

JUNE 2020



SEMINGTON
PARISH
MAGAZINE

Minister for Semington:

Rev. John Rees

22 Warren Road

Staverton

BA14 8UZ

Tel. 01225 764365

Where To Go To Stay in The Know

Canalside Benefice

The Canalside Benefice website canalsidebenefice.org.uk has a number of useful links on it. It has resources for worship and Messy Church resources for children. In addition there is a link through to YouTube so that you may worship from your own home. Check out the Benefice website for the most up to date link.

Semington Little Marsh and Littleton Support Group

The Support Group was founded as a direct result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Group has a Facebook page which is the principal source of information, updates, offers of help and requests for help. Search Semington Little Marsh and Littleton Support Group on Facebook to join.

The weekly newsletter is published via the Facebook page – but (and here is the important bit) we do print a limited number of hard copies to go to households without internet or Facebook access. The Group has been collating a list of villagers who need a hard copy for over a month but we really need your help to make sure NO ONE is missed from the list. So if you know of someone who needs the newsletter printed please e-mail victoriabodman@gmail.com and don't worry if you think you're duplicating someone else's effort, it really is not a worry!

Semington Village Website

The village website www.semington-village.co.uk has all the latest news needed including Wiltshire Council updates, the Support Group Newsletter and the Parish Magazine. Importantly it also includes normal day to day stuff that even in the midst of these strangest of times you may need to access.

Wiltshire Council Website

For wider issues such as refuse collections, ancillary and community services, the Wiltshire Council website www.wiltshire.gov.uk should be your first port of call. There are links on the home page for service updates as well as the facility to sign up for e-mail updates.

Christians in Semington

Bev Woodward

Christians in Semington - We will be praying in our own homes for our community on Wednesday 3rd June.

Homegroup - we are meeting every Tuesday in our own homes, via zoom, at 8.30pm. We've started the 'Just 10' course with Rev. John - all about the 10 commandments, for today's generation. Far from being a set of rules to restrict us, they are principles that bring freedom and fulfilment. Phone Jack/Bev 870784 or David/Pam 870030 for more details.

Editor's Note

Gillian Airey

I had hoped we may have something new to talk about but we need to be patient for a few weeks more. I trust that you are still coping well with the new normal. We received lots of lovely feedback for Julia's on the Semington at War article so very kindly Julia has given us a second instalment for you.

The deadline for July and August's edition is Friday 19th June when I am convinced we will have something new to talk about! If you wish to contribute to the magazine or weekly newsletter my e-mail as always is semparmag@icloud.com
Stay safe – stay well



thank you

The family of the late Clarence Farr would like to say thank you for all the kind messages of sympathy and to everyone from Semington village that came out to pay their respects

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This Month I'm Having A Bit of A Clear Out

Gilly Airey

I'm sure we've all seen the posters from the Great War with children enquiring of their father 'What did you do in the Great War Daddy?' - well I'm convinced that we will be asked the same question about the lockdown... So when I am old and grey(er) and get asked the question 'What did you do in lockdown Great Nanny G?' I shall proudly declare 'I sorted my cupboards out'. Oh yes, I have been rooting through the cupboards in the house with great gusto – mostly hoping to find a long-forgotten bottle of hair dye I'm not going to lie.

Gorgeous Hubby says that our cupboards have revealed a lot about me which I'm not sure how to take to. Let's take the airing cupboard as an example; The airing cupboard houses amongst the usual stuff, the first aid kit, because let's face it in a medical emergency you need to keep the first aid box upstairs in a cupboard under a pile of towels. We went through the first aid kit and it would appear I have a plaster 'habit' as we decanted no less than six boxes of plasters each professing to heal me in a super quick, invisible, antibacterial, waterproof way, even some of them promised to do it in Spanish (I do love a foreign plaster!). I ditched the 'Short Sexy Hair Gel' as my hair is long and quite frankly I can't be doing with all the attention 'Short Sexy Hair Gel' threatened to bring! I found two year's worth of contact lenses with some at least two prescriptions ago and sadly forsaken as the curse of varifocal specs became a reality. The Olbas Oil and Vicks Vaporub went the distance because Gorgeous Hubby can't stand the smell.... who knew!

The cupboards downstairs told a similar tale. There were cupboards that housed the 'nice' wine glasses and crockery which had some not so nice surprises. I owned a total of 29 placemats, fabric, wicker, bamboo, melamine, you name it I had it, I could have opened my own John Lewis at Home from the contents of that cupboard.... And of course I needed them all because my table sits precisely six people. I found place card holders, four of them, useful when your table sits six, decorative pegs (don't ask I have no idea), a Lazy Susan (what was it about Susan that made her so?) and a glass cheese board. Needless to say I own them no more.

So what do my cupboards reveal about me – I have a 'just in case' mindset I buy things on the premise that one day I may need to call upon them, sadly it did not extend to hair dye, but it's okay because I've just bought some shampoo especially for grey hair – just in case!



LOCKDOWN MENU

MON - SAT
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Down The Local

John, The Landlord, John

Or not down the local as it is... Firstly a massive, massive thank you to everyone who is or has supported the pub through the lockdown so far. Be it an ale take away, Mid-Week Madness, Sunday roast or fish and chips it all makes a difference. Every little helps and it helps towards keeping the lights on and hopefully bounce back when we can in whatever shape or form that may be.

We are currently thinking about how we might open with social distancing in place as it looks as though that will be the first steps. Limiting what people drink and limiting the amount of people in the pub makes my accountant go all wobbly but it is what it is. Please, please continue to support us now and when we open the doors fully again. It is tough times but this village and the great community just won't be the same without its pub. I will do my best to make sure it stays here but we really really need your help and support. See the ad for the Lockdown Menu opposite and I am doing my best to stock ale, lager and cider but its getting harder and harder to get hold of but we will always have food...!!

Due to reduced take up in the early part of the week, take-out is now only available from Mid-Week Madness through to Sunday Lunch (Wednesday to Sunday) from 5.00pm to 8.00pm depending on the number of orders. Alcohol off sales are pretty much available all day every day as funnily enough I don't go far. I can't say thank you enough to the great people in this village. We hope to see you in the safe zone of the pub soon and hopefully won't be too long before we can open (semi) fully.

Semington W.I.

Deb Hurn

It appears that we are going to have to socially distance for a while longer yet. However, we've still been keeping in touch via WhatsApp and email etc., we even had a meeting via Zoom to see how it worked. It was nice to see different faces.

The results of the Elmer the elephant (made from a plastic milk carton) competition were as follows 1st Shirley Kemp, 2nd Jeannie Bailey and 3rd Angela Ludlow. Congratulations to them. It's been lovely seeing the photographs of everyone joining in with different events in the village. Have already had a preview via photograph of one of the very lovely windows in bloom.

Sadly I don't quite know when we'll be able to meet up for WI again, but hopefully not in the too distant future. Meanwhile stay well and safe everyone.

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Based in Semington, Trowbridge



Andy has very kindly given us another Lockdown Quiz, so here's your starter for ten....

1. Which is the only US state capital to end in the letter X?
2. What names were given to the three tunnels in the film 'The Great Escape'?
3. Who met and fell in love with Marge Bouvier at a 1974 summer camp?
4. Which country is bordered by both the Atlantic and Indian oceans?
5. What is Tiger Woods real first name?
6. Which Apollo XI astronaut did not step on the moon?
7. You'll Never Walk Alone stems from which musical?
8. What does a numismatist do?
9. Stock market trader Nick Leeson bankrupted which bank?
10. Whose advertising slogan is 'Why have cotton when you can have silk'?
11. Which cruise ship ran aground and overturned off Tuscany in 2012?
12. What is the name given to the process of signalling with two flags?
13. What is the only word in English ending with the letters 'mt'?
14. Who had the 2017 UK Christmas number one with 'Perfect'?
15. Which US Store chain is named after the first mate in Moby Dick?

Answers on page 17.

Short Stories and Tiny Tales – Creative Writing Competition

Siobhan Chown - 01380 870197

We're inviting children of all ages to come up with a story on whatever subject or theme that inspires them. The only rule is that it should be no more than 500 words long. Full details are available on the Support Group Facebook page and in issue 7 of the Support Group newsletter.

Deadline for entries is **Tuesday 30th June**. Entries can be submitted by post or hand delivered to The Old Kennels, The Hunt Close, Semington, BA14 6JY or by email; s.chown@bearly-there.co.uk

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Sara Teasdale (1884 –1933) was an American lyric poet whose work is largely unknown these days. These two poems about May might be short but they captures the early and late part of the month we have just lived through – before and after the Arctic winds came down upon us and May lived up to its reputation of being wild, changeable, and cold.

May Night

The spring is fresh and fearless
And every leaf is new,
The world is brimmed with moonlight,
The lilac brimmed with dew.

Here in the moving shadows
I catch my breath and sing—
My heart is fresh and fearless
And over-brimmed with spring.

May

The wind is tossing the lilacs,
The new leaves laugh in the sun,
And the petals fall on the orchard wall,
But for me the spring is done.

Beneath the apple blossoms
I go a wintry way,
For love that smiled in April
Is false to me in May

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Your Wiltshire Councillor News

Jonathon Seed

We have now endured seven weeks of lockdown in a bid to beat the deadly COVID-19 virus. All of our lives have changed and sadly there have been fatalities. However, the Prime Minister's announcement of safe progress on lockdown is very welcome and it is good to see our government here in England showing the same respect to the people that the people have shown to Government and their lock down rules. None of us (including the Government) really know how this crisis will move forward but we must at least try to move forward safely. Hopefully the latest rules will allow just a tiny bit more "normality" as we edge towards that goal.

In local government Wiltshire Council continues to operate, albeit in a very low key mode and with the operational lead taken by officers of the Council. The main aim is to look after the vulnerable and shielded in our society and this has proved to be incredibly costly with reports of a "black hole" in excess of £25million being opened up in the finances of the Council. At some stage the Councillors who are responsible for the Council will have to account for the control of this spending; we must assume that robust fiscal controls were in place. Inevitably there will be a financial spending review in the near future.

Wiltshire Council has also been cautious in the introduction of virtual accountability and in spite of central government moving quickly to allow virtual meetings, the first tier of Wiltshire local government has been overtaken by many Parish Councils in adopting technology to facilitate meetings. Locally, I congratulate Seend and Poulshot Parish Councils for their excellent Zoom Parish Council meetings and it is of note that these meetings were attended by many more local residents than would have attended in the village hall. As in many aspects of our current lives there are some definite advantages to the COVID way of working which we will need to consider as we move out of the crisis.

Finally I am getting expressions of concern from residents at the very quick removal of services by Wiltshire Council and the slower reintroduction of socially distanced services, again in spite of government encouragement to do so. Our first priority must always be to look after the vulnerable in our society but we must also not lose sight of providing a service to those who pay for all of the services a Council has responsibility to deliver. Included in this list of services are Household Recycling Centres which have reopened albeit in a very limited way.

As your local Wiltshire Councillor I will continue to hold the administration of Wiltshire Council to account on your behalf - as soon as the Council introduces a virtual system to do so!

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Parish Council Matters

Peter Smith Vice Chair of Parish Council

Planning – The planning application to put 20 entry-level affordable homes on land north of St. George’s(20/01306/OUT) has been rejected by Wiltshire Council. It is certain that the developer will appeal. If you want to know more about the reasons for this decision, visit the Semington village website and search under “Planning”.

We have also learnt that the public inquiry into an earlier application by the same developer to build houses on this land has been postponed. It is likely that both appeals will be heard at the same time. The parish council has strongly opposed both these applications, as have a significant number of villagers.

Parish Council Meetings – These have resumed, albeit in a remote format using Zoom technology. A meeting was held on 20th May, and the minutes of this meeting can be found elsewhere in the magazine, or on the village website. Further virtual meetings will happen, with the next taking place on 1st July.

Joint Working – The parish council resolved that we need to take steps to foster and continue the great community spirit that we have found in responding to Covid-19, so that we don’t lose it once the worst of the pandemic is over. The parish council wants to work with the Semington, Little Marsh and Littleton Support Group to identify initiatives that villagers care about, and to build community capacity to make these happen. This will be an agenda item for the next parish council meeting, before which some preliminary work will be done.

Stay safe.

Peter Smith

Andy’s Answers

1. Phoenix
2. Tom, Dick and Harry
3. Homer Simpson
4. South Africa
5. Eldrick
6. Michael Collins
7. Carousel
8. Collect coins
9. Barings
10. Galaxy
11. Costa Concordia
12. Semaphore
13. Dreamt
14. Ed Sheeran
15. Starbucks

Remembering VE Day and Semington at War

Julia Wade

Phil Humphries was 10 years old at the time of VE Day – 8 May 1945. He lived in Semington but had to deliver some eggs for his aunt who lived in Trowbridge. He took the bus on his own (it cost 3d, return) and went to Trowbridge Park. He was amazed at all the American soldiers there from the barracks. Phil remembers the German Prisoners of War who were at Manor Farm, at the end of Church Street. There were about 6 of them and they were in the barn next to the farm, which they had done up a bit. His Dad was on land drainage work, hedging, ditching, etc., and he was often sent off with a gang of German or Italian PoWs to work on the farms. His Dad said that most were very friendly but felt homesick. They had had enough of the war, just like everyone else. He also said the Italians were very good at cooking! There was no air raid siren in the village. The nearest was outside Melksham Town Hall. The children would wait to hear the all clear sounded before going back to school. One time they didn't hear it, but went back to school anyway!

Edna Jones was 9 years old. Her Dad was an ARP Warden and came in with the news that the War was finally over! They went to the Town Hall in Trowbridge, where huge crowds of people had congregated around the lamppost that was on an island there. She was getting shoved and pushed around, as they waited for Albie Taylor (who featured in last month's article), the pre-war organiser of the Carnival, to come out onto the balcony to speak. An American soldier offered to put Edna up onto his shoulders so she could see. Her Dad wasn't too keen on the American soldiers, but this one said he had daughters of his own. He swung her up onto his shoulders and danced around the lamp post! A few days later they had a street party in Castle Street (where the family had a butcher's shop – Robinson's). Mrs Burbidge's piano was dragged out onto the road so she could play for everyone. Edna remembers having jelly and ice cream for the first time in years. Later, she and her sister leaned out of their window, watching all the adults getting drunk! Edna vividly remembers the bomb being dropped on the British Legion building in Trowbridge. The evacuees used to go down there to play table tennis. Two girls hid under the table but were killed when the bomb fell. The German plane went on to crash at Wingfield. They were buried next to Edna's brother's grave. When one of the families could no longer send money for its upkeep, Edna's family helped to maintain the graves. Edna also had a story about an American jeep, but you'll have to ask her about that one!

Gwen Farr (who will be 99 in July) was working in the munitions factory in Silver Street, Trowbridge, during the war. Haydens & Son had been an engineering works before the war. There she met her husband Clarence, who sadly died very recently. They lived in Littlemarsh for 56 years and were married for 71 years. Clarence's brother Norman was one of the three Semington men (and the only one who was born in the village) who lost their lives in WW2. His Navy ship struck a mine whilst heading home, and was sunk. Gwen too, remembers the bombing in Trowbridge.

She had just come off a 12-hour night shift at the factory. Hearing the enormous noise, she knew it was close. On VE Day she too was outside Trowbridge Town Hall, dancing round the lamppost. I wonder if she saw a little girl (Edna) on the shoulders of an American soldier?

Mick Mortimer was 13 by VE Day and remembers a street party in Trowbridge. Earlier in the war he recalls being frightened by the bombs falling in Bath. A nicer memory was the American soldiers throwing oranges and chewing gum to the children from the trains. Around 1942/3 he remembers a bomb being dropped by the Beehive pub, near Bradford-on-Avon. It breached the canal bank and all the water poured down into the river!

Les Hiscocks was 7 or 8 by the end of the war. He said, "You don't worry about something at that age." He remembers wearing gas masks and the sirens going off in Broughton Gifford and all the children going down into the cellars at the vicarage. He lived in the Paxcroft area on VE Day, and remembers making a big bonfire at the bottom of Trowbridge Park, near the swimming pool. He used to go with his Dad to Shails Lane to see them putting the roof on the hangars at Bowerhill and watching the troops marching up to Keevil Airfield. The planes were rewired at Bowerhill. They came down on a lorry and were then shipped off to where they were needed.

Some Semington residents lived further afield during the war, but it's interesting to consider their different experiences:

Arthur Waracker was 18 years old at the end of the war. His family was in Essex but Arthur was an apprentice radio operator in Lincolnshire. All he could remember from VE Day was somehow burning down a flagpole... He thinks he and the other apprentices may have put wood around the bottom to make a bonfire!

Barbara Evans was 16 and living in a remote hamlet on the Shropshire/Welsh border and doubts there would have been a big celebration there, without the mass media coverage we are used to today. They had no TV, and only a home made radio. There was still some danger throughout the war though, as German planes on course for Liverpool or Chester sometimes dropped their bombs early. She told me she could hear the distant bombs and see flashes in the night sky. One night the Garth Mountain was set on fire - possibly the bombers mistook their target.

Joan Hawkins, 99, was living in Portsmouth, so had had a very different experience of the war. As an important port, it was a major target of German aircraft and the city had suffered many bombings. The residents, however, just accepted this as part of life – much like the coronavirus, she said. She remembers many bonfires being lit in gardens around the city as people celebrated the end of the war.

John Riley lived in Margate, Kent, during the war. He was 10 years old at the war's end and remembers there was a street party about a fortnight after VE Day. Because the skies over Margate had been so peaceful for months it was clear that the war was nearing its end, so was not such news to them. It had been scary for years. Dog fights between planes, overhead, had been a common sight, and British fighters would attempt to take down German bombers to stop them reaching London. Margate had a fighter aerodrome 4 miles away and this was a Luftwaffe target. He recalls that some returning British planes crashed into the cliffs.

Young John was in the habit of standing on top of their concrete, above-ground air raid shelter and looking out to sea. One day he was watching a 'dog fight' and then a Messerschmitt appeared, 100 yards ahead, heading straight for him. He screamed out, "Jerry, Jerry!!" – and then, when the plane was just above the house, he saw the pilot climb out onto the wing and JUMP to the ground – far too low for a parachute but too high to survive the fall... Meanwhile, John's father, a fireman, was just heading out for his shift. He heard John's scream, dropped his bike and ran back... the plane crashed on the road, right by his bike. John's scream had saved his father's life! His father ran back to the plane, puzzled to find it empty, until John told them the pilot had jumped. They found his body and he was buried at Margate cemetery. The pilot was 18 years old. ..

I recall the 50th anniversary celebrations in 1995, here in Semington. We had a wonderful Garden Party in the grounds of Brook House and sang lots of wartime songs. The celebrations this year have been unforgettable, for unusual reasons, but I think everyone in this village should feel content about the way we commemorated this extraordinary anniversary, and the generation whose memories we honour.

Once again, I want to sincerely thank all those who have kindly shared their memories with me, so I can share them with you. It has been a privilege. *Julia Wade*

Semington Past and Present

If you have read the recent collection of villagers' memories about VE Day and World War 2, you might be interested in reading more memories about life in our village, as well as its history. In 2002 a book was produced by the Semington History Project Group (since disbanded) and edited by Gabrielle (Gay) and Doug Firmager, both of whom have sadly died since then.

This book now costs just £3.00 and can be bought from the village Post Office at the Village Hall on Monday and Thursday mornings.

Parish Council Minutes

Abridged Minutes From Meeting Held Wednesday 20th May 2020

Present: Cllrs P Smith (Vice -Chairman and Acting Chairman for the meeting), R Blake, P Bowyer, M Kasasian, R Oglesby, W Scott, C Wade and the Clerk Roger Coleman. There was one member of the public present.

Apologies: Parish Councillor S Rimmer and Wiltshire Council Cllr. J Seed

Environment: Footpaths: Cllr. Scott stated that he had commenced the process of surveying local public Rights of Way and some corrective actions had already been implemented including the need to repair two stiles. It was noted that Brian Smyth continued to be an active member of the Footpath Group. **Fly-Tipping:** Cllr. Blake commented that Fly-Tipping had also occurred along the Byway (Green Lane) that was the continuation of St Georges Road. Cllr. Smith reported that there had been a spate of broken glass beer bottles left on the High Street which he had cleared up. **Pavements:** Concern was expressed regarding the growth of weeds on the pavements but the Council decided that no action is to be taken at present.

Liaison with Semington, Little Marsh and Littleton Support Group: Councillors expressed their admiration and gratitude to this Group for their work in the village and resolved that steps must be taken to foster and to continue this 'community spirit' once the COVID-19 Pandemic is over. Cllr. Scott suggested that 'Initiative Leads' within the village could be nominated and that a Working Group be formed comprising Support Group members who would take the lead and representatives from the Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to include this subject on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

Planning: The Council noted the status of extant planning applications; 20/01306/OUT North of St Georges Road, residential development of 20 entry level affordable with associated infrastructure - refused; 20/02204/FUL 14 The Knapps proposed 4 bedroom bungalow – approved. There were no planning applications received after 11th May 2020. Cllr. Scott gave a brief summary of the reasons given by Wiltshire Council for the refusal of planning application 20/01306/OUT and commented that it was likely now to go to Appeal Councillors noted that the Western Area Planning Committee meeting to be held on 18th March 2020 at which it was hoped that a decision on the Village Green application would be made was postponed and that the Planning Appeal in respect of Planning application 19/02147/OUT scheduled to take place on 13th and 14th May 2020 was also postponed.

Finance. Total balance as at 13th May 2020, £36,994.80

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 1st July** (via Zoom)

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Dorothy House Virtual Big Breakfast 5k Run

Biddy Walcot

Step up for Dorothy House and join our first ever virtual Big Breakfast 5k Fun Run!

Between now and Sunday 21 June get positive, get some exercise and help raise vital funds for Dorothy House and patient care in your community! **You can do** a virtual 5k anywhere and at any time that suits you and you don't even have to do it in one go! Do the 5k on your own or with the kids. You can fundraise by logging in your steps, walks or runs online each day until you hit the magic 5k target. You can even do over it over a few weeks, just make sure you complete the full 5k by **21 June!**

COVID-19 is having a huge impact on our community. The pandemic means we've shut all our shops and had to stop many fundraising activities. Funds from the local community that support over 70% of our care are fast drying up and the impact could be devastating.

We are doing everything we can to offer different ways to get involved and continue to raise vital funds for patients but we cannot do this without you. You can sign up now through this link to join us in supporting our local community.

Check out www.dorothyhouse.org.uk/events/big-breakfast-5k-2020/ or follow the link <https://bit.ly/VirtualBB5K>

Melksham Food Bank Appeal

Laura Parsons

What an amazing village we live in!! I've now collected all the items that were donated at the pub and the items dropped off at my house and we have a huge amount!! You are all fantastic and after sending a picture to the team at the Melksham Food Bank they were blown away by the generosity! Thank you again



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Catholic News

St. John The Baptist Trowbridge & St Bernadette's Westbury (inc villages)

St John's (Trowbridge) & St Bernadette's (Westbury) Catholic Churches are physically closed. Further information is available on these websites:

www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk and www.cliftondiocese.co.uk

St John the Baptist - Trowbridge

Sunday & Weekday Masses:

For the duration of the Corona Virus lockdown Mass will be celebrated in St John's Church Trowbridge and uploaded to YouTube. Search 'Mass in Trowbridge'

Fr. Tom will occasionally upload a Children & Young Person's Exercise Prayer service.

St Bernadette's – Westbury - All services are suspended

A Glimmer of Hope: After the Prime Minister's 'interesting' presentation to the nation recently, there was great disappointment from Faith Leaders that nothing was mentioned about the re-opening of places of worship. However, in the report that followed on Monday, there was mention that we could look at re-opening on 4th July (Independence Day!) That still seems a long way off. But in the Government Daily Briefing on Wednesday, it was announced that there would be discussion with faith leaders about the opening of our buildings for private prayer sooner than 4th July. Let's hope so. When we do open back up, for private prayer and reflection and later for public Mass we need to be ready to implement social distancing measures and protective measures from the virus. This will need a small band of volunteers to help and support Fr. Tom in carrying these measures out. If you wish to be part of this group, please let Fr. Tom know. He is drawing up a description of roles and responsibilities for those who wish help.

Parish Website: Please visit our Parish Website when you can. There are many links on it that you may find helpful during these days and also important Parish and Diocesan News. Also, sign up to receive the Diocesan Newsletter via email. Again, this newsletter helps us keep in touch with the wider Church community.

The New 300 Club 2020: The monthly draws are suspended but will take place weekly when the churches reopen. Subscriptions: £50 annually - £13 quarterly - £4.33 monthly. New members are most welcome to join at any time. Monthly Prizes are: £200-£70-£50-£10. For info contact Francis Geraghty:
01380 871083 f.geraghty303@btinternet.com

Thought From The Curate

Rev. Joy Albone

How many times in recent weeks have we heard the phrase 'new normal' as we look forward to what life might look like post-lockdown, post Covid-19? I have lost count of how many times I have heard it, and I have even said it quite a few times too. But what do we mean by 'new normal,' what will our lives look like?

I know that there are certain aspects of our recent lockdown lives that I hope will continue to be part of that 'new normal'. The reduction in pollution for a start and the huge surge in community spirit that I have witnessed in Hilperton, Staverton and Semington. The heightened recognition of the value of many of our lowest paid workers who are vital to our lives: shop assistants; refuse collectors; public transport workers; those who provide care for our elderly and most vulnerable members of society; teachers, nursery nurses and others essential for the education of our young people; cleaners, porters, health care assistants, not to mention the doctors and nurses of our fabulous NHS. What would be on your list?

Our church communities too have been forced to consider a 'new normal' during the period of lockdown and beyond. We have sought new ways of reaching out to people online or by telephone. New ways of worshipping God together, while maintaining distancing and protecting lives. However, it is not new to the people of God to consider different ways of being the followers of Jesus.

At Pentecost, that is 50 days after Easter, (which is celebrated on 31st May this year), we remember that the followers of Jesus were all gathered together in one place, when they received the Holy Spirit in a way that has been described like a rushing wind and tongues of fire. The Holy Spirit enabled them to speak in other languages and enabled those who heard to understand what was said, each in their own language. The Holy Spirit enabled ordinary, simple men (and women): fishermen, a tax collector, a doubter, a cynic, a fanatic, and many more to talk about their faith, to talk about Jesus, in a way that none of them would have found easy beforehand.

The earliest followers of Jesus, those that had been with him during his earthly ministry were all faithful Jews who attended the Temple to worship and now they were being joined by many who were not Jews, who could not attend the Temple, and they had to find new ways of being together and worshipping together, they had to find a 'new normal'! It was a 'new normal' that involved sharing meals and belongings; looking after those who were in need; learning, praying and worshipping together; finding new ways of being a community of God without a building or place of worship that they could all attend! A 'new normal' that involved proclaiming the saving grace of Jesus and the everlasting love of God to all that would listen. It was not all 'plain sailing' for the early followers of Jesus, many of them experienced persecution, imprisonment and even death as they sought to live a life of faith and tell the good news of the gospel of Jesus, but they did not allow that to stop them.

So, as we move forward to a 'new normal' let us not lose sight of all the good that has come out of recent weeks. May we each take an active part in considering the values we want to see in our lives and the lives of those around us, and how our lives and our actions will reflect those values. Do not let us be pressured by those around us to abandon the good that has come out of this time for political expediency, the convenience of commerce or the false status of celebrity figures, instead let us continue to seek the common good for everyone in our communities.

May God bless you as you seek to find your 'new normal'!

Rev. Joy Albone

Paws for Thought



Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

It's in the Bible; Psalm 62 Verse 8



Please visit our **Canalsidebenefice.org.uk** website page and the 'canalsideparishes' Facebook page to include prayer and worship resources and activities for both adults and children.

Check the website for the most up to date link to YouTube for the online services. We will upload a new service every week until St George's is open for worship again.

If anyone wishes to have a friendly chat at this time of physical isolation I would be pleased to talk to them on 01225 764365 John Rees

Contact Details for The Canalside Parishes

Administrator – Michael Gamble, please contact Michael for initial enquiries about baptisms, weddings and general matters on **07795 400262**

E-mail: **canalsideoffice@gmail.com**

PCC Secretary/Treasurer - Jack Woodward **01380 870784**

Church Warden – Mr David Wildsmith

Lay Pastoral Assistants are co-ordinated by Marilyn Stubbs. Please contact Marilyn on **01225 753118** or John if you would like a visit.

Curate: Revd. Joy Albone **07931 638524** email **canalsidecurate@gmail.com**

Rev John Rees, Rector, Canalside Benefice **01225 764365**

Email: **canalsiderector@gmail.com** **www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk**