

# St Helen's Magazine

October 2021

50p



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Loving God, loving others, loving the world

# Parish Directory

(The dialling code for these numbers is 01530 except where stated)

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PLANNED GIVING	Andy Smith	07896 519807
READERS	Sue Brown	417313
	Carol Eyley	412334
	Judith Lewis	564204
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SERVERS	Eileen Barradel	838029
SOUND SYSTEM	Simon Starkey	415718
STREET PASTORS CONTACT	Chris Lewis	07828 463368

## St Helen's Church contact details:

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♦Opening times Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 10.00am - 1.00pm

- ♦ Facebook pages: St Helen's Ashby de la Zouch  
St Helen's Heritage Ashby de la Zouch
- ♦ Twitter: @sthelensashby
- ♦ Website: sthelensashby.net
- ♦ Flagstaff Team: www.flagstaff.org.uk

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www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/327469/Giving.aspx](https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/327469/Giving.aspx)

## Editor Writes ...

Recently I was amazed and delighted to discover there's a patron saint of the internet. Perhaps I shouldn't have been surprised – there are patron saints for almost everything. It seems Pope John Paul II designated St. Isidore of Seville for the job - an interesting choice what with St. Isidore being a bishop of Seville in 600 AD, just a few years before the internet came along. Perhaps it was because of his twenty-book opus where he sought to set out the origins of as many things as he could?



Intrigued, and as if to prove Pope John Paul II's choice a good one, I headed to the internet to find out more about patron saints. Wikipedia did not disappoint – it was full of all sorts of fascinating information about a great many patron saints. I confess to being less surprised to find patron saints for spur-makers, jesters, washerwomen and charcoal burners than I was to find them for software engineers, television workers and medical record librarians. Many of them are known by where they're from, but in amongst them were Isidore the Farmer, Anastasius the Fuller, Anthony the Abbot, and, my favourite, the patron saint of psychiatrists, Christina the Astonishing.

Anyway, here is a list of contents for this month's magazine in terms of patron saints. I accept the second on my list is a little misleading. If it was a link on the computer it would be 'click bait' and I'd need to speak to St. Isidore of Seville ...

Page numbers	Category	Patron Saint
4	Ecologists	Francis of Assisi
4	Lumberjacks	Gummarus
7	Poets	Columba
8	Knitting	Charlotte
8	Crochet	Maribel
9 & 17	Musicians	Cecilia
10 & 18	Historians	Bede
10	Preachers	Catherine of Alexandria
12	Photographers	Veronica
18	Germany	Boniface
21	Prisoners	Maximilian Kolbe
23	Gardeners	Fiacre
24	Seafarers	Brendan the Navigator
24	Children	Jude

*Jill Chapman* .



## Revd Mary Writes ...

Dear Friends

The Rectory drive is presided over by a grand old horse chestnut tree. It stands at the cobweb junction formed by the end of my drive, Manor Close, Prior Park Lane, the sweep of Upper Packington Road and Mount Walk footpath.

Against its trunk, droopy teenagers lollop, waiting for a parental pick-up or the glimpse of a beloved. Under its canopy, on rainy days, children from Ivanhoe shelter, having abandoned my wall where they usually sit like (texting, scrolling) birds on a wire. At its roots dogs sniff determinedly for eau-de-squirrel, and up and down its trunk and across its branches a circus troop of those same squirrels leap and twirl and mock the earth-bound dogs.

That tree is always a hub of activity, but never more so than at this time of year when the conkers are falling, cushioned by their bright green duvets as they fall to earth. Now, young children drag their dads to the tree at weekends (or is it the other way round?), hurling sticks skywards in the hope of a glossy-brown return. Now, students from Ivanhoe, who feel they should be beyond this stage, get to their wall-perch early, to sneak a conker into their pocket before their friends arrive. Now, squirrels take a dash down to ground level, and scamper away with conkers almost as big as their heads in their jaws, still tormenting the dogs who think they've finally grabbed a takeaway, only for the squirrel to do a back-flip out of reach. The horse-chestnut is now a place of joy - and of food.

I've been thinking a bit about the mixed ecology of the horse chestnut tree, about its embrace of different species and sub-species, about its provision for them, as I've been watching news footage of the fuel story and the human response to it. There wasn't a crisis, there wasn't a shortage, until we were told a *story* of the crisis, of the shortage, and then made that story reality by our actions, by filling our cars and our cans and our tubs with fuel that we didn't yet need in order to ward off a disaster that almost certainly will never come. How fearful human beings are, how desperate for control that we move out of control so quickly, how fixated on our imagined need, that we forget the actual need of others.

Instead, perhaps we should consider the squirrels of the horse chestnut tree (or the lilies of the field and the birds of the air as Jesus once said). Perhaps we should be inspired by their trust in the provision given to them to remember that God promises to give us what we need, without us



needing to strive for it. And perhaps we should be humbled by the sharing of the tree by the squirrels, and the teenagers, and the children and their dads, to remember to look to what others need, too - and to make space for them to receive.

Come and visit 'my' tree. Ponder its life -

and yours. Feel free to sit on my wall if you do - the Ivanhoe students will budge up, I'm sure!

With love

**Mary**

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed this is a red squirrel not a grey one. While I'm confessing the inaccuracy of the illustration, I'd better admit it was photographed in Helsinki, not Ashby.

**Ed**

## Exciting News of a Forthcoming Event

**P**re-Pandemic and Lockdown, we had the most fabulous and best attended Autumn Fayre in October 2019.

Post-Pandemic and the relaxation of restrictions, we will have a

- ◆ Christmas Fayre
- ◆ on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> November
- ◆ at 11am.to 2pm,
- ◆ in the Church and the Heritage Centre.

PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW!! More details to follow in the weekly pew sheet.

IF you are able and willing to help in any way, please contact me on 07711 286486, I'll be delighted.

Thank you.

**Eileen Coombs**  
(Co-ordinator)

Chris Lewis

Counsellor / Psychotherapist

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# Divine Comedy

This year is the 700th anniversary of the death of the Italian poet, writer and philosopher Dante Alighieri, usually known simply as Dante. He is famous for his narrative poem the Divine Comedy, which describes his travels through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise - the recognition and rejection of sin (*Inferno*) is followed by the penitent Christian life (*Purgatorio*), and then by the soul's ascent to God (*Paradiso*). He is accompanied on his journey by three guides, Virgil, Beatrice and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

In 2013, poet Malcolm Guite published a sequence of poems called *On Reading the Commedia*, which he described as 'a kind of prayer-poetry journal of journeys through Dante's great poem'.

Here is the first of his Dante poems:

## In Medias Res

*And so I start again, here in the middle,  
The middle of a life I scarcely know,  
How many guesses left to get the riddle?  
The woods are dark and darker shadows grow.  
I followed someone here, but lost her leading,  
With nothing but my lostness left to show.  
The voice that drew me on is faint and fading  
But something else is creeping up behind  
Over whose heart, I wonder, are we treading?  
My shadow-beasts can scent, though they are blind  
All three are here, the leopard, lion, wolf,  
My kith and kin, the emblems of my kind.  
They've come to draw me back across the gulf  
Back from the path I wanted to have chosen.  
Fall back, they call, you can't run from yourself  
Fall to the place where every hope is frozen...  
But not his time, this time I choose to choose  
The other path, path of the dead and risen,  
To try the hidden heart of things, to let go, lose,  
To lose myself and find again the voice  
That called and drew me here, my freeing muse.  
Begin again she calls, you have the choice,  
Little by little, you can travel far,  
Learn to lament before you can rejoice  
Sing to the shadows, sing and do not fear  
But sing them into love little by little  
Begin the song exactly where you are.  
And so I start again here in the middle*

# POPPY FALL

Join us this November in creating a cascade of poppies down the North Wall of our ancient Parish Church

Knit or crochet poppies for us, drop them off before Friday 5th November, either in the box at the back of Church (every day) or in our Parish Office (Monday, Tuesday or Thursday between 10-1) and see them displayed in time for Remembrance Day.

No wool? No pattern? No problem!

Patterns and wool available at the back of church  
Pattern can also be downloaded from our website  
[www.sthelensashby.net](http://www.sthelensashby.net)

4 Church Yard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AA



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*Please send any articles,  
jokes, book reviews,  
photos etc to  
jill.chapman12@btopenwo  
rld.com*

*Thanks*

*Date for your Diary*

*A Time to Remember  
(Memorial Service)*

*- 31<sup>st</sup> October*

*- 6pm*



The  
**What's  
On**  
Notice board

Roll up Roll up to help with an important fundraiser for St Helens:

Our CHRISTMAS FAYRE will be on  
SATURDAY 27th NOVEMBER

11am to 2pm. at St Helen's Church

-Stalls, Games and Refreshments

Please talk to Eileen Coombs

- 07711 286486

# Note-ability

*invites you to*

"*tea for two*"

*a short,  
afternoon concert  
followed by tea and cake*

**Saturday 9th October 3.00pm**  
St. Helen's Church, Ashby de la Zouch

*Free entry with retiring collection*



Around this time, William Laud, Charles I's Archbishop of Canterbury, began visiting parishes and encouraging churches to reintroduce religious images which had been removed under the regimes of Edward and Elizabeth. Laudian reforms required that altars be reinstated against the east wall of the chancel, away from centre where they had been placed since Elizabeth I's day. Pews which impeded views of the altar were to be cut down.

Ithiel Smart, possibly influenced by his time at Cambridge, replaced the fence around the churchyard at Wombourne, adding a gate to prevent animals entering; he added a rail to the chancel, around the communion table, now called an altar again, and had sentences – usually the Lord's Prayer, Creed or Ten Commandments – painted on the walls. In 1639 he had the church porch gated, railed and bolted in order that "*idle and impotent people might not lodge therein as in former times*".

Smart's last entry into the registers at Wombourne was in May 1642, as the English Civil War began. It would be 6 years before he returned, and it is suggested that he may have gone to serve with the Commonwealth army. He certainly spent time in London. In 1644 he published '*A more exact and perfect relation of the treachery, apprehension, conviction, condemnation, confession, and execution, of Francis Pitt, aged 65: Who was executed in Smithfield on Saturday, October the 12, 1644. For endeavouring to betray the garrison of Rushall-Hall in the county of Stafford, to the enemy*' - Smart was a friend and minister to Francis Pitt. In 1645 he was one of the signatories to a Plea to Parliament to establish a Presbyterian government.

Ithiel Smart returned to Wombourne for a while, but resigned in 1652. In July that year he became Vicar of St. Helen's. Little is known about his time here, but he had apparently lost his zeal for politics and quietly got on with his job. He remained in this parish until his death in 1661. All that remains of him is the obituary in the registers:

*"Mr. Ithiel Smart, Minister of Ashby, a worthy and faithful servant of God, a famous Divine and a painful Preacher, ye comfort of God's people in his time, departed this life ye 22<sup>nd</sup>. November and was interred in the Chauncel of our Parrish Church in Ashby ye six and twentieth of November 1661"*.

Ithiel's elder son, also called Ithiel, followed his father to Cambridge and also became Vicar of St. Helen's in 1676 – hence a second Ithiel Smart on the incumbents' board.

**Anne Heaton**

(I am indebted to Margaret King, ex-churchwarden of Wombourne Parish Church, for her paper on Ithiel Smart published by the Wombourne History Group in 2016.)

# Gaining a Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society

I was blessed, or cursed, with the trait of wanting to do things well. Passing my driving test at 17 wasn't enough, so at 18 I took ( and passed!) my Advanced Driving test. I could have gone straight from my hospital house jobs straight into General Practice - but I wanted to be a good GP, so I stayed on to do further training jobs and diplomas before starting my job at Measham.

When I decided I wanted to take photos of Wildlife, it was no surprise that I wanted them to be good. I'm also a bit goal orientated. If I have something to aim for, then I will get up and work to make it happen. If I don't, then I can turn off the alarm and have another lie in !!

So what photographic goals were there to motivate me? There are several photographic organisations in the UK, but the oldest, and they would say the most prestigious, is the Royal Photographic Society ( RPS) , founded in 1839. They award distinctions at three levels. The licentiate shows that you have mastered the basic skills of a camera and photography and is the equivalent of an A level. For the associate level you have to choose a "genre" ( fine art, medical illustration and natural history are three examples). You have to produce a panel of work based on a statement of intent. The standard is high - the equivalent of an honours degree.

The highest level, the fellowship is another big step up - a panel of twenty prints, again based on a statement. It is a bit like a mini exhibition where everything must hang together as a coherent body of work. No one print must stand out from the others with clashing colours, or a different style. The assessors are looking for perfection in all aspects, so it is a daunting task to embark on. There are years when no natural history fellowships are awarded. Most years there are one or two, but they are usually based on African mammals , or Costa Rican insects etc. The last fellowship given for British birds was about six years ago. As I wanted to base my photos on my local patch - the National Forest - I knew it wouldn't be easy. ( No pressure then !!)

I gained my associate distinction in 2013 and was pretty "photographed out" with the effort. I gave myself about a year of





just playing and exploring some other genres of photography, but I realised that it was birds that made my heart sing, and if I was going to put the work in for a fellowship, then it was birds I was going to concentrate on.

To get the quality of images needed you have to get close to the birds, so I concentrated on places where this could happen. Hick's Lodge, Kelham Bridge, Willesley Wood lake and also a little area of private woodland on the edge of Ashby provided such areas. I could go back and back until I found how the light changed through the day and through the year. Where the birds congregated and how their behaviour changed according to the seasons. Each year I would concentrate on just a few species until slowly I began to build a portfolio of possible photos.

Those who have been to my photo-talks will have heard my tales of taking tripods up trees, lying in smelly mud at the edge of former sewage works, collecting roadkill to tempt buzzards to come and feed. These and lots of other wonderful adventures ensued as I built my collection of species. I learnt so much by just waiting and watching the miracle of the natural world.

Putting the panel together was a bit like doing a jigsaw. I printed out about 50 small photos of the possible ones and then started to see how 20 of them might fit together. They seemed to arrange themselves into three rows:- the top having the blue of sky or water, the middle the brown of nests or bark and the lower the dark green of vegetation or its reflection. Things seemed to be taking shape. I went to be given some informal advice to see

if I was getting near the standard required. Any dreams of being ready were shattered when the wildlife expert told me that a lot of my images weren't sharp enough. Back to the drawing board - searching for alternative images to fit the gaps left in the jigsaw.

I found some in my archives, but needed to get out to take more new photographs. Six months on, I thought the jigsaw might be ready! I send my box of prints off to Bristol by courier, but two days later lockdown began! It was six months before they were looked at and I received the results via e-mail.

“ We regret..... “ were the opening words. Luckily Covid had given me a different perspective on the world. I was still alive and well, so not being up to fellowship standard didn't bother me too much. The good news was that they liked my panel, there were lots of strong images , but just four had let me down and they wanted me to resubmit when I'd changed these.

I reckoned I could capture another four perfect images in six months, but it wasn't quite so easy as I'd hoped. The jigsaw was nearly completed, so they couldn't be any four images - they had to have the right background colour, they had to be of a species that I didn't already have in the panel and they had to be perfect !! I needed two new ones for the top row - blue sky or water - but for weeks the sun refused to shine. Then my luck, and the weather, changed and I was able to capture a blue tit alighting, a heron flying with nesting material. The last bits of the jigsaw went into place.



For the first time ever, the RPS, allowed candidates and observers to watch the assessment. It was pretty nerve wracking as the assessors picked over each of my images, looking for minute faults. They found a few and I was bracing myself for the chairman to start with the “ we regret...” words. He started to speak “ Despite.....”. Never has the word “despite” sounded so sweet, as he went on to say that despite a few minor technical points they were delighted to award me the distinction of fellowship. I couldn't quite believe that after seven years of working towards this goal, I had finally arrived.

Has it altered anything? I think the most important thing was to have undertaken the journey. In the struggle to reach perfection, my photography has improved significantly - and that was what it had been about rather than having more letters after my name. I can hold my head up in any amateur photographic setting, knowing that my work is on a level with the best of them - and that is a nice feeling ( some would use the word smug !!).

But more than any of the above is the huge pleasure I have had over the years just sitting, watching and enjoying the miracle of creation that birds represent. If you've never experienced this, then I suggest you start now - a whole new world is awaiting you!

**Martin Vaughan**



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# Daily HOPE



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# Our Sunday Worship in October

Week	8.30am	10.30am		pm
<b>1</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Oct Trinity 18	Staunton Holy Communion	St Helen's All Age - Harvest		<b>6.00pm</b> St Helen's Evening Prayer  Isley Walton Holy Communion
<b>2</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> Oct Trinity 19		St Helen's Holy Communion	Coleorton Holy Communion	
<b>3</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> Oct Trinity 20	Staunton Holy Communion	St Helen's Morning Prayer	Breedon Holy Communion	
<b>4</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> Oct Trinity last		St Helen's Holy Communion		<b>12.30pm</b> St Helen's Baptisms <b>3.30pm</b> Coleorton Messy Church
<b>5</b> 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct 4 <sup>th</sup> before Advent		Holy Trinity Flagstaff Family Holy Communion		<b>6.00pm</b> St Helen's A Time to Remember (Memorial Service)



Services in St Helen's are also streamed live to Facebook, on the Flagstaff Family of Churches Facebook page. And you can catch up with services later, on the St Helen's Church website.

## Other Services

- Holy Communion - Wednesdays      10am  
    Within the St Helen's church building & on-line
- Parish Prayers - Saturdays              9.30am  
    Within the St Helen's church building

## From the Albums ...



**W**e said farewell to our lovely Jenny as she heads off to Portsmouth university to study education.

Jenny has been a much valued member of St Helen's church choir and junior choir for over ten years, and Head Chorister for the last four. She achieved her bronze chorister award, and would doubtless have achieved her silver award had it not been for the time the choir lost due to the pandemic.

Elizabeth Smith co-ordinated the farewells and thank-yous, which included a beautiful 'memory book' of photos and reminiscences from Jenny's St Helen's family.

We heartily welcome Annabel to be our new Head Chorister.



## German Prisoners of War in the First World War

Ashby's Ivanhoe Baths were used for several things other than their original purpose before they were demolished in the 1960s, but probably none caused such an uproar as a proposal in March 1918 to use them to house German Prisoners of War.

The number of captured naval and military personnel remained low throughout the early stages of the war, but increased from 1917 when hundreds of POW camps started to be established. In February 1918 it was reported that although Hinckley had rejected the idea of using its workhouse for such a purpose, the Ashby Guardians had accepted the proposal to house German POWs in Ashby workhouse. The Leicester Daily Post of 12<sup>th</sup> February speculated that the difference in attitude between the two towns might be due to the fact that Ashby had housed French prisoners of war a hundred years before during the Napoleonic wars. However, it seems that the idea was later dropped as the workhouse was never used for such a purpose.

By 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1918, the Leicester Journal was reporting that not only the workhouse, but also Old Park Farm and Cliftonthorpe, had also been rejected as unsuitable for these prisoners. Old Park Farm had come under the control of the War Agricultural Committee and the prisoners were wanted to work on the land. It was the rejection of these alternatives that had brought about a proposal by the military authorities to use the Assembly Rooms of the Ivanhoe Baths as accommodation for the prisoners. This brought about an angry response from the people of Ashby and a protest meeting was held in the Town Hall on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March. The Chairman, Mr A. H. Tugby, said that he had not heard of British prisoners of war in Germany enjoying such accommodation as the Baths and Donington Hall (more of which later). It was said that the town did not object to the prisoners coming to the district but felt that more suitable accommodation should be found. Young people were said to gather on the bath Grounds on summer evenings (no change there then!) and the Head of the Grammar School, a Mr. C Elliot, said that, if German prisoners were housed there, the young people would "hear and see things which would not be good for them." A resolution objecting to the proposal was overwhelmingly carried and the meeting ended with the singing of the National Anthem.

The prisoners were not housed in the Baths, but a camp was established in or near Ashby. I haven't been able to establish exactly where it was but there is a document in the National Archives which includes a list of reports on visits of inspection to British prisoner of war camps during March 1919, by Dr A de Sturler. The places listed include Ashby de la Zouch.

On 14<sup>th</sup> December 1918, The Leicester Daily Post reported that a German

prisoner of war “at the camp at the Queen’s Hotel” had died the day before of pneumonia. His name was Wilhelm Schwenke, aged 31 of Hamburg. His colleague, Josef Huber, aged 32, died of the same thing on the same day and both were buried together in the town cemetery on 17<sup>th</sup> December. The hearse was followed by about a dozen German prisoners and the British guard and the burial service was conducted at the grave by Rev W. E. Sawyer. The guard then presented arms and each of the German soldiers threw sods into the grave and saluted. A photograph of the funeral procession appeared in The Illustrated Leicester Chronicle on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1918. Although it is a poor reproduction, I have included it with this article. I wonder if anyone recognises the house in the background? Ironically, the heading on the page where it appeared was: “All the Best and Brightest Pictures Appear in The Illustrated Leicester Chronicle”.

The German prisoners remained in Ashby until 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1919 as it was reported in the Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette on the following day that “Before leaving Ashby de la Zouch yesterday, 35 German prisoners marched to the local cemetery and placed wreaths on the graves of two comrades who had died during the recent influenza epidemic.”

I mentioned Donington Hall earlier in this article. This became a famous prisoner of war camp for high-ranking German officers from 1915, but more of this next month!

Wendy Freer

### Funeral of German Prisoners at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. —



Two German prisoners of war, named Schwenke and Huber, confined at the camp at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, who died from pneumonia, were buried at Ashby last week. The picture shows the cortege, consisting of about a dozen German prisoners and a British guard, on the way to the grave at the cemetery.

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# Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

As Prisons Week 2021 takes place from October 10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, I thought I would focus this month on the work of Mothers' Union members with prisoners and in prisons.

In many areas of the world, Mothers' Union members are active in supporting people in prison and families whose lives are impacted by imprisonment. In countries overseas, Mothers' Union members take in food and clothing and spend time with prisoners in prayer.

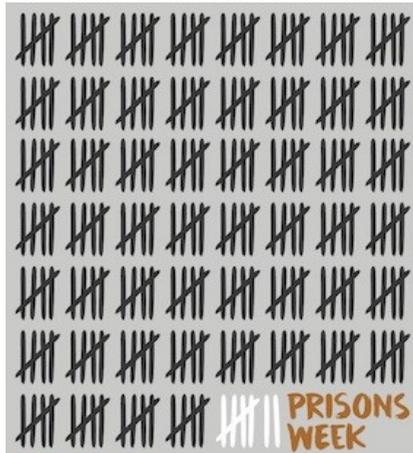
When prisoners have their children in prison with them, members do all they can to improve conditions for these children, providing blankets and fruit and vegetables to supplement the poor prison diet. They will also visit prisoners and make sure the prisoner's family is supported.

## UK and Ireland prison work

Members in UK and Ireland are working with prisoners and their families in 85 prisons. Activities and projects undertaken in these prisons include:

- Running prison crèches
- Supplying prisoners with books, gifts and cards to give to their children at Christmas
- Running craft and art sessions for prisoners
- Sending cards to prisoners at Christmas and Easter
- Providing "Coffee and Chat" time for prisoners who don't have visitors
- Supporting the Prison Chaplain's work.

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# Psalm 23 Garden

The Psalm 23 Garden was originally shown 'virtually' at the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show for 2020, when the show proper was cancelled due to Covid-19. This year, the RHS's 'Great Spring Show' may have happened in September rather than May, but at last this amazing garden has been realised.

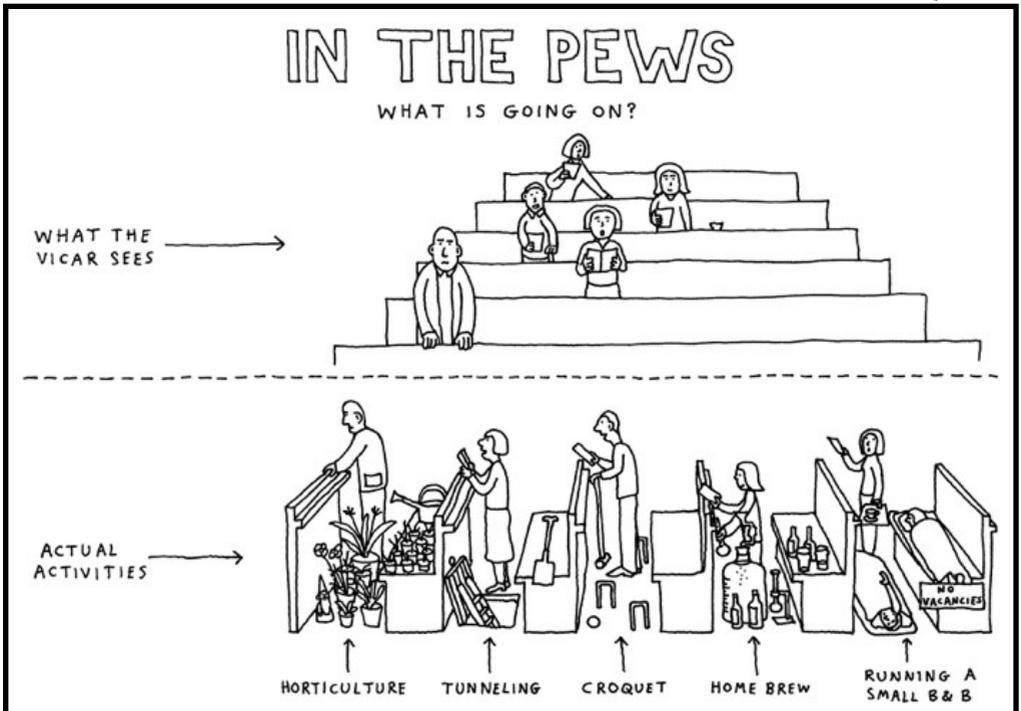
The three year collaboration between the Bible Society and award-winning designer Sarah Eberle was rewarded with the gold medal award for "best sanctuary garden".

Sarah Eberle explained how the garden, which included hawthorn and hornbeam trees, huge rocks, a waterfall and a pool of still water, was inspired by the landscape of Dartmoor. Its imagery is of green pastures, quiet waters and a journey through life to an eternal home. Walking into the garden involved stepping from the front onto some large boulders, and going right over a cantilevered rock, or left over stepping stones. She liked the idea of giving people choices to make, just as in life, but with the assurance that the destination would be a good one.

The Bible Society representative explained how they felt the garden's depiction of the psalm's message, of God being with us in every experience of life, was more prescient post-pandemic than ever.

The Bible Society hope the garden will inspire people to create community gardens based on the psalm, even creating a 'test' garden last year at St Mary's Church in Tadley, Hampshire, to see how the public would respond.

Jill Chapman





Ashby  
**YOUTH  
FOR CHRIST**

## **SUP**port Ashby Youth For Christ

On 25<sup>th</sup> September we took a team of ten people on stand up paddle boards (SUPs) along a beautiful stretch of the River Trent - From Willington (Near Burton) to Swarkestone (near Derby). We were pioneering an activity we will soon be offering to local young people. It was SUPer. There were kingfishers, bankside supporters cheering us on, amused cows, sparkling water, warm sun, an ice berg (silly but true), a floating picnic, bouncy swirly bits and more, all combining to give us a delightful and memorable day.

It is also a fundraiser for Ashby Youth For Christ's upcoming work with vulnerable girls, which will support young women as we explore mental wellbeing, self esteem and other issues that young people are facing in todays online world. The course takes 8 weeks and supports between 6-8 young people at a time. Teachers and other support workers who have referred young people to the course have spoken about how the girls have grown in confidence, and increased self esteem. As well as enabling these young women to realise their potential. It will also give us the opportunity to invite them to other events and activities where they can hear more about Jesus' love for them. So far it has raised £645

Donations can still be made - at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-ashby-youth-for-christ-girls-work>



# Football

The afternoon of rock climbing before football that I'd organised for the end of last month had to be put back a week. The good news is, this was because one of the lads I'd invited had a job. Work for some of these young men seems to be a miserable, short-lived experience. They approach work with such fear and insecurity that whenever they do get a job they (and their employer) have a miserable time of it and the arrangement doesn't last. This further fuels their low motivation and sense of marginalisation and they find themselves in a descending spiral which leaves them highly vulnerable - vulnerable to offers that promise validation. They may know these offers are unhealthy, unwise, ephemeral or illegal but their strength to resist is undermined by the power of these offers to provide immediate escape from their misery. Drugs, gaming, pornography, gambling, consumer credit, unhealthy relationships, couriering or distributing drugs ...

Football has the potential to provide an alternative source of affirmation and good feelings. Exercise stimulates the release of mood lifting and health boosting natural chemicals. Achievement in the form of a shot stopped, goal scored, assist provided or game won is also a mood lifter. Camaraderie is reward in itself. The recognition of peers or even praise from a bald bloke can make a lasting, positive difference to self-perception.

Football is valuable but limited in its effects on these precious strugglers. God is not limited. Please thank God for his grace in sharing his word with these young men. Pray that his word will be shared with even greater skill and power, that it will grow and bear fruit, that these young men will know the power and affirming presence of God's Spirit in their lives through their knowledge of his Son. Pray they will learn to wield his word against their temptations.

We had a pleasant surprise in the first week of September - The astroturf pitch which had been under reconstruction for the past couple of months had been completed and we had a chance to return to it from our sojourn on the ball courts. It is very posh and means we have more room to fill with football and footballers. Thanks, Lord.

Please pray the young men who attend enjoy football, friendship and food (of the spiritual type).

Please pray that they will receive God's word. Pray they will know that God understands their anxieties about material needs and that he delights in them as they look to him and become more like him in their work, study and investment.

We have seen some fellows during September who we haven't seen for a while: It was good to see them and good to know that they know they are

always welcome however infrequent their visits are. This is tremendously encouraging - it indicates a conviction amongst these footballers that God and his Church are welcoming and accepting. A community to believe in and belong to without great behavioural modifications being required.

Please pray that their enjoyment of this acceptance will stir great desire for more. Pray they will be convicted by the Holy Spirit that there is more - more of the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus. Pray they will be courageous in surrendering more to gain more.

Our numbers can vary a lot each week. One of our senior players commented that if everyone who has ever attended over the past couple of years showed up on the same evening we would probably have 50 players or more. With this in mind it is probably a good thing that most players attend sporadically.

Please pray for two young men (aged 18+) who often attend. I will be inviting them to come with me to a friend's farm to pick apples in a few weeks' time. They will be alongside a good number of men who are pastorally-hearted and who have inspirational stories of redemption. Pray that their stories would be used by God to encourage these two young men in their own journeys of faith.

Thank you for your prayers. You are worth a hundred stadium fans

**Vernon**

## **Rock Solid**

The term has begun with the arrival of a sizeable and vigorous corps of year 7's. Already these young people, some of whom were encouraged to attend by their parents, are inviting their friends from school.

Please pray for the year 7 young people who are not yet used to Rock Solid (RS): That they would soon enjoy experiencing the welcome of God's family, the challenge of his word and the personal invitation of Jesus to receive him into their lives. Pray they would, like Zacchaeus, be so delighted at his personal interest in them that they would be delighted to welcome his affirmation and challenge into every bit of their lives.

The year 7's are being ably looked after by a courageous team of young leaders, some of whom are only 3 years their senior. Please pray for the older members of Rock Solid - now beyond the RS age brackets - who are taking on responsibility as RS leaders. Pray that as they are stretched by this work they will know the thrill of being strengthened by the one who calls them to follow him and who promises to never leave them alone on this commission.



Please pray for us as we nurture the young leaders nurturing the year 7's. That we would all enjoy the nurture of the one who says if you remain in me you will bear much fruit. Pray we would bear juicy succulent produce to the delight of the Gardener.

We had lots of fun at the Ashby Statutes fair. And some grief; one of our young people had money stolen from him by an older youth. The crowds were so dense that it had happened and nothing could be done about it within seconds.

Quite a few of the yp had run out of money or tolerance within an hour and we had an enjoyable time chatting, eating sticky things and shooting each other with feeble toy guns in the relative quiet of the Baptist Church.

The evening also gave us the opportunity to bump into people with whom we have had contact over the years. I saw former Youth for Christ contacts - some past Rock Solid members - visiting the fair with their children and, in some cases, grandchildren.

Please pray for people in whom is planted the word of God. Give thanks for these seeds of new life and pray that in God's perfect timing, they will be watered and nurtured to full, fruitful life. Pray that we will be ever more faithful and effective sowers of his word.

## Sk8ers

It was wonderful to meet with young people when Sk8ters began again. We had some faithful characters who have been coming for years, and we reflected on how they have grown and matured over that time. One particular young person was always very agitated when we spoke of God or prayer, and on occasion managed to behave in such a way we have had to ask them to leave for the evening. But we know God is able and He is faithful to water our sowing of seeds in this person's life. Last week they came early and, when asked, came in to help us set up. At our usual prayer time as leaders, before we begin, we gave the young person a choice: stay and join us in prayer, or you are welcome to wait to one side while we pray

... and they joined us at the table! Oh how our hearts sang and we praised the Lord that they stayed and listened.

“May the God of HOPE fill you with JOY and PEACE, as you TRUST in him.....” Romans 15:13 (our memory verse this term)

Please pray that we may experience more Joy at seeing these young people grow in Christ. Lord pour out your Holy Spirit on our Sk8ers, wherever they are now, and show them your grace, that they may turn to you...filled with Joy and Peace as they Trust in you for the first time. Amen.

God bless you,

**The Sk8ers team**

## **Youth Alpha is Coming to Ashby**

We are excited to have the opportunity to run Youth Alpha locally, thank you to Swadlincote and District Youth for Christ for partnering with us, our wonderful chefs who have offered to provide puddings, and Hartshorne Church for allowing us to use the hall.

How can you be involved?

- Please invite any young people aged 11-18 that you know. There is a letter attached to this email for parents.
- Pray for the course as it starts on 21st September and continues weekly until mid December.
- Donate to cover the cost of running the course, this could be to cover the cost of the main meal or the cost of staffing the course. The button below will take you to the Sumup webpage to allow you to make a donation.

If you have any questions please contact [becky.bostock@yfc.co.uk](mailto:becky.bostock@yfc.co.uk)

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# Quotes for the Month

'Caring for God's creation is a spiritual commission requiring a response of commitment. This is a critical moment. Our children's future and the future of our common home depend on it.'  
*Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Pope Francis & Archbishop Justin, joint statement, Sept 1<sup>st</sup>*

'The Vicarage doorbell is fixed. Please bear in mind, because it now plays 'Under the Sea' from The Little Mermaid, opening the door is delayed by impromptu yet obligatory dancing within.'  
*Richard F Watson, Twitter, September 2<sup>nd</sup>*

'I have made my decision as a way of saying yes to God's present call and invitation, and not of saying no to what I have known and experienced in the Church of England.'  
*Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet, on joining the Catholic Church, Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>*

'It's useful to remember that old proverb about Afghanistan's warlords & rulers: "My enemy's enemy's friend's enemy who was my friend is my enemy until he isn't."  
*Rt Revd Nick Baines retweet of Paul Danahar, Twitter, September 7<sup>th</sup>*

'There is nothing holy about agony.'  
*Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey of Clifton, article in BMJ, September 9<sup>th</sup>*

'Governance provides the white lines on the pitch, so that other people can go and play the game; and the lines might get shortened, contracted, expanded, and so on. But you can change all the governance in the world and not change the will of the people to play a different game, or to play the same game differently.'  
*Bishop Nick Baines, re Church of England report by Governance Review Group, Sept 13<sup>th</sup>*

'The Robot Will See You Now.'  
*Steven Croft, Artificial intelligence and the Christian faith, Church Times, September 14<sup>th</sup>*

'Music done properly is a seriously powerful way to introduce, to discuss, to express, to embed faith into the lives of children ... If we get this right, we keep that connection ... into adulthood.'  
*Canon Sally-Anne McDougall, C of E webinar - The power of music for mission, September 14<sup>th</sup>*

'God save our parishes from people with MBAs'  
*Revd Giles Fraser, <https://unherd.com/>, September 16<sup>th</sup>*

'YOU need to have a profound sense of humour and a deep sense of compassion to survive any length of time in the modern Church of England.'  
*Simon Grigg, Church Times, September 17<sup>th</sup>*

'I owe my entire career to my experience as a chorister ... I learned the wonderful truth that something quite exceptional can be created just by you and your friends.'  
*Comedian & Pointless presenter Alexander Armstrong, Cathedral Music Trust, September 19<sup>th</sup>*

'There's definitely not a predicted shortage of Communion wafers. Please do not all leg it to church on Sunday to panic-worship.'  
*Gerrardus, Twitter, September 24<sup>th</sup>*

'it's just the point where you get to the place where you can't think any further, that's where I think God is.'  
*Coldplay's Chris Martin, Howard Stern's SiriusXM Radio show, September 24<sup>th</sup>*

'There is a nationwide shortage of kindness. There is plenty of kindness to go round, but it is unevenly distributed. Long queues are developing and some people who desperately need some kindness can't get hold of any. Please don't stockpile.'  
*Andrew Graystone, Twitter, September 27<sup>th</sup>*

'The Holy Spirit will do the heavy lifting, our role is simply to be willing to share what it means to be a Christian.'  
*Justin Welby explains how he shares the gospel in 20 secs, premierchristian.news, Sept 28<sup>th</sup>*

'Soup, bread and crumble, a recipe for success as evensong attendance soars.'  
*The Prayer Book Society, Facebook, September 29<sup>th</sup>*

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