer that someone would come forward for baptism by a specific date before they left for furlough – and so that was the prayer. A few weeks later, when they arrived in town ready to leave for England, they reported that about half a dozen villagers came to them and said “we have listened to your teaching for many years and we have been watching how you live – now we know that what you have told us is true and we wish to be baptised and become Christians.”

Thanks to Dorothy Lusmore for permission to use this material. Ed.

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## This quarter's puzzle

Identify these four cathedrals and win a prize!



Correct answers next time!

# More Memories of Highfields

## Tricia Dean revisits old time

Having lived on Humberstone Road for 40 years, with our educational and worshipping environs located on the periphery of Victoria Park, our family members became very familiar with Highfields in general and Spinney Hill Park in particular.

We moved to Leicester in 1971, when Paul and I were appointed to our first posts as biology teachers at the Wyggeston Boys' and Girls' Grammar Schools, respectively. Travelling to and from work involved traversing Highfields, sometimes on foot, more often by car, always alongside the Park for at least part of the journey. This pattern was perpetuated in later years, when both our sons attended Wyggeston Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, although their favoured mode of transport was a bicycle.

Such travels were not confined to weekdays, once Paul had joined the Choir of St James the Greater, followed by Anthony, who went on to serve as Head Chorister. In those days, choir practices took up Monday and Friday evenings, with morning and evenings services swallowing up most of Sunday. And we should not forget the weekly 41<sup>st</sup> St James Cub Scout gatherings!

People have often compared, whimsically, the 'twin towers' of St James with those of the original Wembley Stadium. However, St James is not the only building in Highfields with which that comparison could be made. The Evington Cinema, located on the cross roads of East Park Road and St Peters Road, boasted a similar façade, which was the only part of the building to be preserved, after the cinema was destroyed by fire. Apparently, the last film shown there was *Saturday Night Fever*, which dates that memory!

Travelling along Melbourne Road, the corrugated iron structure of St Hilda's Church, painted in bright colours (are yellow ochre and blue false memories?) was a familiar landmark. Nearby, a redundant church was adopted by a New Testament Church of God

congregation. St James's people will remember that our Undercroft was host to several bodies of worshippers, who were glad to use its facilities before they were able to secure premises of their own.

Deep in the heart of Highfields was – and is – the premises of the family firm, A C James & Son, Funeral Directors. We have fond memories of Douglass (the '... & Son') showing us through the south door of St James on Sundays, come rain or shine. If ever Douglass left a service in a hurry, we knew that his pager had alerted him to his services being required by a new client. Douglass's son, Robert, and grandson Oliver, continue to provide an invaluable service to members of the community in their time of greatest need.

Another longstanding resident of Highfields and servant of St James is that well-known teacher, thespian and cricket lover, Michael Bull MBE. One can only gaze with amazement on the energy and dedication that Mike gives so freely to his various interests, which has all been of great benefit to the community.

Speaking of Spinney Hill Park, we remember a small local history publication, the author of which was Jonathan Wilshere, husband of Daphne and father of Nicholas and Andrew, both choristers at St James. This booklet included early photographs of the Park that illustrated its true magnificence. We wonder if any copies of Jonathan's booklet survive?

Even before the notorious hurricane of 1987, earlier winter gales led to several mature trees being blown down in Spinney Hill Park, causing traffic blockages on East Park Road. Whenever winter snowfalls were sufficiently heavy to encourage tobogganing, Paul would dust off the trusty steed that had been the childhood plaything of him and his brothers, so as to test out the speed of its metal runners on the steep slopes of the Park. On one occasion, he met Dr Jane Rudd

enjoying the same activity! Do you remember the pair of traffic policemen in *Last of the Summer Wine* who were always looking for a quiet spot in which to avoid any active policing? Well, fiction was imitating fact! Paul remembers a similar couple, enjoying the view from their parked patrol car, as intrepid tobogganers hurtled downwards ...

When our boys were old enough, we enjoyed playing tennis in the Park, mostly on hard courts, but there were grass courts available, too. Summertime would bring out the local youngsters to play cricket, at which they appeared to be very skilful. (In those days, they were more likely to be supporters of India or Pakistan, than of England!)

Not so pleasant was local residents' habit of putting out food scraps for the birds. Unfortunately, the food was just as attractive to four-legged wildlife, so the Park and surroundings streets became plagued with vermin!

Spinney Hill Park gradually became more and more dilapidated, so we were delighted when, not long before we moved to Lutterworth, a renovation scheme was

undertaken, ostensibly to restore the Park to its Victorian glory, complete with brookside flower beds. We were not resident long enough to witness how successful, or otherwise, this project became.

Just before we moved from Humberstone Road, during the years that I worked part-time as Church Administrator for St James, I witnessed the transformation of a mosque in Asfordby Street. The mosque's architecture became ornate, using superior materials, but the building process was slow, often pausing for weeks or months, as the arrival of materials from abroad was awaited. The finished result was magnificent.

St James has played its part, however modest, in building friendly relations with its Muslim neighbours, by hosting Eid celebrations and a Madrassah in the Church Hall, as well as hosting a joint Christian-Muslim outreach to the homeless in the Undercroft. Sadly, these have now ceased. Times change, but the need to build warm human relationships is ever present and Highfields has demonstrated repeatedly that its residents are ready, willing, and able to take up the challenge.

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## Hidden books ...

*A regular contributor to The Shell (DL) offers the following test of biblical knowledge. The editor has refrained from making any alterations to spelling or punctuation lest he spoils the fun!*

I came upon this remarkable paragraph and having read it several times realised that there were sixteen books of the Bible hidden in the text. I know not if it was by design or purely a fluke. I challenged my friends to find the sixteen and some kept looking so hard for the facts they became confused and questioned the truth of the statement. Some queried the correct numbers and a few were in a jam especially as the names of the books were not capitalised. To others it was too big a job. To some a complete revelation. I must confess I found it a most fascinating search especially when I had completed the task. Yes, there are some really difficult ones to spot. You may require some judges to help you. I will admit it usually takes some time to find the sixteenth, and there will be some loud lamentations when it is discovered. One friend says she brews a cup of tea to help her concentrate. See how well you can compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen books of the Bible hidden here!

*A full list will appear in the next issue. Ed.*

# Jews and Their Faith

The third in a series on other faiths by Angela Jagger



Whereas there is much to learn of interest in the other faiths I have written about in this series, when it comes to thinking about Jews to write about them in a Christian magazine is rather different, as the two faiths are so closely intertwined.

Jesus of course was a Jew and there is nothing in the gospels to suggest that he wished to separate himself from that faith or begin a new one. That is something that happened later. Jesus was clearly steeped in the scriptures of his day, what Christians would call the Old Testament and Jews of today the Hebrew Bible. But it is important to realise that over the last 2000 years, just as in Christianity, there have been significant developments in the Jewish faith.

So what is 'Judaism' today? How is it the same and how is it different from what we might read about in the Bible?

It is often said that what binds Jews together is the sense of a shared history which goes back to biblical times. This can especially be seen in the celebration of numerous festivals which take place over the year most notably that of Passover (*Pesach*) in which at a family meal the events of the Exodus, when the people were led out of slavery in Egypt by Moses over 3000 years ago, are recalled. The details of the story are joyfully retold by the presence on the table of symbolic foods and the participation by children who ask what each item stands for and above all the question 'Why is this night different from all other nights?' ending with the hope 'next year in Jerusalem'. Fifty days later on *Shavuot* the giving of the Torah, including the ten commandments, to Moses on Mt Sinai, is celebrated.

Following the settlement back in the Promised Land worship was centred on the many different sacrifices held from the time of King Solomon (tenth century BC) in the

Temple in Jerusalem. But when the Temple was finally destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD sacrificial worship led by the priests was no longer possible, though Jerusalem where the Temple stood, has always remained at the emotional heart of Jews everywhere. It was then that Judaism had to reinvent itself. In the place of sacrifices in the Temple performed by the priests, worship at the local synagogue, comprising readings from scripture, singing of psalms and prayers, became the norm. Prayer and observance of the Torah in the home is even more vital. The development of the faith was shaped by rabbis, who were teachers and interpreters of the Torah, rather than priests. The purpose of this interpretation was to enable its application to the sanctification of the whole people in every part of everyday life.

If you enter a synagogue (see Fig. 1) there are a number of markers that tell you that this is a Jewish place of worship, several of which are reminders of the Temple. Against the wall that faces the direction of the Temple in Jerusalem, is what is known as the Holy Ark, in which is kept at least one copy of the *Sefer Torah*, the first five books of the Bible, written in Hebrew on a scroll, and kept in a decorated cover out of respect. Before the Ark burns the perpetual light (*Ner Tamid*).

The most important part of the weekly Sabbath service is when the curtains of the Ark are drawn back (see Fig. 2) and the *Sefer Torah* is carried in procession around the synagogue to the *bimah*, the reading desk in the centre of the congregation facing the Ark. It is a privilege to be called up to read from the text, something which children are generally educated to be able to do. Traditionally the learning of Hebrew starts at the age of three, accompanied by the tasting of honey to show the sweetness of the commandments, leading up to the first

reading in the synagogue at the age of 13 when a boy becomes *bar mitzvah* (son of the commandment). Girls become *bat mitzvah* (daughter of the commandment) at 12 though practice varies as to whether they will formally read in a synagogue.

'Hear, O Israel! the Lord is our God. The Lord is one!

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength...'

These are the opening words of the *Shema*, the central command to be found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. It is also a declaration of faith, that there is only one true God, and is a reminder that the people of Israel are chosen to obey the command to love God in every aspect of life. They also are recipients of God's steadfast love which should be reflected in showing such love to others. The *Shema* is repeated every day. Its centrality to the sanctification of life is to be found in the practice of encasing a tiny scroll on which the words of the *Shema* are written in a small box, a *mezuzah*, which is fixed to the doorposts of a home or synagogue. The *mezuzah* is touched upon entering as a reminder of the commandment. (See Fig. 3)

The sanctification of everyday life is especially seen in the keeping of the Sabbath from Friday evening till the following Saturday evening. And whereas there are Sabbath services in the synagogue it is in the home that the keeping of the Sabbath is most marked. It is a day to rest, pray or to study and begins and ends with special blessings and a meal. Sanctification of the everyday can also be found in the practice of keeping *kosher*, such as in the choice of food and drink. Only foods that have been declared pure should be consumed and in different countries and regions, boards of rabbis check on which foods pass the test. If you look on a number of foods that can be bought in a supermarket you don't necessarily have to go to the kosher section, but look for symbols like 'KLBD' on a packet of biscuits or tomato sauce and you will have found the symbol of a board. Foods based on milk and on meat should not be consumed at the same time. A fully Orthodox household will keep utensils for

these food types separate.

'Fully Orthodox' is the term which reminds us that, as in almost any religion, there is a spectrum of practice and a variety of groups which reflect this. For Jews this will most clearly be seen in attitudes as to how far adaptations should be made to life in the modern world when looking at the interpretation of different *mitzvot* (commandments). In the UK there are various groupings from what might be called 'Strictly Orthodox' through mainstream Orthodox, Masorti, Reform, to Liberal and Progressive. This spectrum of practice may be seen in the types of food that are eaten, but also in such things as the role of women and the interpretation of scripture. Those with a more conservative approach will keep to the separation of sexes, shown in separate seating in a synagogue, often with a balcony for women, who will not take part in leading the services or becoming rabbis, whilst those with a more liberal approach will fully integrate women.

Other groupings lie in the geographical origin of Jews who have immigrated to the UK, mainly Sephardi, with an origin in Spain or around the Mediterranean or Ashkenazi with an origin in Eastern Europe. This reflects the long history of persecution of the Jews and their marginalisation in the various countries in which they settled, culminating in the twentieth century in the Holocaust. In Britain the Jewish community, as in other places, was formally expelled under Edward I in 1290 only being allowed to return at the time of Oliver Cromwell in the seventeenth century. The synagogue in longest continuous use in England is the Sephardi Bevis Marks in London, opened in 1701. Built with an unobtrusive exterior in a secluded alley in order not to attract attention, inside is to be found a magnificent piece of architecture.

There are two synagogues in Leicester, one in Highfield Street designed by local architect Arthur Wakerley and opened in 1898. The Leicester Hebrew Congregation that meets there is described as Ashkenazi Orthodox in tradition. The second synagogue is to be found in a converted school in Avenue Road. It takes the name Neve

Shalom, Oasis of Peace, after a village near Jerusalem where Jewish and Palestinian Arab Israeli citizens aim to practise living in harmony together. It is linked to Liberal Judaism. Both synagogues have very recently undergone refurbishment, including building extensions, partly to enable their work in education and to welcome visitors.

The etiquette in visiting a synagogue is to dress modestly. Men should be prepared to cover their heads as are women in more Orthodox synagogues. Be prepared for men and women to sit separately in a service. As a

general rule it is important to check that you are expected, as unfortunately Jews have been forced to be security conscious, but this is usually done very easily and details of making contact can be found on synagogue websites.

The Council of Christians and Jews was formed in 1942 to enable members of the two faiths to get to know each other better. The local Leicester branch meets twice a year. If you would like to know more please speak to Angela.



Figure 1

A view taken from the women's gallery of the Leicester Hebrew Congregation's synagogue in Highfield St. It shows the Holy Ark (*Aron Kodesh*), with the reading desk (*bimah*) in front. On either side of the window are displayed the ten commandments, whilst on the wall are prayers for the Queen and royal family in English and for the state of Israel in Hebrew.



Figure 2

Torah scrolls in the opened Ark. Torah scrolls may be clothed in a richly decorated mantle, with a silver 'breastplate,' a reminder of the breastplate worn by the high priest in the Temple. The ends may be topped with silver finials. Hanging from these is a *yad* (hand) a pointer often in the shape of a finger, which the reader uses to follow the text.



Figure 3

The mezuzah for the new extension to Neve Shalom synagogue. Picture taken at its installation in 2019.



Figure 4

The Menorah lit on Victoria Park on the festival of *Hanukah* to celebrate the rededication of the Temple after its desecration by the Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century BC. The eight lights remember the eight days when the oil in the Temple lamp burnt without replenishment. It celebrates the victory of light over darkness and stands for religious freedom everywhere.



Figure 5

A collection of menorahs brought from homes to Neve Shalom to celebrate Hanukah.

# Fall-out!

## Tricia Dean recounts an American adventure

In 2018, Paul and I visited our niece, Katy, and her family in Boston, Massachusetts. My sister travelled with us and our trip was timed to coincide with world-renowned 'Fall'. Katy and her husband, also named Paul, had booked Air-B&B accommodation in North Adams for our first weekend in the USA.

It was still term-time for Katy's children, William and Amélie, so we couldn't set out until school was out and young Paul was home from work. We set off – five adults, two children, a dog and luggage in one vehicle – in steady rain and gathering darkness. Hours later, we arrived at our destination, our headlights illuminating a building that reminded me of Norman Bates' house in *Psycho* ...

We stayed in the car while young Paul collected keys from our landlord, who was occupying the ground floor. Alarm bells started ringing when we saw Paul's worried expression as he returned. We entered a ground floor door and mounted a bare, gloomy wooden staircase, only to find an upper door held shut by a padlock, with splintered wood around its hinges – it had obviously been forced open on a previous occasion.

The upper door opened straight into the lounge, which was cluttered with dingy furniture, including a so-called sofa bed on which one of us was supposed to sleep. A door to the right led to a bedroom. A door to the left led to a second bedroom, from which another door led to a third bedroom, from which another door led to the bathroom, from which another door led to the kitchen, from which another door led to the lounge –

we'd come full circle! Having recovered from our dizziness, we explored the rooms more thoroughly ...

At least there was ample bedding to keep us warm, although it was in dubious condition. Drawers were full of the owners' possessions, so we had to live out of our bags.

We'd intended to self-cater, but the kitchen lacked most basic utensils, whether for preparing, cooking or serving food and drinks. We resorted to buying take-away pizza for supper and vowed that we'd do justice to an all-American breakfast at a local diner the following morning.

Performing ablutions proved to be something of a challenge! The bathroom was so diminutive that you could touch opposite walls with outstretched arms; neither of the bathroom doors could be secured, and none of the five adults could persuade the shower (no bath) to function. So, lick-and-promise strip washes in the basin were supplemented by tooth-brushing in the kitchen sink.

Ironically, the older members of the party fared better than the youngsters in coping with these relative privations. Probably childhood memories of no central heating and weekly baths at home, plus summer holidays spent in caravans with outside chemical toilets, stood us in good stead!

No praise is too high for the all-American breakfast, by the way. Thus fortified, we explored various places of interest and enjoyed a woodland ramble amongst trees that were rapidly changing

colour, as their leaves took on their autumn glory.

'Back at the ranch' there was a Visitors' Book from which numerous pages had been pulled and whose remaining comments seemed to have been written by 'guests' with strangely similar handwriting ... Squeals of amused terror from William and Amélie filled the air when they noticed me adding my contribution: I trust that nothing I wrote was libellous!

Katy and young Paul felt guiltily

responsible, having been fooled by some attractive photographs of the bedrooms posted online. To us, it was a uniquely entertaining part of our American adventure, the rest of which was packed with many and varied experiences that far outshone any negativity from that first weekend.

It's strange, but true, that it's often out-of-the-ordinary events that create lasting memories. Anecdotes about them enliven social gatherings more than run-of-the-mill stories of things that went according to plan. Such is their fall-out!



Perhaps Tricia's holiday let was something like this! Ed.

# Wonderful Worcester Weekend

## Vicky Roe writes ...

Over the first weekend in March 2020, I was in Worcester for the Friends of Cathedral Music National Gathering based there. I joined nearly 180 others, meeting many friends, old and new. Among them were Glynn and Sue Richerby, who now live in Worcester and are well established members of the Cathedral congregation. Glynn had recently been granted Permission to Officiate in Worcester Diocese.

I had travelled to Worcester early on the morning of Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March to visit 'The Commandery', a historic building that had been an infirmary linked to the monastery in medieval times and contained rare wall paintings in one of the upper chambers. After the dissolution of the monasteries, it became a private home. It was used as the Royalist headquarters during the decisive Civil War Battle of Worcester in 1651. It became a private home again, which was visited in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century by John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, both of whom later became Presidents of the United States. From 1866, it housed the Worcester School for the Blind Sons of Gentlemen, the modern equivalent of which still exists in the city. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was the base for a printing company, but is now a fascinating museum with a good café.

I joined the other FCM members in Worcester Cathedral after lunch, where we were treated to an instrumental recital by some of the talented pupils from King's School, Worcester. Then we travelled to Tewkesbury Abbey, a beautiful building that survived the Reformation by being bought by the townspeople for £453 – the price of the lead on its roof and in its medieval stained glass windows. Tewkesbury Abbey also has fine Victorian stained glass windows and two modern ones designed by Tom Denny to mark the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the

monks in 1102. The Abbey has the largest Norman tower in existence at 14 metres square and 45 metres high, which houses a peal of 12 bells, most of which were cast by Taylors Foundry at Loughborough in 1962. We had a talk by Director of Music Carleton Etherington and a recital on the Milton Organ, so called because it was purported to have been played by the poet John Milton when it was in Hampton Court Palace from 1654-1660, before it was returned to Magdalen College, Oxford. It was bought by Tewkesbury Abbey in 1736 and has had several refurbishments since then. After a break for tea and cakes in the Parish Centre, we returned to the Abbey for Evensong. It was sung by Schola Cantorum, the choir of boys from Dean Close School, Cheltenham, and men, who sing the weekday services, and were conducted by their Director of Music Simon Bell. We were treated to Moore Responses, Gibbons' Short Service Canticles and Byrd's anthem *Ne irascaris, Domine*. The moon was shining brightly over the Abbey tower as we left for Worcester.

On Saturday morning, we set out for Great Malvern Priory, passing the 'boating lake' on the cricket ground and the flooding from the river. The church is a grand building set on high ground, for which the local people paid £20 in 1541 to save it from destruction. The Director of Music, Piers Maxim, talked to us about the variety of music provision there and then demonstrated the capabilities of the fine organ, which was rebuilt and modernised by Nicholsons in 2004. After coffee and biscuits, we had time to explore the building, viewing the Norman font, the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century misericords in the choir stalls, the locally made 15<sup>th</sup> century tiles and the stained glass windows, both medieval (15<sup>th</sup> century) east and west windows, the Tudor Magnificat Window (given by Henry VII in 1501-2) and

the modern Millennium windows done by Tom Denny, who also did the Richard III windows in Leicester Cathedral and whose artistic style is instantly recognisable.

We returned to Worcester for lunch, followed by guided tours of the Cathedral, tower or library. I had chosen the library tour and the knowledgeable librarian had put out many books of historical and musical interest from the impressive collection that dates back to Anglo-Saxon times. Among them were the Worcester Antiphoner, a rare book containing the music sung daily at services between 1220 and 1225, illustrated manuscripts and Bibles, part-books for choirs, works by composers connected to the Cathedral such as Thomas Tomkins and Edward Elgar, and a pictorial representation of the pilgrim route to Jerusalem. Preserved in a glass-topped case were items relating to King John, who is buried in the chancel, including his will and fragments of his shroud.

Later, I had time to look round the Cathedral to view the tombs of King John and Prince Arthur, Henry VIII's elder brother and Katherine of Aragon's first husband, who died in 1502 and whose chantry chapel is to the right of the high altar. It was the presence of these royal burials that protected Worcester Cathedral from major destruction at the Reformation.

The first Cathedral on this site was founded in 680 AD. St. Oswald built another in 983 with a monastery attached to it. St. Wulfstan began the present building in 1084, replacing the earlier ones. In Anglo-Saxon times, Worcester was one of the most important monastic cathedrals in the country and a centre of great learning, which continued into the later Middle Ages. The monastery survived until 1540 when Henry VIII dissolved it. Some of the last monks became the first Dean and Chapter. The cathedral was badly damaged in the Civil Wars, but Charles I was able to watch the Battle of Worcester from the tower in 1651. A major programme of rebuilding was

required after the restoration of Charles II. The Victorians carried out further restorations from 1854-75. The cathedral has a long musical tradition and Edward Elgar premiered several of his compositions there at Three Choirs Festival concerts, as well as being a friend of the cathedral's organist Ivor Atkins. A statue of Elgar stands in the square outside the cathedral.

The Assistant Director of Music, Nicholas Freestone, talked to us about the pipe organs at Worcester, two of which were sadly not working, but he did play us some pieces on the small chamber organ in the Quire. After tea and biscuits in the ancient Chapter House, we filled the Quire for Evensong, listening to Morley Responses, Canticles by Rubbra in A flat and Haydn's anthem *Insanae et vane curae*, sung by the girls and men of the cathedral choir.

That evening we gathered in the grand and richly decorated Assembly Room of Worcester's Guildhall for the formal dinner, at which the Dean of Worcester, the Very Revd. Peter Atkinson was the guest speaker.

On Sunday we joined the regular congregation filling the nave for a Eucharist sung by the boys and men of the choir, treating us to Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G minor* and Elgar's *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, accompanied by an electronic organ. After coffee and chats, we returned to the vast circular space of the 12<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century Chapter House for lunch and further opportunities to talk together.

During the afternoon, I visited Greyfriars' House and Garden, a late Medieval merchant's house that had been rescued from demolition and sympathetically restored by an antiquarian couple in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is now a National Trust property on a street of other ancient buildings just off Worcester's main shopping area and well worth seeking out when you are next in the city.

We returned to the Cathedral for

Evensong in the Quire, where I was seated behind the choir in the stalls. The boys and men sang Hunt's Responses, Noble in A minor Canticles and Byrd's anthem *Ne irascaris, Domine*. Being so close to the choir, I could really appreciate the intricacy of the music written by Byrd and the skill of the singers performing the anthem, which had begun and ended this wonderful weekend in Worcester. I am so glad it happened before the current restrictions took hold.

After Evensong on Sunday, I went back to Glynn and Sue's house on the hill for a delicious tea of homemade pastries, scones and cookies. An added joy was seeing Anna, their daughter, who was visiting from South Africa. They all sent their love to everyone at St. James the Greater and I passed on ours to them. Glynn later attended John Raven's Thanksgiving Service in Leicester on 18<sup>th</sup> March, where he helped to give the address.



Worcester Cathedral



Great Malvern Priory



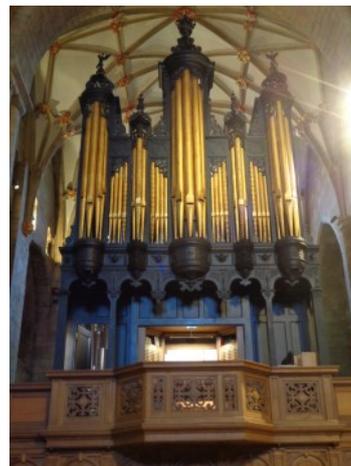
King John's Tomb, Worcester



The Moon over Tewkesbury Abbey



Glynn and Sue Richerby



The Milton Organ at Tewkesbury Abbey

# Calendar of Services and Events

As they used to say in the early days of television broadcasting when the technology was, to say the least, a bit flaky:

**Normal services will be resumed as soon as possible!**

## *Commemorative Flowers*



It is hoped that the St James's tradition of donating commemorative flowers will resume later in the year.

## What's on ...

**The following regular events are temporarily suspended until the COVID-19 lockdown is lifted.**

<b>Sundays</b>	Sunday Club in school term time Contact: Church Office	10.30	Hall
<b>Sunday</b>	Coffee Organiser: Liz Turner		Hall
<b>Thursdays</b>	St James's Singers Director: Michael Rule	19.30 alternate Thursdays	Ashman Music Room
<b>Fridays</b>	Boys' and Girls' Choir Practice Full Choir Practice Director: Matthew Haynes	18.00 19.30	Ashman Music Room

## Who's who ...

<b>Churchwardens</b>	Simon Edwards	Phil Jones
<b>Deputy Wardens</b>	Janet Burton Paul Jenkins	David Kibert April Rule
<b>Church Administrator</b>	Annabel Cowley	<a href="mailto:office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Alastair Jackson	<a href="mailto:office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Director of Music</b>	Matthew Haynes	<a href="mailto:dom@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">dom@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Organist and Associate Director of Music</b>	Michael Rule	<a href="mailto:organist@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">organist@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Flower Guild Coordinator</b>	Julia Walker	<a href="mailto:juliabentom350@outlook.com">juliabentom350@outlook.com</a>
<b>Parish Safeguarding Officer</b>	Vicky Roe	<a href="mailto:pastoral.assistant@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">pastoral.assistant@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a> 0116 255 2108
<b>Head Server</b>	Emma-Jane Hunt	<a href="mailto:ej_finn00@hotmail.com">ej_finn00@hotmail.com</a>
<b>The Shell Editor</b>	Graham Jagger	<a href="mailto:editor@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">editor@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Bldg Services Coordinator</b>	Tony Chizema	<a href="mailto:bsc@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">bsc@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a> 07852 161337