

OCTOBER 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 newsletter is now published to alternate with the Parish Magazine so generally in the middle of each month. Distribution is via the Support Group Facebook page. For anyone who would like a hard copy of an issue of the Support Group Newsletter, including all past issues, the spares are in the Somerset Arms and the Village Hall, which can be accessed when the Post Office is open on Mondays and Thursdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm. There is a fantastic selection of books and jigsaws available to buy when the Village Hall is open.

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 meeting via zoom in our own homes, to pray for our community, on **Wednesday 7th October** at 8.00pm. Please contact Jack Woodward, 870784, for the Zoom link.

Housegroup - This will continue on Tuesdays, via Zoom, at 8.00pm, but not every week. So if you'd like to discuss how the Bible helps us to live as God wants us to, please phone Jack/Bev 870784 or David/Pam 870030 for more details and the zoom link.

Wednesday Afternoons - the Church is open every Wednesday from 2.00pm to 3.30pm for anyone who wants to take time to be quiet.

Sunday 18th October - the next service in Church, 10.00am. Please let Michael Gamble know if you will be coming (07795 400262), as numbers are restricted at present.

Semington Support Group Road Leads

If the latest Corona virus developments mean that you need to or feel safer taking extra precautions then remember that your road lead is there to try and support you as we enter uncertain times once more. Check the support group Facebook page for further information.

Editor's Note

Gillian Airey

Can you believe that we're here at October and the nights are truly drawing in and suddenly the air is getting chilly, the leaves are turning and there is a smell of woodsmoke in the air.

Deadline for submissions for the November edition is **Sunday 18th October**. If you wish to contribute to the magazine or weekly newsletter my e-mail as always is **semparmag@icloud.com** **Stay alert – stay safe!**

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This Month I've Become a Prepper

Gilly Airey

You may recall Gorgeous Hubby and me missed the beginning of Lockdown in March on account of deciding to be as far away from home as possible when a global pandemic hit – so I am taking no chances whatsoever this time as a lockdown of sorts looms on the horizon. Me – I'm getting prepared with a list of stuff to do for when staying home becomes again the new going out.

First and foremost I am going to nail some of the lovely country walks we have right on our doorstep and I am determined I am not going to get lost like I have done on the last three attempts, the worst of which involved me panicking as I attracted the attention of a herd of cows and the divine Ms L just kept telling me to jump over a fence – the barbed wire scars were evidence that I am incapable of jumping over fences....

I have also decided for me this year I won't bother with a Christmas jumper – no, this year for me it's all about the Christmas mask. I've only gone and bought me a selection of Christmas fabric and I'm going to make me (and about 27 other people) a Christmas mask – so that should keep me super busy for a few weeks.

I have also started stockpiling..... not pasta or toilet rolls you'll be pleased to hear, no I'm stockpiling wool and jigsaws. Currently I have five knitting and crochet projects waiting in the wings, I've already finished one – a mobius cowl (look it up, I hope you'll be impressed) and am currently trying to finish a rather natty scarf for Gorgeous Hubby which I'm rather hoping he won't wear because I want it for myself!. As for the jigsaws, the divine Ms L has again been guiding me in building my collection of jigsaws that should keep me quiet for a while – although I don't think I could possibly attempt the 4,000 piece jigsaw that is sitting in the village hall right now – besides who has a table big enough to complete a 4,000 piece puzzle?

And then there's the gardening – whisper this as I don't need Gorgeous Hubby hearing this – but I have actually really started to enjoy doing the weeding so I'm sure that along with that and the 300 bulbs I've ordered (he doesn't know about those either) will help pass some time too.

So if as BoJo says this is going to be how the next six months are going to pan out the one thing I am prepared to do is spread kindness not germs and looking forward to spending my most favourite season, autumn, at home in Semington.



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Parish Council Matters

Peter Smith, Vice Chair of Parish Council

Guttering and Pavement Clearance – a total of 15 parishioners worked hard through the morning of 12th September to clear the weeds and soil build-up along several streets in the village. Some even worked on when, after two hours of toil, others headed for the Somerset Arms. Result: pavements and gutters a treat to behold. Well done all!

Planning Changes – the Parish Council has prepared a response to the government's consultation document on proposals to change planning rules. This response is available to read in the September Parish Council agenda papers.

Wessex Close anti-social behaviour – on 11th September, damage to play equipment and extensive littering at the play area was reported by a parishioner. This was cleared away the following morning and the play area was again available for all to use. It's evident that people living in and around the area have recently heard noisy gatherings, and are now keeping an eye on what's going on.

A draft strategic framework for guiding Parish Council activities – arising from replies to the village questionnaire in July, there are a lot of possible new initiatives within the parish. To help the council and parishioners choose what to do and when, a document has been drafted which aims to capture all the activity areas of the Parish Council. The council would like to adopt this framework to guide its work, but wants to hear what villagers, businesses and other organisations in the community think before it does so. The draft framework is circulated with this magazine. It's about your village and the improvements you'd like to see. Please read it and send your comments in to one of the email addresses at the end of the document. The deadline is **14th October 2020**.

Village Planters – arising from the questionnaire, a group of villagers wanted to help revive the planters around the village. The parish council has now agreed a budget of £150 to help the group to do this. There are also many daffodil bulbs to be planted this autumn. Anyone not yet in the gardening/planters group but who would like to join should contact me on **pnmssmith@mspsmith.plus.com** or phone 01380 870888.

Village Litter Pick – on Friday 18th September, a small but enthusiastic group gathered at the village hall and swept through Semington with bags and litter pick sticks. The roads were left looking completely clean ready for the Harvest Festival celebration event on 19th September. Well done all – again!

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Able Community Care – Reader Offer

Angela Gifford CEO

Able Community Care is a Norfolk home care company which was established in 1980 and now provides care 24/7 throughout the UK and beyond.

We continually read news/articles flagging up the activities of Doorstep Criminals: fraudulent roofers, gardeners, service officials and other non-genuine visitors who target older people. Over the years we have also had first-hand evidence from our own clients and carers.

As a company we have decided to see if we can help prevent this on a small scale and so we have had the Door Safety Sticker to give away to older people. To date we have sent out 60,000 upon request, since February 2019.

If you would like to have one, please ask call on **01603 764567** or email to **info@ablecommunitycare.com**

We will not keep their details other than to send out the door sticker to them.



Ruby and David Daniels, who have lived in the village since 1973, celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary on Thursday 10th September and received a congratulations card from the Queen.

A difficult time for large celebrations!

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Natures Notes

Poems about ravens tend not to be full of joy; rather, they are dark, brooding affairs. This, by Walter de la Mare, is a good example:

*'Build me my tomb,' the Raven said, 'Within the dark yew-tree,
So in the Autumn yewberries, sad lamps may burn for me.
Summon the haunted beetle, from twilight bud and bloom,
To drone a gloomy dirge for me at dusk above my tomb.
Beseech ye too the glowworm to bear her cloudy flame,
Where the small, flickering bats resort, whistling in tears my name.
Let the round dew a whisper make, welling on twig and thorn;
And only the grey cock at night call through his silver horn.
And you, dear sisters, don your black for ever and a day,
To show how sweet a raven in his tomb is laid away.'*



The better known one by Edgar Allen Poe is spookier still. And yet, anyone watching the pair of ravens that regularly inhabit the village, and dance and tumble about the sky calling out to each other, might wonder whether these dazzling birds really deserve this treatment.

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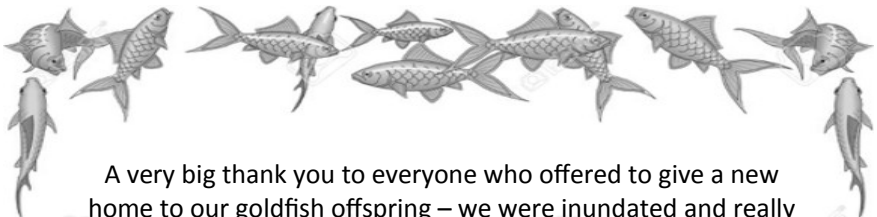
Tony Marsh

I would like to say a very 'big thank you' to everyone in the village who sponsored me for my parachute jump from 10,000 feet. On Saturday 12th September I completed a tandem free-fall parachute jump at an airfield near Salisbury. I was raising funds for Alzheimer's Support.

With the support of people in both Manor Closes, Manor Farm, Church Street and DG Car Sales I managed to raise over £1,400 for Alzheimers's Support Trowbridge. I would also like to thank the Milk Churn, Cleeve Cats, Co-operative Travel Melksham, Trowbridge Garden Centre, Bay Tree Cafe and AJC Drainage Frome. I must also thank the many carers I have supported over the past 16 years for their generosity. My apologies if I have missed anyone out.



Peter Turner



A very big thank you to everyone who offered to give a new home to our goldfish offspring – we were inundated and really grateful that we could spread a little happiness around the village. We hope that the fish are all settling into their new homes!

Parish Council Meeting

Abridged Minutes From Meeting Held via Zoom Wednesday 23rd September

Present. Councillors P Smith (Vice -Chairman and Acting Chairman for the meeting), R Blake, V Bodman, M Kasasian, R Oglesby, W Scott, C Wade, R Bruges, S Chown (from Agenda item 3b) and the Clerk Roger Coleman. Wiltshire Council Cllr. J Seed attended (part-time).

Co-option of a New Member: The Council **resolved** to co-opt Siobhan Chown as a member of Semington Parish Council.

Wiltshire Council Report: Wiltshire Council, Cllr. J Seed gave a brief report on the following topics: **Finance:** The financial position is looking healthier than originally predicted because of the beneficial effect of some cost-saving measures that had been introduced by Wiltshire Council. **Melksham Campus:** This project is moving forward, and some other capital projects are also progressing. **COVID-19 Marshalls:** Wiltshire Council is not introducing the COVID Marshall scheme because the population has been generally responsive to the COVID-19 restrictions imposed and the current rate of infections in Wiltshire is very low. **Electoral Boundary Review:** It was confirmed that the Draft Recommendations of the Boundary Commission indicated that Semington will now be contained within the Melksham Rural West Electoral Division – a Division that will also include Bowerhill Industrial Estate. He added that Semington will remain in the Melksham Community Area. **Whaddon Lane Cycleway.** Cllr Smith enquired whether any progress had been made in developing this cycleway. Cllr. Seed replied that he would make those enquiries at the ‘virtual’ CATG meeting that he was attending the following day.

Chairman’s Report: Daffodil bulbs have now been obtained by Cllr. Oglesby and the ‘Village Planters Group’ is to be requested to undertake the planting of the bulbs. The Tornado play equipment at Wessex Close is broken and Wiltshire Council has taken steps – though largely ineffective – to prevent its use pending a decision on its future. He added that the newly formed Wessex Close Group is now operating and that its meeting is to be held on **10th October** to undertake a site inspection and to propose a possible programme for the development (and improvement) of that area.

Highways and Environment. Cllr. Scott proposed that it would be timely for the Parish Council to write a polite note to the landowners reminding them of their legal obligations to maintain and protect Rights of Way (RoW) crossing their land. The Council agreed with this proposal. The RoW in question were SEMI14/20 and SEMI13/10. Cllr. Bruges commented that RoW SEMI 39/20 was blocked and although designated a bridleway it was impossible to pass along it if riding a horse. The Chairman added that clearance work had been undertaken on that RoW but further work was needed and he would investigate the matter further. Cllr. Smith stated that the hedge that runs alongside RoW SEMI 41/10 and borders the (assumed) unadopted road needs attention as it is very overgrown. Councillors commented that the ownership of this hedge had always been a disputed matter and in the past, the Parish Council has taken the initiative to cut back the hedge having informed the neighbouring residents of the intended action. It was noted that more recently the local residents – one in particular - had taken the necessary action. It was **resolved** that the Parish Council writes again to the local residents requesting them to take the necessary action and the Clerk was asked to provide copies of a suitable note to be delivered to each household including recognising the co-operation previously received from residents.

Planning: 20/10306/OUT residential development on land north of St Georges Road Cllr. Scott confirmed that he would be attending this Appeal Hearing and that he would read out a prepared statement, on behalf of the Parish Council, to the Appeal Inspector. 20/07304/FUL Proposed conversion of entrance lobby into new dwelling at St Georges Court, the Parish Council resolved to send comments to Wiltshire Council as shown (in italics): *The Council objects to this proposed development. The proposed development will detract from the setting of the existing building and will be contrary to maintaining the integrity of this historic listed building and recommends that this application is passed to the Conservation Officer for comment.*

'Planning for the Future' Government White Paper Consultation: The Parish Council noted the proposed White Paper and individual councillors thanked Cllrs. Bodman and Scott for preparing a possible Semington Parish Council response to the proposals contained within the White Paper. Councillors commented that the proposed response was detailed and well-argued and that it comprehensively addressed the key points that related to villages such as Semington. The Council noted the additional paragraph proposed by Cllr. Bruges and agreed that it should be included in the main text. The Council resolved to send this response, with the addition proposed by Cllr. Bruges, as the formal Parish Council response.

Finance: Balance in hand as at 23rd September **£41,491.19**

Village Initiatives: The Chairman gave an introduction to the draft strategic framework paper that was written by Cllrs Scott, Bruges and Smith to guide the Parish Council in respect of Village Initiative activities. He stated that the ultimate goal must be to invite councillors and parishioners to take the various proposals forward and to allocate tasks according to interests and abilities. The Parish Council resolved to send a copy of the paper – subject to an amendment to the opening paragraph - to each household in Semington to promote better community engagement and to invite comments on its contents from parishioners. It was hoped that such an approach may encourage further involvement from parishioners in community activities and that they would be better informed regarding the role and intended direction of their Parish Council.

Semington Website: The Clerk and Cllr. Scott commented that the Semington website had been refreshed and that the webmaster was now taking an active role in improving its display of Parish Council information. Cllr. Scott added that he was keen to be able to display planning information on the website and there were hopeful signs that he might be in a position to do this soon. It was agreed to take no further action at present and to review the subject at the next meeting. The Council resolved to accept the offer from Cllr. Oglesby for the existing webmaster of the West Lavington website to provide a quotation for developing a similar one for Semington.

Village Celebration: In respect of the Village Celebrations the Chairman thanked all those involved in organising such a successful event and for the variety of activities and displays that took place, a sentiment also expressed by the councillors present. The Parish Council resolved to record its thanks to the Organising Committee and Cllr. Bodman.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 21st October 2020 and that it would be a remote/virtual (Zoom) meeting.

Semington Celebrates

Vicky Bodman

Saturday 19th September saw the Semington Celebrates event take place. The event was held to celebrate how our community has come together during these difficult times.

People were encouraged to take time to walk round the village, paint a stone, enjoy music at the pub, make a donation to the food bank, look at the decorated windows, visit a prayer station and church labyrinth, visit the wall of hearts at the school, see the works of the newly formed camera club and spend time with our neighbours.

What an effort everyone put in! It was fantastic. People were sharing home made treats, cuttings of plants, home grown food (watch out for Mr C's chillis if you had any of those!) sweets for the children and having a dance at the pub.

The event really showed what a great community we have here in Semington. Even before the event the Street Scene volunteer team went out to make sure the streets looked tidy and there was no rubbish to be seen.

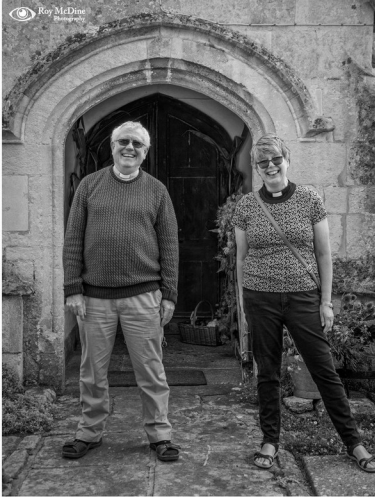
People have said to me that they have met people in the village they'd never met before, forming great friendships. I've seen some fantastic pictures from the Camera Club. I even managed to convince a couple of people to try out a run with my running club!

As it appears that COVID is not over and more restrictions come back into place, I think we timed our event just right to appreciate our community 6 months into this pandemic.

As the lovely Mrs W said *'Lovely Day, Lovely People, Lovely Village!'*

Photos opposite (clockwise from top left) Rev John Rees and Curate Joy Albone (courtesy of Roy McDine), Giving Goodies Away (Katherine Way), Camera Club Display at Village Hall (Roy McDine – check Facebook on how to join the club), Bread and Chutneys (Lesley Williams) and the handsome 'Church Dog' (RoyMcDine)

Semington Celebrates



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Melksham Foodbank

Julia Wade – 01380 870137



Thank you so much to everyone who has continued to donate much needed items to the Melksham Foodbank. The volunteers who run it, are very, very grateful to you all. They particularly appreciate having a regular supply of food and other items for their clients.

I would like to mention the items which they are generally in need of, at the moment. They do change weekly, so I will list the weekly needs on the village Facebook page. With Christmas not so far away (there, I said it... sorry about that!) they are looking to build up stocks of Christmas treats but please make sure they have a really long best before date:- Christmas puddings, Christmas cake, mince pies and nice biscuits. They are also always short of sweets, as a treat for adults. Why not buy a load of pick-n-mix which can be bagged up for each client? Make sure they're in a sealed bag so the ants don't find them, especially if you leave them at the church. They are also always short of tinned meats, such as stew, and ham.

All **in date** tinned and packet food, as well as toiletries, toilet rolls, etc., will be welcomed. No fresh food at all, please. Please take to either the Somerset Arms pub between 12.00 and 7.00pm on Wednesdays or put in the box in the church porch, any time, but it is better if that is also done on a Tuesday or a Wednesday to avoid food sitting there for several days. Please do keep an eye for any changes to these arrangements, in the Support Group's Newsletter on the village website. (Hard copy can be delivered to those without the internet.)

For the full list of what items to donate, please see the notice in the church porch or contact me on 01380 870137. There is also a Facebook page and website www.melkshamfoodbank.org.uk

At The School Gates

Candida Hutchinson

St George's is a stunning school provision for early years children, and we look forward to showing new families for September 2021 around the school. We will be following social distancing and group number rules, so visits will be after the children have gone home. Please look at our website <https://st-georges-semington.wilts.sch.uk/> for all useful information and more photographs of our outside grounds and play space.

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So, plenty has been happening through September. As we go to print we are on day 1 of the new rules, more about that later.

The Eat Out to Help Out scheme proved more than successful as we turned away as many tables as we took bookings, as full as possible every night maintaining social distancing. We are continuing a scheme of our own with treble 6, a choice of 6 dishes for a maximum of 6 people for a bargain £6.00 each. Call into the pub or check Facebook for further details.

The village celebration day was also a success proving that socially distanced music can be done. Many enjoyed the selection of bands from their tables throughout the day and night. It took a bit of policing but we managed to maintain order till the music stopped at 10.00pm.

So what do the new rules mean? First and foremost you can still enjoy your village pub. It's just a little different. Masks must be worn indoors until you are seated, once seated they may be removed unless you are leaving your table. There is no standing allowed inside (although this has always been the case aside of private functions). Biggest bonus is we will bring drinks to your table. Outside standing is permitted as long as social distance guidelines are followed and masks do not need to be worn.

Over the next few days we are moving the marquee closer to the pub to allow us to create further seating and the ability to keep the covered areas warm. This should be in place by the time you read this. As winter comes we hope to have as many tables as possible available for the maximum permitted size of 6 to enjoy. We are also varying our menu as much as possible and if we continue to get the footfall keep up with our food discounts. Again keep an eye on Facebook.

We have to be strict about the 10.00pm close but up until now we have been pretty quiet from 9.00pm on but please bear this in mind when planning your visit. These continue to be tough times and it seems the 'new normal' is forever changing. If we keep to the rules however there is no reason to not be able to enjoy the pub as best we can.

Hope to see you down the local real soon.

As always much love and stay safe.

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Something To Make You Smile

Neill Newport

Right now we need something to keep us smiling – every word is true apart from "the crystal clear waters of the K&A." Pat Butler, this is for you but too good not to let everyone else have a laugh at my expense.

Many years ago, I woke up one beautiful sunny Sunday morning. Birds a twittering, smell of pine and shafts of sunlight coming through the wooden shutters. Oh, wait, stop, that's from another joke and this is for real. It was a beautiful, sunny, Sunday morning. I'd have been about 32, so 30ish years ago. Shirley Newport, my long suffering wife was fast asleep, as were our two young daughters. The day was too good not to enjoy. I put on my running kit and off I set to run along the towpath towards Devizes. No sooner had I turned onto the towpath when behold, in front of me, as far as I could see were 200 fishermen. There was a massive competition taking place. I carried on, hurdling most of the fishing poles. These poles were huge, easily reaching the far side of the canal. I've never understood why they just don't buy short poles and fish from the other side but then again I'm not a fisherman.

It's a lovely run and it was really pleasant, listening to the birds a twitter.....oh there I go again. After a couple of miles I found myself on the opposite bank to the Barge pub. I turned left to head back towards Melksham and decided to run along the old, disused railway line. I was feeling good, really happy and wondering if Mrs N might be up by now.

Happily cantering along, different people had bought or laid claim to sections of the old railway line and this meant I had to hurdle several barbed wire fences. No problem. I competed at club level in hurdles until I was 28. Ahead of me was another barbed wire fence. I could see that a farmer had spread flat a load of cow manure. Again, no problem, it was totally dry and easy to run on or so I thought. -

I cleared the fence easily, landing 6ft away from the fence, expecting to land on hard cow muck. THE FARMER HAD DUG A PIT!!! I immediately sank up to my armpits in cow poop. I honestly couldn't feel the bottom. I hadn't told anyone I was going for a run. All manner of things were going through my mind. I'm about to drown in well, COW POOP! Nobody knows where I am. Visions of police searches, being dug up in two thousand years time and being labelled Semington Peat Bog Man!

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I was too far away from anyone to call for help. 'Neill' I said to myself 'don't panic.' All the little bugs were having an absolute feast below the surface. Slowly, very slowly, I spread myself and eventually managed to drag myself out. It was exhausting and I wanted to just lie there a while. No, that wasn't possible. All those bugs were all over me, well at least up to my armpits. And they were hungry. Anyone would think they'd never had anyone jump in their pit/home before. I desperately needed a shower. I got up and started running, getting faster and faster as the need for that shower grew ever more demanding.

Damn it! I'm going in that canal as fast as I can get there. Hang a left and I knew the soothing waters of the Kennet and Avon were only two fields away. I kept close to the hedge (not any of those I fell in last night). Through the first field. It was as if those bugs knew what was coming. They chomped harder and deeper. Because I was now running faster than Usain Bolt had ever run, the contents of the pit was flying onto my face, neck and somehow getting into my ears. It was truly unbearable.

One more stile to go. The other side of that stile was the towpath and then crystal clear waters of the K & A that would relinquish me of the agonising pain from my tormentors, devouring my rapidly diminishing body. I sailed over that stile and the towpath like a Thomson's Gazelle. KERSPLOOSH!

Have you ever seen 200 angry fishermen? I have.



Catholic News

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

Please check weekly newsletter for any changes to timings

St John the Baptist - Trowbridge

Sunday & Weekday Masses:

For the duration of the Corona Virus Mass times are:

Saturdays 12noon & 6.00pm (Vigil Mass)

Sundays 10.30am & 12noon

Monday/Weds/Friday 9.00am

Tuesday 6.00pm

St Bernadette's - Westbury

Mass times are:

Sunday 9.00am

Thursday 10.00am

For social distancing & safety protocols the one meter+ distancing will be followed, and face masks are required to be worn whilst in church.

Live streaming: All masses are streamed live on www.churchservices.tv or on YouTube 'Mass in Trowbridge'

Parish Newsletter: This is available on the Parish website. Should you wish to have an emailed copy please contact f.geraghty303@btinternet.com

Motor Neurone Disease Fund Raising. Anthony Higgins one of our parishioners was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2018. Unfortunately, it is terminal. The family are taking part in mission 5000 to raise money to help find a cure in the future from this terrible disease and raise awareness about it. His children are doing several 5K runs and he is doing a 5K motorised wheelchair event to raise awareness.

THE NEW 300 CLUB 2020: The monthly draws 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 information on any of the above contact Francis Geraghty 01380 871083 f.geraghty303@btinternet.com

Thought From The Curate

Joy Albone

Recently we managed to get away on a much-needed family holiday. As all through lockdown we have had to form a family bubble with our daughter and her husband and children (we look after the children when their parents are working at the RUH), we were happy to holiday in the same house as them. We ended up staying in the Forest of Dean only a few miles from where we lived in the nineties.

Needless to say, much of the week was spent revisiting places we recalled from the time we lived there: whether it was squelching through the thick oozing mud at Puzzlewood; absorbing the peace and stillness of my former parish church located amid the trees; or having fun and laughter in some of the same playgrounds and on some of the same play equipment my own children had enjoyed when they were the age my grandchildren are now!

One of my favourites has always been the Sculpture Trail at Beechenhurst, over the years the sculptures have changed as it was always anticipated that some would gently deteriorate and disappear into the background while others would come and take their place. However, from the time I first encountered it over 25 years ago, my favourite sculpture has been "Cathedral" a 15 feet high stained glass window suspended in the forest, so I was delighted to discover this still existed and to revisit the site! The artist created this sculpture recognising the analogy between the natural vault of the trees in the forest to the vault of a cathedral roof and the way the trees have grown up and now soar over this location echoes this even more today than it did 25 years ago.



In each encounter with our memories of our past, as we viewed them from the present, I couldn't help but be reminded of our ever-present God, who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, but perceived by us through the ever-changing lens of our lives as we come closer to him and, sometimes move further away from him. Yet God's love for us never changes, even when just as any child does, we may challenge and frustrate him: he remains constant. I wonder how many of us as parents can say the same? We each of us have the same access to God today, as we had as children and will have for the rest of our lives, for God is only a prayer away!

This term our children have returned to school, or started new schools, and I am sure many of us are concerned for their safety and well-being in this new-normal that includes the wearing of face-coverings and maintaining social distancing. As a Benefice we are fortunate to have close contact with our three primary schools in Staverton, Hilperton and Semington, and we love to provide a weekly service of Collective Worship into our schools, albeit at present these will need to be pre-recorded and sent into the schools as videos to be viewed. We are looking at prayer with the children this term, in particular The Lord's Prayer. A prayer that Jesus taught his followers 2000 years ago but is still as relevant today as it was then, as it brings us closer to our ever-living God.

My prayer for you in this ever-changing world is that you will have an encounter with God who never stops loving you, and who never changes!

Paws for Thought



We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

It's in the Bible; 1 John 4 verse 16



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.

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**