THE Parishioner

EASTER 2021

St Mary's Church Ash Vale

roots down, walls down

Vicar

Rev Neil Lambert
203 Vale Road
Ash Vale
Surrey
GU12 5JE

revneil@me.com

Churchwardens
Martin Lindsay
Nikki Glover

Hon. Treasurer
Patrick Brown

Parish Administrator
Jackie Scott
E-mail parishoffice@ash-vale.org.uk
Office Hours Tues 11am-4pm, Thurs 10am-3pm
Parish Office Mobile: 9am-5pm
07863 311165

Sunday Morning 10am Services: On Zoom for now, and in Person after lockdown
You are welcome to Zoom in to the Sunday Morning service at 10am; simply email the Parish Administrator to receive the link, or find it on Facebook @StMarysAshVale.
Once restrictions lift you will also be able to attend in person, with extra measures to keep everyone safe. **On arrival please sign in or scan the QR code on your NHS app, use hand sanitiser, pop on your mask and go directly to your seat and remain seated.** We must not mingle, so as to protect all those attending. (Please stay at home and use Zoom if you have COVID-19 symptoms). **We look forward to welcoming you.**

Evensong Wednesdays 8pm

You can Zoom in to Evensong on Wednesday nights or join us in the car park. Email the Parish Administrator to join our mailing list and receive the link. Keep in touch as arrangements are always evolving!

Monthly Messy Church: 07730 609446

- *Jan: Wedding at Cana Kits*
- *Feb: Lost Sheep Trail*
- *March: Messy Easter kits*
- ***April: Messy Easter Trail***
- *May: Messy Church tbc*

St Mary's Community Centre

- Large hall & kitchen
- Small hall & sink / coffee making area
- Wheelchair accessible toilet

Bookings: Please contact the Parish Administrator for news. We are following latest Government and CofE guidance.

Ash Vale Chapel, Wharf Rd

(Joint project with Hants Surrey Border Methodist Circuit) www.ashvalechapel.com

Project Manager: 07730 609446

Parishioner Magazine Team

Editors: Alex Sanderson & Neil Lambert
Advertising: Eileen Monds
Collation: Alison Shewell
Distribution: Caroline Johnson

Contact the Parishioner team:

parishioner@ash-vale.org.uk
Alex: 07730 609446

During the Pandemic we are publishing mainly online, with paper copies on request. Please collect your copy at St Mary's or text us: 077309 609446 www.ash-vale.org.uk

We are hugely grateful to a small army of willing volunteers who contribute, collate, publish, email, print, bundle and deliver The Parishioner to all our readers!

An invitation to the Table

By Revd. Neil Lambert

Once again, a huge thank you Dan Austin for another great Easter cover for the Parishioner Magazine. For those reading this on the web page you get it in glorious Technicolor too! You might remember, last year he took us verse by verse through the chapter in the gospel of Luke 24 and the road to Emmaus. This year, we have a picture of an English hedge row, with a tree that clearly represents the cross.

The painting was inspired by a wounded blackbird that Dan found in the road, and brought home to nurse. With the mother and father blackbird, and the eggs in the nest, it's almost like a holy family. On the lft, representing our business that we are all involved with is the car, whizzing past. On the opposite side, a field, and the hope of something different. The Sun is shining, like a beautiful pearl.

When I showed the painting to the local Chapel Poetry Group, someone said that reminded them of their favourite poem, The Bright Field by R S Thomas. We had a look at it and it is miraculous how well it fits.

The Bright Field – *R. S. Thomas*

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as our youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

Although Dan didn't know the poem, he had illustrated it, just as the poem illustrates the passage, inspired by Matthew 13: 45-46 which reads:

> *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. (NIV)*

Of course the field and the pearl represent the great good news of Jesus Christ, which we celebrate every week in church, and more than any other time at Easter.

The poem talks about missing something that is so precious, because we are too busy to stop and notice. So this is an invitation to stop, and find something that is for all eternity this Easter.

The 'old normal' that we find ourselves longing for was never really that normal. Let's face it, we were stressed out and spread thin. Now is an opportunity to discover what truly is important and where our treasure lies, not in holidays or big houses or fast cars, but in connecting to our creator through Christ.

Certainly, something that I have missed greatly during lockdown, is sitting around a table together with friends and strangers, easting and sharing. I personally can't wait to make that part of my 'new normal'.

During lockdown, we have of course been meeting around a table, whether in church or on zoom. It's called the Lord's table, and we remember what Jesus did. His last supper, crucifixion and resurrection. It is that hope of resurrection that has brought us together each Sunday around a table. To give thanks, to share, and to pray for one another— and it has been priceless.

As we come out of lockdown we want to invite you to the table, whether it's for a cup of tea, or to celebrate Easter. Come and join us, as we rebuild our lives as a community.

Whoever you are, whatever you believe, you are welcome.

Neil

Book of Psalms 2021

St Mary's Church, Ash Vale

As we look back over a challenging year, we are contemplating our experiences of God and faith in these times, and collecting psalms written by our church family & community, expressing our despair, fear, hope, love, and all things in between.

We would love to add your contributions.

projectmanager@ash-vale.org.uk

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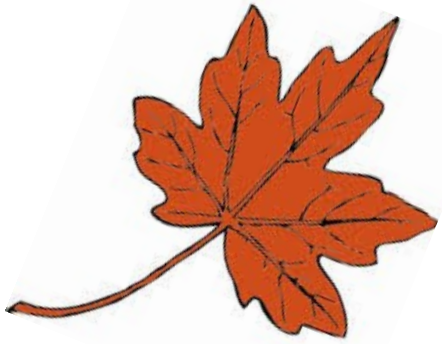

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Meet the local — Mary Langsford

The Parishioner interviews one of our local community heroes...

Great to meet you Mary! Tell us a bit about yourself...

In a sentence: I'm a rock and country music loving, Prosecco drinking, mad cat lady!

Have you always been in the area? What do you love about Ash Vale?

I've lived in Ash Vale for over 50 years. We moved here when my dad left the Army and I have never felt the need to move since. Up until a couple of years ago my career was in IT and I often made long commutes for work and travelled internationally too. We're lucky to have great road networks and a great rail service. You can be in London in 45 minutes and the coast in 45 minutes, Heathrow in 30 minutes and Gatwick in 50 Minutes. I've always felt safe here. I live in a small close where everyone knows each other and we have a wonderful community spirit.

What's your 'day job'? How has COVID affected your day to day?

Once I left IT, I became a Registrar which means I spend my days marrying people. It really is the best job in the world! COVID has had a devastating effect on the whole wedding industry from the Ceremonies through to caterers, planners, venues, entertainers and others. So many of our couples have had their wedding plans squashed several times. Even now, restrictions are very limiting and so couples are still having to compromise from the 'Big Day' they had planned, to a more intimate event.

We know you have a great heart for the community. What motivates you and what do you get up to?

As work dried up, I found I had plenty of time to volunteer within the community I have made home. I feel blessed to have good health and that meant I could step up and volunteer to help others who need it as part of the amazing local Corona Support Group. I've met and worked with some incredibly selfless people who have dedicated their lives to this community and I am so happy to have been able to play a small part in that. Initially, I acted as a co-ordinator for my very local area, taking calls from those needing help with their shopping and prescription collections, and more recently have become a regular volunteer with our Food Parcel Project, where we make up parcels for families needing a little extra help through these difficult times. I am so motivated by the generosity of the community when we ask for donations - especially little extras around Christmas, Mothering Sunday and Easter, to make these times a little more special for

the families we help. I have many friends who have worked all the way through the pandemic who would have loved to have been able to do more. We know this won't last forever and we're finally seeing a light at the end of this terrible time but for as long as I can get out and give a little something back, I will continue to do so. Being back in the Chapel is actually very nostalgic for me - as a teenager I went to a Youth Club there called PowerPoint, and so coming back decades later in a very different capacity is amazing.

Away from the volunteering activities bought in by the pandemic, I am also a regular volunteer and treasurer for our Local Nature Reserve and I am the area coordinator for our very active neighbourhood watch scheme.

A little bird told us you're rather a fabulous singer, tell us about that!

Oh well now, who told you that?! Hahaha, Yes I do love a good sing song! I have fronted several party and function bands over the years and being on stage truly is my happy place. The very first band I was in - The Tangible Fruit Squad - was planning its 25 year anniversary with a bit of a comeback tour around the local area during 2020 but I don't need to tell you how that went! Hey Ho, maybe we'll go for a 30th Anniversary tour instead! I've played some incredible venues from the Iconic Rock Garden in Convent Garden, to stately homes performing at Weddings. We were lucky enough to get some Radio Airplay and even did a live acoustic set on the Whispering Bob Harries show. I guess the highlight for me would have to be my appearance on ITV's Stars in their Eyes with Matthew Kelly, Singularly the most exciting thing I have ever done!

What's your Easter wish, prayer or message for our local readers?

Mostly, I hope everyone can hold on to the fact that there are better times ahead. This won't last forever and the time will come we can see and hug friends and family again. Secondly, to anyone who is still struggling, know that there is help out there. Don't be afraid to ask. We have a wonderful group of kind volunteers just waiting to support you in anyway we can. Finally, please be kind. It costs nothing and may make the world of difference to someone.

Introducing Rosie, our Waterways Chaplain

By Rosie Leakey

When I became a Christian, 42 years ago now, my life was transformed overnight and having given my life to Christ, I experienced such love and joy within my heart I was propelled into living and viewing life differently on a day-to-day basis. Jesus rapidly became my best friend whom I enjoyed talking with, reading the Bible, and looking out for answers in line with His plans for my life. The verse from John 3:16 then made sense to me, *'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.'* It has been an exciting journey, not always easy going but full of encouraging things that have happened, even in the hard times. One of the verses that has always meant a lot to me is from Psalm 37 v *5 'Commit your ways to The Lord, trust in Him and He will do this'*. I placed this verse over the doorway of the department I work in and God did indeed bless the work. I also learnt that success in Gods' eyes can be different from our limited idea of achieving or being successful.

My love of being on rivers and walking along tow paths started 20 years ago when we had a family holiday on a narrow boat. Being able to go more slowly along and appreciating the beauty of nature helps us to draw closer to God. I am so grateful that my love of sharing my faith in Jesus, being on or near water and enjoying nature, has all been brought together in being a Waterways Chaplain.

I retired from being an Occupational Therapist 4 years ago to help look after my late frail father-in-law, to spend more time with my elderly mother, to be on or near the water and to help look after our granddaughter.

Just before the end of the first lockdown I managed to complete my training to be a Waterways Chaplain and I was commissioned in time to go roaming in the Fenlands. We did many prayer walks round the old churches that were along the river banks and it was an encouraging time meeting different people.

Many others enjoy walking along the tow paths and even more so in this year of a pandemic, so it has been good to be able to be out and about when possible and talk with those who do want to, especially if I am given an opportunity to share about what Jesus means to me and has done for us all. I look forward to seeing you again in the future and may the Lord bless us all daily as we look forward and trust in Him for a Happy Easter and year ahead freer of COVID.

News from Abbeywood Care Home

By Carol Weaver

Hi Everyone, let me introduce you to your local care home, Abbeywood, on Wharf Road. We specialise in caring for the elderly and those with dementia. We have brilliant residents, who haven't been outside since last March. It has been a very tough year for us all.

We want to start planning exciting things for our residents after lockdown. Our Moto is '#never too old', so we have decided to start early and plan a Panto for late November, date to be confirmed.

We would like to open this up to the public as well, but being a care home we have to fund this all ourselves... that's where we hope you guys will be able to help. Our Panto is Cinderella, and we have some costumes, but may need to ask for help with some props and scenery. As a team we will need lots of willing Abbeywood volunteers to fill the characters too!

As you pass our windows, especially during the holidays on the Easter Trail, please do keep waving to our residents, they really love it. They may not all wave back, but they talk about it as you go by.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and we wish you all a Happy Easter.

If you'd like to get involved and support the Abbeywood Panto in November please phone us on 01483 404931 and ask for Shai, Sylwia or Carol. Thank you for your support!

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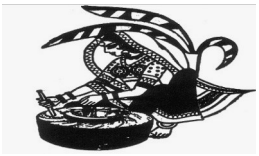

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Poetry Corner

Memory Marks

Laughter dances with pollen,
Creaks' crescendos unheard.
Feathers fly.
Stored energy surges.
All that is home watches.
Then Silence.

Popping, a paper bag inflates,
Mother of pillow fights done.
My son's Asthma abates.
The tree deteriorates.
Cotton white daisies delight.
Then silence.

Ripping bares my chubby legs.
Roots display their hidden mane.
My dress was darned.
The rented house intact.
Seat belts clicked.
Then silence.

Spinning wildly in the sun.
Driving home on scorching seats.
I outgrew my party dress.
My Mum sold her old Cortina.
New Jeans made climbing easy.
Then silence.

Racing up to the seagulls.
Dad's last jumper warmed.
The Helter-Skelter, candy striped.
Harlequin's knit, ruby bright.
Coconut mats dirty, scratchy.
Then silence.

Pushing off first-time fear.
Racing to Grandma's Terrace.
Exhilaration confidence builds.
Her cobble lane history rubs.
Swatches of memory unseen move.
Then life.

By PCD Roberts

Thought for Today

Do you mean what you say when you praise my name?
Is it only fine words, is it all just a game?
When you say all your thanks —does it come from the heart?
Do you really mean it, or maybe just one part?

Think on these things—that My love for you
Is all embracing, is completely true.
I love to hear you singing—a love song to my ears
That also helps to lift you through the oncoming years.

Are the words that you sing for my ears alone?
Do you mean what you say, whatever the tone?
A song from your heart is what gladdens my own
What raises us all up—a place near my throne.
Join in with the crowd, you're all friends of mine.
Come join with the angels— O chorus sublime.

By BMS

Enjoy these wonderful poems with a cuppa, and why not send us your own?

The copy deadline for our June/July edition is 7th May 2021
parishioner@ash-vale.org.uk

Mirror Mind

Reflections on memories in poetry

Poetry Competition

The Chapel Poetry Group invites you to get creative and submit poems reflecting on your memories. All the winning poems will be published in our 2021 poetry collection "Mirror Mind", and celebrated at a launch event either in person or online, as covid regulations permit.

First Prize for our overall winner is a £30 book voucher, and all winners whose poems are published will receive an author's copy of the collection with your poem in it. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate local poets and explore treasured memories.

Everyone is welcome to participate, whether you are an established poet or a beginner, young or old. The important thing is, you must write about your own memories and experiences. Here's how to enter:

Submit your poems by email to: ashvalechapel@gmail.com
Subject line: **Mirror Mind Poetry**
Deadline: **Friday 30th April 2021**
Format: Please attach your poem to your email as a word document or PDF, all entries will be anonymised by our administrator before being sent for judging.
Make sure you include your name, address and phone number in your covering email.
Maximum 3 poems per poet, maximum length 40 lines per poem (no minimum length)
£2 suggested donation per poem to enter. https://givealittle.co/campaigns/feafddb7-d1b7-4686-810d-a66d0d0914c6

Would you like to pre-order a copy of "Mirror Mind"? Text Alex: 07730 609446
All donations & proceeds from the sale of "Mirror Mind" will go towards the running of The Chapel Project, further details here: www.ashvalechapel.com

St Mary's invites you to celebrate

Easter 2021

Palm Sunday 28th March: Zoom Service 10am

Email parishoffice@ash-vale.org.uk for the link or see below

Good Friday 2nd April: Stations of the Cross & Prayer

Follow the stations of the cross trail from The Chapel on Wharf Road to St Mary's Church on Vale Road. Arrive at St Mary's for a socially distanced opportunity for private prayer and reflection in church. (Open 10am onwards)

Easter Sunday 4th April: Zoom Service 10am

Email parishoffice@ash-vale.org.uk for the Zoom link or to book your seat in Church (spaces are limited) We look forward to celebrating the risen Christ!
Zoom Meeting ID: 84034623394 Password: 063505

Easter Trail 4th April—18th April

We had so much fun with the sheep trail, we are doing another one for Easter! Please pop an Easter Egg, Easter Scene, Easter Garden, Easter Wreath or even a knitted Easter Egg in your window or front garden in time for Easter Sunday, and leave it up for 2 weeks, so we can all enjoy finding them during the Easter Holidays. Contact us on 07730609446 or send an email to projectmanager@ash-vale.org.uk with your location and a photo to add your display to the trail. We hope you have lots of fun making your Easter displays and hunting for them all during the Easter break. #AshValeEasterTrail
Easter Trail link: https://ash-vale.org.uk/easter-trail-4th-18th-april-2021/

Book of Psalms for our time

St Mary's is creating a book of psalms reflecting on how we have experienced God and faith in recent times. Feeling inspired? You can send contributions for this to projectmanager@ash-vale.org.uk. We will display the new psalms outside St Mary's on the prayer wall in the car park for Easter. Come end enjoy them on their own or as part of the Easter Trail.

With every blessing this Easter from all at St Mary's

Alleluia, Jesus is Risen!

Join us on zoom. Sundays 10am.
Meeting ID: 840 3462 3394 Passcode: 063505

What's on in April & May 2021

Weekly Events at St Mary's :

Sundays 10am –Join St Mary's for our weekly Church Service. All are welcome. During lockdown we will be on Zoom only, and once the doors open again at Easter we will be both in Zoom and in person. Evensong is back too, contact the office for the latest timings.
Contact: Parishoffice@ash-vale.org.uk

Mondays 11am: Coffee Chat Zoom Join fellow parents and carers for informal coffee chat and friendship. (Term time only)
Contact Alex: 07730609446

Tuesdays 10am: Babies at St Mary's Support Group We have run this new Support Group on Zoom while COVID numbers are high locally, but will open with restricted numbers after Easter. Booking will be essential once we are back in church, with legal limits on numbers. (Term time only)
Contact Alex: 07730 6094446

Wednesdays 11:30am: Toddler Zoom with Chapel Kids and Little Lambs Library toddler groups. Watch this space for "Garden Praise" once it's allowed! (term time only)
Contact: **Alex: 07730609446**

Thursday Café look out for news on Facebook & website. Once cafés are allowed to re-open we will be risk-assessing and reopening. parishoffice@ash-vale.org.uk

10th July - More in the next Parishioner!
Sneakin' Suspicion *are booked for an 'end of covid' Gig - watch this space!*

Donations for St Mary's: https://givealittle.co/campaigns/47eb21e6-c2b0-4a23-a526-8d13fd24fa56 **Thank you!**

Chapel Arts Monthly Makes

Artists in Residence Debi & Jono Retallick host a 'monthly make' fundraising event for The Chapel, Ash Vale. Ashvalechapel.com
Email Debi for event details, Zoom links, and to book your place on the workshops:
debiretallick@googlemail.com

6th April 4pm: Monthly Make:
Wire & paper birds (Zoom): A 60 minute session where Debi will take you through the process of creating a wire armature and hand building with paper to create a Bird form. Suitable for 11rs+ Kit £6 & please make a donation to The Chapel.

4th May 4pm: Needle-felting flowers (Zoom)
Learn the art of needle felting whilst creating a flower of your own design to celebrate the arrival of spring! 11+Yrs, Kit £10 incl p&p.

Donations for The Chapel : https://givealittle.co/campaigns/8d80cd98-df9f-494e-9808-b8898744146f **Thank you!**

Chapel Poetry Group Workshops:
April: Fr 23rd April 7:30pm (Zoom & Garden)
May: Fr 14th May 7:30pm (Zoom & Garden)
Contact Alex: 07730 609446

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GAS safe REGISTER

Easter Bible Study

By Helen Lambert

Hebrews 12:1-4 (NLT)

Jesus – the Initiator and Perfecter of our faith!

Does faith seem hard at the moment? In fact does life seem hard? It is often said that life is a marathon, not a sprint – and there are times in a marathon where it feels almost impossible to take the next step towards the finish. The image of a race is one that is used in Scripture to describe our journey of faith - and in today's Bible reading, the writer acknowledges that it is an *endurance* race! Not only that, but Jesus has run it before us…

The writer of this letter highlights three ways in which we can be encouraged during this strange time when all is changing, but sometimes it feels as if nothing has changed. The first of these is set out immediately in v1.

We are surrounded

Whether we live on our own or with others, many have experienced the kindness, neighbourliness and a sense of community that has grown throughout this year. Coming on to our doorsteps to encourage the NHS, or to remember those whose lives have been lost, has somehow bound us together. Who, in particular, does this verse say "surrounds" us (v1)? At St Mary's, many have known the importance of "fellowship" – that "togetherness" that we experience through the Holy Spirit in our lives – as we have continued to meet and worship, albeit remotely, through the wonderful technology of Zoom. How wonderful that our God is not limited by physical walls and distances! There are times when running a long race when it is only the encouragement of the crowds lining the road – *"You can do this!"* – that keeps us going. Let us not stop encouraging one another in these (hopefully) last stages of beating the pandemic.

Strip off the weight

For an endurance athlete, the balance between weight and strength is an important one, and it is essential that they are not carrying any unnecessary weight on race day that would slow them down. Whilst God does not mind what physical shape or size we are, he does want us to run this "race" of our Christian life unhindered. What are the things that might slow us down, or even "trip us up" (v1)? As we reflect on the past year, can we use the opportunity to consider what might be preventing us from living life as God intended? We may not have been out much – but

are there aspects of our attitudes, relationships and behaviours that we have hidden away, but we know need to change? "Strip off every weight that slows us down" – use this time to commit to change!

Eyes on Jesus

If the challenges just mentioned seem hard, we are now told how to do it (v2) – what is the secret? All successful athletes have a trainer – the one who commits to seeing them succeed, from beginning to end. The athlete can only succeed if they follow the trainer, who will themselves have been a successful athlete who has won many races – a true "champion". Who do these verses say is our "champion", and what is his role (v2)? The secret is that we are not meant to run this race alone. The "crown of witnesses" (v1) can support and encourage us, but is it Jesus himself, our champion, who enables and empowers us. Note that he is both the "initiator" (some versions say "author") and "perfecter" of our faith. We so often feel guilty that we are not trying hard enough to believe, or not trying hard enough to live the right way. The world tells us that we need to rely on our own inner resources. The Bible tells us that it is Jesus himself who, by his Holy Spirit living in us, is our inner resource. He sows the seed of faith within us, he shows us the way forward, and he gives us the strength and ability to live according to what he has shown us – to "run the race".

We know we can trust him to do this because he has run it before us (v2b). This coming week we will remember how Jesus went to the cross (v2) and died for all our sakes (v4) in order for us to be able to live our present lives in relationship with him, free of all that slows us down (v1). We have this "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow" * because this death was not the end – Easter is a celebration, not a mourning, because Jesus rose again and "is seated in the place of honour beside God's throne" (v2).

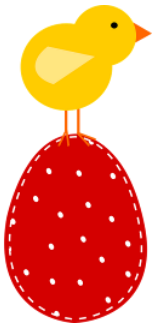
And so, this Easter, if you are tempted to "become weary and give up" (v3), "fix your eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith"!

[1]Great is Thy Faithfulness. Thomas Obediah Chisolm 1923

Hebrews 12: 1-4 (NLT)
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.
Bible Gateway online: https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2012%3A1-4&version=NLT

Seasonal Favourites: Grow your own Pea shoots!

By Victoria Fox



Marrowfat peas make excellent Mushy Peas, but they also make a delicious salad greens and are really simple to grow!

What you need:

- A pot, a trough, a pot, anything that will hold soil will do!
- Compost/soil (enough to fill your pot)
- Marrowfat Pea seeds.

If you are recycling your plant pot then make sure it's had a good scrub in soapy water as dirty pots can harbour bacteria and moulds. Fill your pot loosely with compost. Lay your peas on the surface around an inch apart and poke them around half an inch down into the soil. Cover slightly so the peas are under the surface and water well. Until April they will do better inside, on a sunny windowsill, after that they will do best outside. Place your pot somewhere where mice can't get to it. Mice love peas! When they are around 6 inches high, trim the top few inches to eat. They taste lovely on their own, but are great in salad!

Happy Easter from Butterflies Preschool

We are delighted to now be enrolling new starters for September 2021. We are currently open Monday - Friday, with longer days running on Mondays and Wednesdays until 2.30pm. We are Ofsted registered and accept all funding. We run independently from the Community Hall side of St Mary's Church and follow the Early Years Curriculum. Our Pre-school has an outstanding Early Years team, highly qualified with many years of experience. We are committed and dedicated to providing a safe, clean and nurturing environment for our children every day.

Despite our village and world around us finding its way through a global pandemic, it is a huge blessing to see how resilient and happy our Butterflies children are, especially as they enjoy playing and learning with each other.

As lockdown regulations begin to ease, our infection control safety measures continues to be one of our top priorities. We understand it can be a worrying time for many families and are happy to share all the practices we have in place, should you be interested in learning more about our Pre-school. We also have a few spaces left on certain days, though we are looking to recruit and grow our Early Years team to enable more availability for little ones. If you are interested in a free taster session we would love to hear from you. For further information, please feel free to contact Natalie Andrews on 07881807337 or by email Butterfliespreschool19@gmail.com

We wish everyone in our community a safe and happy Easter.

Best wishes from all of us at Butterflies.

Natalie

(Owner, Butterflies Pre-school)

Butterflies Pre-school

News from St Paul's Church in Tongham

By Margaret Murray

The most exciting thing to happen this year (apart from vaccinations!) has been the start of the ramp building project. That isn't to say that this has not been many months, or even years, in the planning. Only last summer we were busily examining bricks for compatibility with the clunch work of the church. (Phew – they match...). The ramp will make such a difference to wheelchair or pushchair users, in fact anyone who finds climbing stairs difficult. As part of the same project we are renovating the porch, with new glass doors and curtain heating to ensure a warm welcome – in both senses of the word!

We have carried out a considerable amount of fund-raising to finance the project, and people have been so generous, both in donations and in legacies and fund-raising, e.g. making cakes. (We do love cakes in Tongham.) Claire – our Vicar – was planning to do a sponsored sky-dive, and in fact may still do so.

Our builder, Richard Margetts, started work in December 2020, closely followed by Christmas, in quite horrendous weather – he has worked through rain, gales, snow and occasionally sunshine - and expects the work to be finished around Easter day, but as a back-up we are hoping to have an outdoor service to avoid using our shiny new ramp and porch. Or, more honestly, we are hoping to navigate any sudden changes of Governmental policy in the Lockdown restrictions by planning an outdoor service. Watch the website and Facebook for updates – because of course in Britain we can't ignore the weather. But one way or another, whether online, outdoors, in church or maybe a mix of all three – we plan to be in action.

We are so looking forward to welcoming as many people as possible into our Church.

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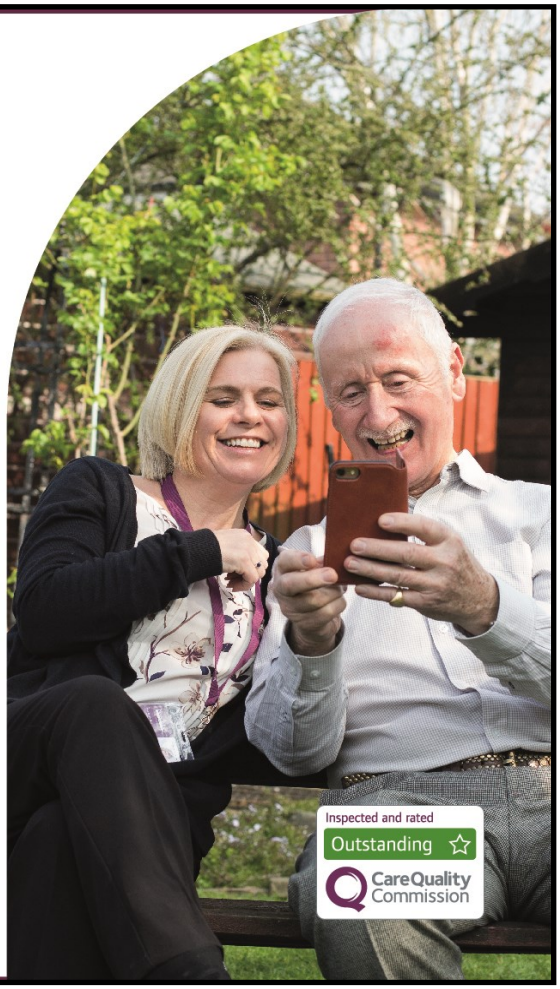

An Easter Giggle

A vicar was planning an Easter pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and was aghast when she found it would cost her £50 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee. She protested to the travel agent that the cost was ridiculous. 'That might be true,' replied the travel agent, 'but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord himself walked.'
'Well, at £50 an hour for a boat,' she replied, 'I am not surprised!'

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Navigating By The Son: Finding Our Way in An Unfamiliar Landscape

How I Came to Write It, by Stephen Cox

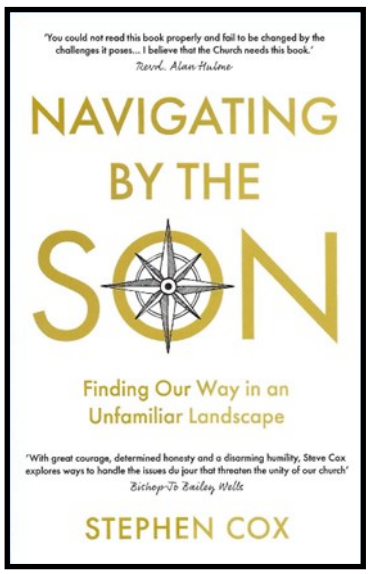
About twenty years ago I prayed what for me then was an almost unthinkable prayer. I paused for a long time before I prayed it. I couldn't imagine the sequence of events that would be necessary for God to lead me to see the issues differently, and I wanted to pray with full openness to allow God to work in me. I asked God to show me if I was wrong in how I understood what the Bible says about homosexuality. I was not prepared for how painful and disturbing God's answer was to prove. I took a conservative position, and it seemed obvious to me then that this was the only biblical view and therefore the only legitimate Christian view.

A year or so later, my prayer began to be answered in a way I had not anticipated, when I discovered suddenly and unexpectedly that my devout and deeply Christian older son was gay. Three things were very clear, firstly that he had not chosen to be gay, secondly that his efforts, which had been long lasting and persistent, to find 'healing' from homosexual orientation, had been to no avail, and thirdly that he loved God and was submitted to God in a way that won, (and still wins) my admiration and respect. Over the next several years he moved to a position of believing that the expression of homosexual love was not necessarily un-Christian. Though we still do not totally agree over how to interpret the Bible on this issue, I was deeply changed by engaging with him and with the questions raised. I found myself reading the Bible with a fresh urgency. In doing I found myself reflecting more biblically on how we live together with profound and emotive disagreement, and on what God might be saying to us when we see Jesus and the fruits of his Spirit clearly manifested in those with whom we disagree. I have found that the scriptures have a great deal to say on the matter in ways that have enriched my faith and my love for Jesus Christ, and have opened up the Bible to speak afresh to me in all kinds of circumstances.

This book is the result of my journey of exploration.

It is not primarily about homosexuality. It is about being Christlike, and what that might mean in a church and society that is often divisive and judgmental. It is about where we find our identity. It is a book about how we treat our 'enemies' and what it actually means to love them, about how we argue well, about grace and honesty and disagreement.

Above all it is a book about Jesus, and how we are called to imitate Him, not just 'believe the right things'.



The above is slightly adapted from the introduction to the book,'Navigating by The Son: Finding Our Way in An Unfamiliar Landscape'. Matador 2021 £11.99 paperback or £9.99 e.book. Widely available including from the Matador shop at https://www.troubador.co.uk/bookshop/

Meet the Candidates:

About Nigel Manning, a candidate for the Surrey County Council elections on Thursday 6th May 2021

I have lived in Ash / Ash Vale for over 30 years. I spent 42 years in Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs as an Inspector of Taxes, latterly focussing on investigating multi-million-pound international companies. This sound financial experience has been enormously valuable to me, in my voluntary role as a local councillor. I have had the privilege and honour of representing the residents of both Ash / Ash Vale on both an Ash Parish Council (APC) and Guildford Borough Council (GBC) for over 20 years. As Chairman of APC for the past 19 years, I have a proven track record of dedicated voluntary and public service. I have a strong local voice and a reputation for getting things done. I also have a common-sense approach to maintaining quality services whilst securing value for money for all residents, whether they live locally or in the wider Borough.

From 2003 to 2016 I was the Lead Member at GBC for finance and assets, in some form or other. I stepped down in 2016 so I could be Mayor of Guildford. I appointed Rev Neil Lambert as my Mayor's Chaplain; I still recall with great amusement the sermon Neil gave at my Civic Service – he brought "The Tea Table", need I say more?

I have always been aware of the pockets of deprivation within the Borough and as Mayor I saw first-hand the fantastic work the volunteers do within our local communities. Year in year out, with little or no recognition, they support the vulnerable and disadvantaged. It was an extremely humbling experience to meet and say thank you to so many wonderful people who selflessly give up their time to help others. As Mayor I supported many charities including the Mayor's Support Fund and British Heart Foundation, raising over £55,000 during the Mayoral year.

I regularly support many local charities and for years Marsha and I have organised numerous charity quiz nights, within the Parish and across Surrey. These have raised thousands of pounds for worthwhile causes, including the 1st Ash Vale Scouts and the Citizens Advice Bureau. (CAB). Prior to the Covid 19 Pandemic we regularly attended the monthly charity night quizzes at Victoria Hall.

I care passionately about our local community. I have actively encouraged the Parish Council to organise the Summer Fete and Christmas Fantasia, so that residents can come together to support local charities fundraising activities.

In addition to my "council work", I am currently the Chairman and Trustee of Ash & District Museum Society and Trustee of the James Payne Memorial Fund. In the past I have also been a governor at Ash Manor School and a Trustee of Ash CAB.

Meet the Candidates:

About Carla Morson, a candidate for the Surrey County Council elections on Thursday 6th May 2021

Ash Vale has been my home for many years. I had a varied career in public service and since taking redundancy have spent my time undertaking voluntary work with Citizens Advice and latterly our Covid Support Group.

Last March I set up the Ash, Ash Vale & Ash Green Coronavirus Support Group. We've all pulled together and have a much more joined up community now. A supportive community spirit is absolutely paramount and with that in mind, I've become concerned that we aren't getting the support we deserve from our local councillors. Our current councillors have remained remarkably silent throughout the last year.

Our area has been dominated by Conservatives for over 20 years and it's time for change. We need new ideas and views as our community has grown in size and diversity: we have to ensure no one is left behind.

There's much I want to achieve as additional building in our villages didn't come with supporting infrastructure, so we are now left with more traffic on the roads (many of which are in poor condition), insufficient school places and overwhelmed GP services. This must be rectified. I also want access to the most accessible parts of Ash Ranges open again for ALL to enjoy, step free access at Ash Vale Station and even more commitment to stopping climate change through things such as increased active travel and improved/cheaper public transport.

Conservative controlled Surrey County Council want a single Unitary Authority and to scrap our local council, taking decision making even further away from us. This would only make things worse. All of this on top of proposals to cut £1m Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding, a failing adult social care system and severe reductions in our fire service capacity. This comes at the same time as an announcement to borrow £100m to fund local projects over the next five years. I'm all for the funding of local projects but where is the money going to come from to repay the loan and interest? Further cuts to essential services?

I will be standing as the Liberal Democrat candidate for Ash in the County Council elections in May. Whether you believe in politics or not, it's part of all of our lives and we can't escape it. I've no wish to be a politician, what I do want though is to be a champion for our villages and make sure we get, not just what we want but also what we need and deserve. I hope you will offer me your support and join me on this journey.

Meet the Candidates:

About Peter Kimber, a candidate for the Surrey County Council elections on Thursday 6th May 2021

'Hi, I'm Peter, the Labour candidate for Ash in the upcoming county council elections. I love this area (having lived in Ash Vale all my life) and know we are incredibly lucky to have so many green spaces close to us (the canal and ranges for example), as well as excellent transport links with three railway stations in the Ash area. However, I believe there is much that can be improved by electing a Labour councillor.

For example, we have had the 'range floor' area of Ash Ranges closed by the Defence Infrastructure organisation (DIO). I know many of us used to really enjoy walking and cycling over that part of the ranges, and the concrete tracks on that part made it much more accessible than other parts of the ranges. I know how much this has affected those living around the range complex, as they can no longer walk their dogs or exercise as the gates to the ranges around Ash Vale Station and near the Swan pub are locked. The 'Save Ash Ranges' campaign has a meeting with a representative from the DIO a little while back, which many of us had to watch on Youtube as the zoom call was so popular! Ultimately though, most people (a notable exception being our own MP) were dissatisfied with the response given by the DIO. Those behind the Save Ash Ranges campaign are doing a sterling job in standing up for range users, and if elected, I will offer to work hand in hand with the campaign and lobby hard for the re-opening of the range floor. This would be my first priority if elected.

There are also other issues I would address, I would support the re-introduction of an hourly, useable, 41 bus service between Ash, Ash Vale and Farnborough, as well as supporting step free access to Ash Vale Station (however, I am also aware at the amount of work needed for this to happen).

At a county level, Labour supports the introduction of unitary authorities in Surrey, replacing the current two-tier county and borough councils. This would reduce bureaucracy and increase efficiency. Labour would also reverse cuts to our fire service and reverse fire station closures.

Lastly, Labour would fix Surrey's broken roads, something which has my full support! It is completely unacceptable that cars are getting damaged by potholes and shoddy road repairs. Labour would break up the monopoly given to the firm 'Kier' by Surrey County Council for road repairs, and introduce proper competition, alongside better in house coordination of road repairs.'

15:00 03/04/33

It was just after 3pm on the 3rd April 33AD. The Roman Army Execution Detail noted that the first of the three prisoners being executed that day had just died. It was a bit of a surprise because normally a prisoner took much longer to die, but as the Detail had to remain until all the prisoners were dead it was probably more of "One down, two to go" feeling than anything else. In the meanwhile it was back to gambling to while away the hours until they could return to barracks; after all they were just Roman soldiers carrying out their orders.

The background to this? At the time the Roman Empire was busy being the Roman Empire. The Emperor Tiberius ruled in Rome and Pontius Pilate (a junior Roman Civil Servant) was the Roman charged with keeping order in the province of Judea. To keep things rosy he had cosied up to the Jewish Religious Powers and they to him, but being Pilate he had still managed to alienate others. Also in the frame was Herod Antipas (a son of Herod the Great) who was the Roman appointed Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. So far so good.

Then along came trouble, a 30odd year preacher who had gone about preaching that the Kingdom of God was close at hand had come to town. The new preacher was accompanied by a band of rustics (including ex fishers, an ex tax collector and an ex zealot), he did not rail against the Roman Authorities but preached that one should love God and love one's neighbour as one's self. He had upset the Religious Authorities by declaring that the Temple was a place for prayer and worship and not a place for commerce. For the Religious authorities the question of the day was how to neutralise this threat without upsetting the status quo?

Herod Antipas had incarcerated a previous troublesome preacher (and cousin to the new one), then without trial the preacher had been beheaded, his head put on a platter and presented to a young dancer who had pleased the said Herod Antipas. This option was no longer available.

The preacher was detained by the Temple Authorities and after a confrontation was handed over to the Roman Authorities. The death penalty was demanded by the Temple Authorities and to avoid trouble this was granted by Pilate, which takes us back to the start of the article.

Epilogue: Pilate was removed from office 36AD, Tiberius died 37AD, Herod was removed from office 39AD, the Temple was destroyed 70AD and that rag tag army of fishers and others (excluding the zealot) spread the teachings of the executed man until in 313AD Christianity was recognised as an acceptable religion within the Roman Empire. Now THAT is a story!

Scrivener

PS. The date quoted above is believed to be the most probable, by many scholars.

Help is at hand! Useful numbers

Here are some of the useful numbers you may need if you need support in Ash Vale. If you think we are missing a number please let us know.

Local Churches:
St Mary's, Ash Vale – 07863 311165 (Parish Administrator's Mobile)
The Chapel, Ash Vale – 07730 609446 (Project Manager's Mobile)
St Peter's, Ash – 01252 331161
Holy Angels, Ash – 01252 321422
St Paul's, Tongham – 01252 782790

Local help and support during the Covid-19 crisis:
Ash, Ash Vale & Ash Green Coronavirus Support group (volunteers doing shopping & prescription runs & emergency food parcels) – 07843 489796
Ash Parish Council – 01252 328 287
Ash Citizens Advice – 01252 315569 or 01252 314711
Ash Vale Health Centre – 01252 317551 (Out of hours phone 111, in an emergency dial 999)
Guildford Borough Council Covid-19 Community Helpline – 01483 444400
Community Wellbeing Team - 07769 642053 / 07901 513652
Safe & Settled Team - 01483 444476 for those needing help at home on arriving back from hospital or needing some help to manage at home.

If you need to talk to someone : national helplines
Samaritans (24/7 service) – 116 123 or text SHOUT 85258
National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247
www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/ (run by Refuge)
The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327
The Mix, free information/support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994
National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428
PAPYRUS—Young suicide prevention society, 0800 068 4141
Childline for children 0800 1111
Alcoholics Anonymous—0800 917 7650 (24/7)
Narcotics Anonymous—0300 999 1212
Cruse Bereavement Care— 0808 808 1677

Contacting The Parishioner:
Call Alex (Ed) 07730 609446 in the first instance and she will put you in touch with the right volunteer. parishioner@ash-vale.org.uk

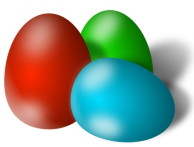
Donations: *Did you know? You can now 'give a little' online to support St Mary's Church and all the work we do. We very much need and appreciate your support in these difficult times. https://givealittle.co/campaigns/e912dae4-3af1-4453-99dc-0330f32faf15* ***Thank you!***

#EasterTrail #MessyEaster #AshValeEasterTrail
#EasterHope #EasterWalks #CommunityFun

We had so much fun with the sheep, we are doing another one for Easter!

Please pop an Easter Egg, Easter Scene, Easter Garden, Easter Wreath or even a knitted Easter Egg in your window or front garden in time for Easter Sunday, and leave it up for 2 weeks, so we can all enjoy finding them during the Easter Holidays. We have our Easter Trail web page ready to go, and will add all your trail locations to our list in time for Easter Day. **Trail link:** https://ash-vale.org.uk/easter-trail-4th-18th-april-2021/

Contact Alex on 07730609446 (text, call or WhatsApp), or send an email to projectmanager@ash-vale.org.uk with your location and a photo to add your display to the trail. We are happy to include everyone in Ash, Ash Vale, Ash Green & Tongham, so don't be shy! We hope you have lots of fun making your Easter displays and hunting for them all during the Easter break.



Alleluia, Jesus is Risen!

PS: to start the fun, how many Easter Eggs can you find in this Magazine?

What's inside?

An Invitation to the Table — (p3&4) By Revd Neil Lambert

Book of Psalms 2021 — (p5) New Psalms by local people in trying times

Meet the Local—(p8&9) The Parishioner interviews Mary Langsford

Our local Waterways Chaplain (p10) Rosie Leakey

News from Abbeywood Care Home (p11) We're doing a panto! *Oh yes we are!*

Poems & Poetry Competition — (p14&15) ***Enter your poems by 30th April!***

How to Celebrate Easter 2021—(p16) St Mary's services

What's on in Ash Vale — (p17)

Bible Study for Eastertide —(20 & 21) By Helen Lambert

Pea shoots, a seasonal favourite - (p22) By Vicki Fox

News from St Paul's Tongham— (p23) Ramp building has started!

How I came to write 'Navigating by the Son' - (p25) Author Stephen Cox shares his journey and the key themes from his new book.

Meet the Candidates for the County Council elections on 6th May (p26 - 28)

15:00 03/04/33 — (p29) Scrivener reflects on the Romans at Easter

Help is at Hand! - (p30) Useful numbers

Easter Trail—(inside back cover) Free fun in the holidays! Decorate your windows and front gardens for some lovely Easter walks! #AshValeEasterTrail

Don't miss the Easter Service!

Sunday 10am on Zoom (See centre pages for what's on)

We welcome fun, informative and local interest items!
The copy deadline for the June/July 2021 issue is 7th May 2021
Emails please to: parishioner@ash-vale.org.uk

In these unusual times we are minimising the risk to our readers and volunteers by printing only on request, and by sharing ***The Parishioner*** far and wide via email, website and social media instead. Please remember to like & share online! If you or someone you know would like a paper copy please pick one up at St Mary's or The Chapel, or call / text 07730 609446 to request one. ***Best wishes & stay safe!***

The Parishioner seeks to explore and reflect upon a wide variety of local issues whilst recognising that not everyone will agree with the views expressed. These do not necessarily reflect the views of all the members of St Mary's Church nor those of its Parochial Church Council.