



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Loving God, Loving Others, Loving the World



Parish Magazine

June 2024

WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Hello and welcome to June's edition of the parish magazine!

I am writing this just after returning with our youth group, the Priest Room Gang, from the highly anticipated trip to Amsterdam. You can read all about their experience this month, and they are all really looking forward to telling you all about it over the coming weeks. My highlight was being able to spend so much quality time together as a group and seeing all the young people growing in friendship with one another. A strong sense of community is so important.

You can also read about the importance of community on page 9, as Annabel receives the Civic Youth Award, and on page 6, with Caroline's reminder of our church brunch last month and all that our church community is doing to steward the environment.

With blessings for the month ahead,
Emily



Donations can be left in the boxes at the back of St Helen's Church, in the porch of Holy Trinity or the Congregational Church, or at any of Ashby's Co-ops. Thank you to everyone for the continued support.

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FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM

Dear friends,

I write a week on from a General Election having been announced. We all knew it was coming at some point this year but it was a surprise to many that it is going to be before the summer holidays begin. For the next month or so, we will be bombarded with Party Political Broadcasts, news bulletins that are full of reports about what the different parties are saying, as well as more local events and leaflets through our doors.



Some of us will love all the energy around the election whilst others will hate it, and some will positively disengage, but I would suggest that, as Christians, we do need to engage in some way.

Scripture encourages us to pray for all in authority in our world, to work for justice and to support and care for those who are on the margins of our society. We know that those who represent us in Parliament and in local government have a voice into many decisions that can affect very deeply the lives of those they serve, and so they have a significant influence in framing legislation which can either advantage or disadvantage those who are more vulnerable in our society.

The Diocese of Leicester has produced some helpful guidelines as to how we might engage with the General Election. First of all is an encouragement to us all to pray -

- For all those who are putting themselves forward as candidates in the election that they would carry out their campaigning with integrity and truthfulness.
- That all debates would be honest and generous and would focus on policies rather than personal insults.
- For those who are elected – that they would lead with courage, humility, a willingness to listen and a real desire to serve the best

interests of those in their constituencies and beyond.

Secondly, the Diocese encourages us all to vote, either in person or by post. Apparently, only 67% of the electorate in Leicester and Leicestershire actually voted in the last election. Not only does voting exercise our democratic right – which many people in the world do not have – but it also means that we have some influence over the outcome.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have issued a call to put prayer and participation at the heart of the General Election campaign and they are backing a resource called 'Pray your part' which is a series of daily thematic reflections written by Bishops. This can be found at www.cofe.io/PrayYourPart



Let's all pray our part as we approach 4 July.

With best wishes,
Sue



HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT...

THE ECO-INITIATIVE?

As we continue our series looking at the many and varied things God does within our church, we hear from Caroline about how we are working to take care of God's creation.

In response to the Church of England's mission to help tackle the climate crisis and the programme to reduce its carbon emissions, our own church formed the Eco-Initiative Group at the end of 2022.

Since then, the Group has been looking at actions that we can all take to reduce our environmental impact on the planet. These issues range from how we heat our buildings as efficiently as possible to ensuring that any cleaning products used are environmentally friendly. Wherever possible we avoid single-use plastic, promote recycling, and are creating wildlife havens in our church gardens. St Helen's holds a Fairtrade Church status, and environmental concerns have been addressed in our worship content. We have included a series of 'eco tips' in the pew sheet notices, and the Lent Talks for 2023 followed an eco theme using Tearfund material and resources. Last year a 'green' survey was distributed to church members to get some feedback from the congregation. Also, courtesy of PRG, a very successful toilet-twinning fundraiser was organized. A member of the Eco Group attended a climate resilience workshop, which gave us a positive and encouraging feeling that we are 'on the right track'.

The Group has also organized a few social occasions; a plant-based lunch was held last February, then brunch (using vegetarian, organic and locally-sourced ingredients) took place later in the year. The most recent event was breakfast in the Heritage Centre to support and promote the work of the Fairtrade Foundation.

We are pleased that we have made progress in several areas; a few examples are the use of LED lighting in both the church and the Heritage Centre, our cleaning products are obtained from the Fair2All shop's refill

scheme, we practice packaging recycling, and there are now water barrels and composting bins in the Heritage Centre garden. The churchyard and Heritage Centre grounds are well-stocked with nature- and wildlife-friendly plants and flowers and 500 Spring bulbs have been planted in our gardens.

However, there is still much more to do - calculating and reducing our carbon footprint by being more energy efficient (not easy in an ancient building!), maybe looking at renewable energy options. The Eco-Initiative Group is a small group, so we would gladly welcome additional members to the team; if you are interested, and feel inspired to join, please let me know. Also, input, suggestions and actions would be welcomed from all members of the church so that we can all be involved in looking after this fragile planet and caring for God's creation.

Caroline Millward

(Pictures from the recent brunch held by the Eco-initiative to mark World Fair Trade Day).



Please see the following message from Pam Watson: 'For anyone with a long memory-covering the 1980s- and involved with Holy Trinity Church, Packington Church or North Street Infants school- also briefly at Woodcote I think. Yes, Miss Janet Clarke. Sadly Janet became very ill very quickly and left us to go to glory on Thursday 23rd May. No further details yet but feel free to contact me. 01530 413511 or pamanddavid@watsonashby.co.uk Thank you and God bless you. Xx'



For news and views in North West Leicestershire read your local newspaper

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MESSY CHURCH

May's messy church was quieter than usual due to it being half-term, but this gave plenty of time for both adults and children to make some new friends! It was lovely to have two bilingual families with us, just as we heard about the message being heard in different languages at Pentecost. The next messy church will take place on Sunday 23rd June, 3.30pm at Viscount Beaumont's school. We would be delighted if you could join us.



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CIVIC YOUTH AWARD

Last month, our very own Annabel Fraser was awarded the Civic Youth Award by Ashby Town Council. First given in July 2016, the award recognises the contribution of a young person to the community of Ashby de la Zouch.

To quote from her nomination: “.... Annabel has been a member of St Helen’s Choir since she was eight. Over the years, she has grown in confidence, and has developed greatly as a church musician and chorister. She is now studying for her A levels, including music. Annabel is in her third year as Head Chorister.



She gets on with her roles and responsibilities as Head Chorister without fuss, whilst maintaining her sense of humour and fun. It goes without saying that Annabel’s voice is clear and strong, but as Head Chorister she has also shown outstanding leadership – supporting other ‘trebles’ in the full choir, and a very kind and caring approach with younger members of our Junior Choir. Her loyalty and commitment to St Helen’s Choir is excellent; and even during last summer, when in the midst of her GCSE exams, she was rarely absent.

All of these impressive qualities mean that Annabel is an excellent example to all the other young singers.”

The Town Council agreed that Annabel is a very worthy winner of the Civic Youth Award.” Congratulations Annabel– very well deserved!

PRIEST ROOM GANG TRIP TO AMSTERDAM

PRG would like to extend their thanks to everyone who has supported us along the way. We had a great time away together and will look forward to sharing more with you over the coming weeks.



Day 1:

“At 3am we woke up and started packing for the trip to Amsterdam. At 4:45, we all got lifts from kind volunteers to the airport where we went through security and waited for the plane. I was nervous, and so was my sister, because it was our first time abroad. But when the plane started it was actually quite fun. When we arrived in Amsterdam, we found our way around over to the train station, where we took the train to Amsterdam Central. It was beautiful! The buildings were tall and modern-looking and the bicycles were EVERYWHERE! Anyway, we went to find our hostel, Clink. It was very nice and had its own game room and a bar and an activity room, where we did glow in the dark painting and Karaoke. After finding our rooms and dropping our luggage off, we were hungry and decided to eat at a restaurant called ‘Eye’. The food was really good and we all enjoyed it. Then we had a little walk around then headed back to the hostel. When we were on the boat back, we were given free cans of Fuzetea, which was peach and mango flavoured.”

Day 2:

“Today we woke up at 7am and had a shower, then we went downstairs at 8:30 and had an unlimited breakfast! At 10am we headed out to look at the shops, there were loads and loads of bikes so we had to dodge them. After that we headed to the Anne Frank museum at 4 o’clock. After that we headed back to the hostel and had tea (fish and chips) and Karaoke till 11pm! Then we got ready for bed and slept until the next day”



Day 3:

“We visited the Van Gogh museum after a tram ride through the city. It was full of paintings of his and his influences. Matthew Wong, who also came the same fate as Van Gogh, had an exhibition on his art work. After lunch we walked to the church where we had a tour then joined in a communion service. We then went on the metro to Antonia’s house where we played games and ate dinner with their youth group. Before going back to the hostel to play games, we sat on the edge of the Amstel river. Here we were approached by a very funny man who told us “water... is not a solid”. We stayed up for a bit then went up to pack, then we went to sleep at about 1am after playing cards.”

Highlights of the trip:

“I had lots of fun staying in a room with Sab, Nab, Lia and Philip and I enjoyed lots of games of cards. I also enjoyed exploring the city and finding gifts for back home. I would definitely do this trip again!”*

“I enjoyed playing charades on the first night, meeting the young people

from Christ Church and learning more about Van Gogh. There was a nice link on Wednesday as it turned out Van Gogh used to lead Sunday school at the church we visited.”

“I loved playing cards and games in our room but also in the atrium on all the nights. I had fun looking around the Van Gogh museum and Anne Frank’s house and had lots of fun whilst visiting the young people from Christ Church.”

“My favourite part of the trip was just sightseeing and looking at the buildings. Karaoke was also fun and so was the Anne Frank museum. I’d love to go again.”

“My favourite bit was the smouldering security guard and the ‘Give them the light’ man. Overall, it was a really fun trip, lots of laughter. 10/10, must go again.”

“Really had fun playing games and cards with everyone, including the other youth group. Loved sight seeing and exploring through the picturesque city. We should definitely do this again. I think the rest of our church will be very happy for us with what we’ve done. Anne Frank was eye opening and Van Gogh was very informative– I had no clue he shot himself, very educational trip but A LOT OF FUN.”

“We did Karaoke and table football which was really fun, we went to the Anne Frank museum too and saw and looked in her annex where she hid. It was a really fun trip and I enjoyed sightseeing and shopping too!”

“I really liked looking around Amsterdam and seeing all the pretty scenery. There were lots of quirky shops that I enjoyed exploring too. Another highlight was visiting the Anne Frank museum which was interesting.”

“My highlight and overwhelming joy was the first evening of arrival. It was the vision of the young people on the riverside sitting together. The vision of taking PRG to Amsterdam was unfolding and the vision was turning very tangibly into a reality. To sum up the thoughts of Antonia at Christ Church, I know that God was and is good!”

PRG

*PRGs new nicknames

UPDATE FROM LTOS

For some of the Asylum seeker/ refugee community In Loughborough, playing football is proving to be a massive boost for mental health, especially considering the trauma from the past - and anxieties for the future - that they have to live with. Over 2 years ago Becky, one of our lovely younger volunteers, started football sessions on Southfields Park which became very popular. Soon, links with 'Leicester City in the Community' and the 'Action committee' at the university had helped to make this a regular weekly session. Recently, a brilliant football Tournament took place at Loughborough University. Teams were made up of asylum seekers and refugees from hotels in Loughborough, Derby, Leicester and Woodhouse Eaves. There were over 90 people attending the event and a full day of matches played. Everyone who attended seemed to have a great time with lots of positive feedback received from the people who participated. Hopefully this will be the first of many tournaments to be arranged between the teams.

Here's how you can help:

Asylum seekers housed by the Home Office are given three basic meals per day and £8:86p per week to cover any other expenses such as clothes, shoes and toiletries. Needless to say, this leaves very little spare to spend on luxuries like football kit! LTOS is trying to fund the provision of football boots for our local refugee teams. If you feel you could make a small donation towards a pair of boots, I can promise you it will be VERY be much appreciated!

If you feel you can help, please make your donation either direct to Loughborough Town of Sanctuary online (please mark it with the reference 'football boots') or give a cash donation to Liz Smith.
(am told by our LTOS treasurer that she is investigating an easy way to retrieve the gift-aid portion of any donation made by the public, but she hasn't yet resolved this issue, so if you would like to gift aid your donation, please email me (address below) and I will try to sort it out for you.

The bank details for donations are as follows:
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GARDENING TIPS FOR JUNE

The longest day of the year is amazingly only a few weeks away and the garden is growing at a very rapid pace. Any young plants you have been nurturing should be removed from the greenhouse, conservatory or window ledge and planted in their final positions. It is important to keep up with the repetitive garden jobs such as watering (when needed), weeding, grass cutting and dead heading etc.

The weather has turned colder and wetter once again but luckily no late frost has occurred.

You can start to plant out your bedding and seed raised plants but be aware we could possibly get a ground frost so you may need to cover them. June is a safe time to plant out more tender vegetable plants such as Courgettes, French beans, Tomatoes and Cucumbers, providing your garden offers a medium degree of shelter from the wind. Please remember to sow and plant vegetables sparingly but often, if you are fortunate enough to have the space.

Continue to earth up potatoes but keep the compost moist. However, try to not overwater as this compacts the soil, squeezing out the oxygen and thus preventing the development of the tubers.

Pinch side shoots from your Tomatoes and remember to start feeding them once the first truss is setting fruit. If you are growing Strawberries then peg down the runners once your crop is nearing the end if you wish to create new plants for next year. Always water potted Blueberry plants with rain water rather than tap water as the lime content of tap water reduces the acidity of the soil over time.

There is an endless list of such plants that can make a brilliant bedding display. My favourites are Geraniums, Marigolds, Begonias, Cosmos, Gazanias and Petunias. Our, "Spanish Area", is full of brightly coloured Spanish ceramic pots containing a multitude of red, orange and yellow flowers, which include a few Cannas.

We now plant up our own hanging baskets and pots as we have a purple theme at our front door. We have also recently acquired a lavender and cream coloured 2-seater covered bench so we can sit and view our front garden for a change. We grow many pot and ground Hostas and all our vegetables at the front of our house.

This is a safe time to prune shrubs which have already flowered such as Spiraea, Choisya, Camelia, Deutzia and Philadelphus. Take out unwanted branches and reduce the leading shoots to make the shrub bushier. I also prune the bottom of the shrub to lift the canopy which allows more light, and air in and this benefits any plants growing around the base of the shrub.

We again have a Blue Tit nest in one of our bird boxes which is easily viewed from our house and garden. You need to remember to top up your bird baths, bird feeding tables and hanging feeders. We also hang 3/4 coconuts and put in crushed fat balls. Our smaller birds love them. They are expensive to buy so re-use them rather than buying new coconuts.

As the weather becomes warmer pond weed can quickly get out of control if left alone. The warmer temperatures will make fish more active and so now is the time to start feeding them daily.

It is certainly worth visiting some local Open Gardens. The monies collected all go to various charities. In many of the gardens they offer tea, coffee or soft drinks and biscuits etc.

Also, we have many good local garden centres and they are well worth a visit, and again, you can enjoy a meal, lunch or beverage.

Alan and Alison Cross

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OUR WORSHIP IN JUNE

	am	pm	Wednesday
1st Sunday 2nd June		3.30pm All-Age Worship 6pm Evensong + Soiree	1st Wednesday-5th Holy Communion 10.30am In Church
2nd Sunday 9th June	10.30 am Holy Communion (with children's church)		2nd Wednesday- 12th Holy Communion 10.30am Prior Park Community centre
3rd Sunday 16th June	10.30 am Morning worship		3rd Wednesday-19th Morning prayer 10.30am In church
4th Sunday 23rd June	10.30 am Holy Communion	3.30pm Messy Church at Viscount Beaumont's school	4th Wednesday- 26th Holy Communion 10.30am In church
5th Sunday 30th June	10.30am Team service at Holy Trinity, Ashby		

Regular activities:

- Monday mornings - Little Fishes 9.30 - 11.30am during term time
- Mondays - Monday Group – 8pm
- 3rd Tuesday - PCC meeting – 7 till 9pm
- 1st Wednesday - Knit and natter – 2 till 4pm
- Thursdays - Choir practice – 6.30 till 8.30pm
- Fridays - Heart- warming Space 1-4pm
- Saturdays - Parish Prayers – 9.30am in the Hastings chapel

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY// JUNE

- **Sunday 2nd June– 6-8pm- Sunday Soiree– Organ recital.**

A service of choral evensong sung by St Helen's choir, followed by refreshments and a short recital by Andrew Chapman performing music by Mendelssohn, Bach and something more modern.

- **Sunday 16th– Amsterdam thank you– 10.30 service.**

PRG will be sharing all about their visit to Amsterdam during morning worship, followed by lunch in the heritage centre to thank everybody who has supported them along the way.

- **Sunday 23rd June– Saying thank you to Carol Eyley and goodbye to Margaret Lawrence.**

During our 10.30am service we will be saying a big thank you to Carol Eyley and having a little celebration, with refreshments, of her 40 years of lay reader ministry.

- **Sunday 30th June - this will be a team service for the Flagstaff family of churches, held at Holy Trinity Ashby, 10.30am.**

There will be no service at St Helen's this morning as we enjoy the opportunity to worship together.

- **Save the date: Sunday 14th July– deanery confirmation service at St Helen's.**

Several members of the St Helen's congregation are being either baptised or confirmed by Bishop Saju in the 10.30 service. It would be wonderful to have as many people present as possible to celebrate with them and encourage them as they take this next step in their journey of faith.

ASHBY YOUTH FOR CHRIST

If you would like to sign up for regular updates either follow this link <http://eepurl.com/dvVqri> or email helen.davis@yfc.co.uk. Alternatively you can scan the QR code.

Thank you for all your prayers and support.



Rock Solid

Searching and finding:

Last month we ascended Bleaklow. There was an



aeroplane crash. We didn't cause it. Though the plane and her crew came to grief more than 75 years ago there was an amazing amount of debris and it was in surprisingly good condition. Finding the site was easy– we had maps, compasses, GPS and even clear weather. We also had lots of fun searching unsuccessfully for arctic hares and we did

find 3 left handed gloves, so if you have any lonely righties do let me know and we can arrange marriage.

Please pray for Rock Solid's diligence and tenacity in searching for truth and the Truth. We have the bible and testimony but the conditions are testing– our vision is limited, the light seems dim and there is much to obscure our view. Pray we will be compassionately guided and zealously restored to the greatest searcher. That people might be dazzled by Him.

Thank you for your prayers.

Vernon, Emily, Karen and Josiah

'Look down from heaven and see, from your lofty throne, holy and glorious.

Where are your zeal and your might?

Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us.'

Isaiah 63:1

DEMOCRACY AND POPULISM

If we take the Lord's Prayer seriously and we are wanting God's Kingdom to come on earth, as it is in heaven, then the way we choose to organise our societies becomes an important issue. Is God's Kingdom more likely to happen in a Communist Gulag, a Fascist dictatorship or a Democracy?

Most western liberal countries have chosen democracy because it is the system of government that is least likely to harm its citizens. It's not perfect. It's about compromises and bearing with the fact that your fellow citizens may choose a government whose policies you dislike. However you have to take the rough with the smooth, knowing that in five years time you can all choose again based on how those policies worked out in practice.

And that five year period is quite important because it takes time for new policies to take effect and people who were initially not in favour may come to see that it was a good idea after all. A policy that lots of people thought would be a good idea, takes time for the downsides to become apparent.

Running a country is not simple. There are competing demands for how our taxes are spent. More money for the NHS may mean less for education or repairing our roads.

Liz Truss came up against the fact that lots of economic factors are intertwined and altering one strand affects many others.

A populist politician doesn't recognise these complexities. They play on our fears and have an apparently simple answer to their country's problems - often summed up in a few words slogan.

They appeal to their citizens' sense of wanting someone to put things right, to sort out the complexities for us, to offer a simple solution amongst the confusions of the modern world. However it is fool's gold. Their simple solutions can never work, because the world really is complex. "Going for Growth" didn't help folks' mortgages.

"Building the Wall" didn't stop immigration into the USA. " Stop the Boats"

hasn't stopped them yet.

With their simple policies inevitably doomed to failure, the populist can't admit that they were wrong. They have to have their excuses ready. Other people or systems were to blame for their policy failures. It was "the deep state" or "leftist civil servants" - not their policies that were wrong.

Even more worrying can be that when their time in office is coming to an end and the people are going to vote on whether they liked their policies or not - they refuse to accept the result of the vote and try to cling to power. Sounds familiar ?

So..... what does this mean for Christians and the forthcoming election. The first thing is to go and vote. Bad people get elected because good people don't vote. Secondly, listen to the promises being made by the parties and candidates. Is their rhetoric designed to play on our fears? Do their policies acknowledge the complexities of our current situation or do they sound simplistic? The simple is usually wrong!

Lastly, it is citizens' judgement time as to whether the government's policies have worked out as we had hoped. Ignore the excuses!!

Martin Vaughan



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AN ONGOING STORY OF GODS AWESOME GRACE TO THE UNDESERVING

At university I had no interest in God whatsoever; my world was focussed on my studies, aspiring to an academic career, and a passion for climbing which I now see as an adrenalin addiction needing a “fix” at least weekly

But God In the summer of my second year, camping in the Llanberis Pass to research and write a dissertation for college (plus a few climbing days!) one evening some people began a climb on the cliffs above our campsite. Returning from the pub after nightfall, we found that they had become stuck on the cliff. We attempted to assist but were unable to do so, and called the Mountain Rescue Team. I remember their headlights as they arrived but nothing else until a month later looking out of a hospital window in my hometown of Guildford, Surrey. Caught by a rockfall during the course of the rescue, I had suffered a skull fracture. My parents had been told there was a 50% chance I'd survive, and if I did recovery would take ten years (as far as I did recover). Mentally, my brain was a mess, I'd have forgotten the beginning of a sentence by the time I got to the end and physically, coordination was very poor what I'd lived for seemed to have become forever unreachable in a flash depression sank like a heavy cloud.

Eight months later I was more mobile, and it being the era when students especially could hitch-hike anywhere, I got a lift to Portmadoc knowing there was a climber's bunkhouse near Tremadoc rocks where one could stay for 5p per night – perhaps I'd meet old friends there? Walking into Tremadoc, I saw a sign saying “Christian Mountain Centre” my brain only registered “Mountain Centre” and I stopped to ask directions to the bunkhouse. “Oh, we'll give you a lift later, come in for a coffee” I never saw the bunkhouse!

As soon as I signed their visitor's book, they knew who I was as they were involved with Mountain Rescue – and I found out later on they'd been praying for me ever since the accident had happened. But that evening I was overwhelmed by the warm welcome of these strangers, and stayed at the Centre the whole weekend. Learning that they depended a lot on voluntary helpers, I wrote to them the following week offering to help wherever I could – and was asked straightaway to come back. I was there for 6 weeks I think.

The Centre ran Outdoor Pursuits courses for young people, and gave them the Gospel in informal sessions morning and evening, many coming to the Lord. What I heard, my brain being so dysfunctional, went in one ear and out the other; but I was so moved by what was around me, what I'd now describe as the Lord's pres-

ence, and so aware that I was not part of it and yet equally of my acceptance by all the staff that in the end I cried out to Godmy version of the “Sinner’s Prayer” was “Lord I have nothing to offer but a mess, but I give my life to you, Amen”.

Jesus instantly responded: the depression lifted never to return, I felt a new connection with all the Christian staff and the Bible changed from deadly dull paper and ink to a life-giving personal letter from God. My life was never the same! In my excitement, getting into the Bible and church I hardly noticed what else God was doing but that September I was back in college (so much for the 10 years recovery prognosis) and graduated the summer following. The Lord had restored to me what I’d had before the accident I was offered a research studentship as I’d hoped and planned for and began preparatory work for it. BUT – He’d broken the Climbing addiction and it was already a year since I’d tied onto a climbing rope, and I was beginning to sense His calling elsewhere is this what I should be doing, Lord?

Two years after being there, the Christian Mountain Centre offered me a job as an instructorAfter prayer the Lord was evidently calling and I left university to be a part of the CMC team. BUT living in a residential establishment in close contact 24/7 with both staff and visitors brought me face to face with all my “issues”, serious underlying ones of the kind we’re all prone to bury, try to ignore and override, all the fruit of childhood and life experience -- for me manifesting as an inability to relate, a sense of inadequacy, rejection, self-rejection, even self-hatred leading to fear and lack of confidence with people especially.

Feeling I’d “blown it” I did not work long at CMC, ca 18 months. After a bit of a time delay I gradually realised that God was not condemning me but making me aware of issues because He wanted to deal with them. Over many years I’ve found out what Jesus meant when He said, “I have come to heal the broken-hearted and to set the captive free”(Lk4:18) and He has steadily brought healing to all those problem areas of my life, sometimes through crisis breakthroughs more often gradually. This is what Jesus meant by “It is finished” – not only forgiveness for our sin but also provision for all the consequent wounding of both our sin and that of others affecting us. For me the outworking of this has been a miracle as big or bigger than that initial physical healing when I gave my life to Him.

And TODAY? For the last twenty years I have felt called to make known to the Lord’s people how Jesus longs to minister to their deepest needs: because He came to save the WHOLE person and not just the polished exterior, He is interested in those areas we seek to hide from ourselves, let alone other people or God (who knows all about them anyway!). He has given me opportunities with Ellel

ministries, teaching days, personal ministry and with Flame International that ministers to the traumatised and grieving in conflict areas (eg in South Sudan this coming February) in all of which I have seen His heart for the broken as He reaches out to them with healing love.

We all have a story to tell of Jesus' saving grace and we need to share it! A favourite verse of mine is Philemon v6 (NIV): "Be active in sharing your faith (=your story) so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ".

David Lauder

(Submitted by Pam Watson)

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

The 'communion of saints' is a well known phrase to church-goers, but it has an element of strangeness – it's hardly ever used in secular circles, and I can't ever recall it being used in any conversations.

It doesn't come from the bible, but from the Apostles' Creed, the last part that goes chuggety-chug, chuggety-chug, with a rhythm similar to an old train on an old railway line:

*"I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen."*

It would be difficult to guess the meaning of Communion of Saints. Here saints means ordinary Christians, and communion means togetherness. It's that simple. Except it's not, because the saints are from the past, the present, and the future. That description puts us in a whirlpool where the brain is struggling to understand. Mainly because it seems impossible for us to connect with people from the past as well as the future.

For the moment, let's stick with 'togetherness between the Christians of today.' Immediately you realise that 'togetherness' is a problem. There are

many churches and organisations that claim to be Christian, but is there much togetherness?

At this point a theologian might chip in with 'it's spiritual togetherness and fellowship, that operates in spite of differences of opinions.' For me, this is a cop out. For example, the battles within the Anglican Communion can be ferocious. Thankfully, no-one as yet has been shot.

A possible saving feature is that it's the same God who has given life to us all, and to every living thing. Not only life, but God has shown us the virtues we should try to attain. Pertinent here seems the concept of forgiveness.

Whether it's a family, or church, or social group in Ashby, or our nation, they can only hold together if forgiveness is offered and accepted, as appropriate.

To forgiveness we can add tolerance, and we may or may not see much tolerance in the jousting before the next election, now only weeks away. I do hope we don't copy the American model of vitriolic mud-slinging and accusations. It seems truth often goes out of the window to make room for lies, because that's what you do to gain power.

But let's look on the bright side and focus on the communion of saints. We must include those homely virtues like kindness and going the extra mile. To receive an unexpected kindness is always welcome, whether from a church friend, a neighbour, or someone in the street.

You may be asking, is there a 'communion of neighbours,' because in many streets in Ashby the neighbours know each other and help out in times of need. Is there also communion between football supporters, who chum together and sing short songs during the game, like we do at church, except we have a choir.

You might accuse me of being too inclusive, but I'm only copying Jesus, who would talk to, and even help, the outcasts whom the Jewish leadership wouldn't touch with a barge pole. To conclude, our togetherness is made up of many things, including forgiveness, and going that extra mile with a smile.



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ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY



[Ashby Show On The Bath Grounds, Date Unknown But Thought To Be 1920s]

Next month, (July) will be the annual event known as The Ashby Show, run by Ashby de la Zouch and District Agricultural Society. The first show of the expanded Society was held on The Bath Grounds in 1904, but as Ashby de la Zouch Agricultural Society, i.e. without the “district,” the Society, and the show, are much older than that.

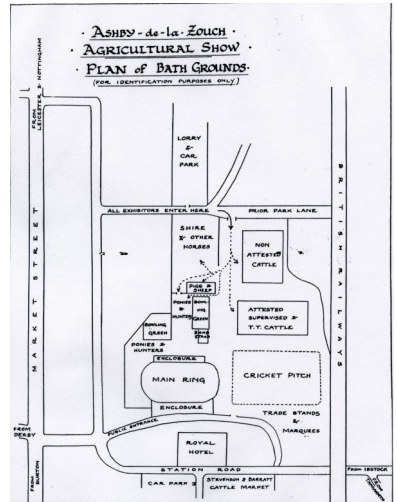
The oldest Agricultural Society in the county is probably the Leicester one, formed in the late 1700s, but Ashby formed its own in 1833. The first meeting was held on the 23rd December of that year in the Hastings Hotel (the first name of the Royal Hotel). It’s stated aims were:

“to protect the interests of all classes dependent upon agriculture, and to diffuse sound and useful information upon all subjects connected therewith; to watch over all legislative measures, affecting the interests of the agricultural community; to recommend and promote all measures calculated to increase skill, industry, comforts and respectability of the labouring classes; and to collect and diffuse information upon the best mode of administering the poor laws, with a view to benefit the condition of the poor, as well as to lighten the pressure of the poor rate.”

The meeting was presided over by Sir George Beaumont. This would have been the nephew of the Sir George Beaumont who was instrumental in the founding of the National Gallery, the latter having died in 1827. Also present were The Marquis of Hastings, The Earl Howe, various other local dignitaries and VIPs, and a large number of the local gentry, clergy and farmers.

A year later, on the 24th November, the first anniversary took place. It began at 10 am with a ploughing match on a piece of land near Packington. The prize for the best work, £3, was awarded to John Baker, ploughman to the Marquis of Hastings.

After the match, at about 1pm, a prize stock competition was held on a close (field) close to the Hastings Hotel. This was probably the Bath Grounds. There were classes for cattle, sheep and pigs. The show ended at about 2.30pm and an hour later, the 120 members sat down to dinner at The Hastings Hotel. The meal was described as “most sumptuous” starting with “turtle soup without the mock”, followed by “game in abundance” and wines of the finest quality. The hotel was said to be “splendidly furnished and the accommodations are such as are seldom met with in any part of England.”



[Plan Of Ashby Show, Thought To Be 1949]

Sir George Beaumont, Chairman, gave a short speech and then more prizes were awarded. A prize of £3 was awarded to William Bates, age 71, for 48 years service, during which time he raised a family of 8 children without parochial aid. A prize of £3 was awarded to Mary Higgins for 11 years service as a dairy maid. Thomas Illesby was awarded £3 for supporting his wife and 12 children without parochial support and John Kendrick was awarded £3 for having raised 110 lambs from 85 ewes during the last season. Finally, William Measures, shepherd, received a prize of £1 for having reared 102 lambs from 92 ewes with a loss of 2 lambs and no ewes. This was followed by more speeches and toasts and although Sir George departed at about 10pm, the rest of the company did not separate until a late hour.

By mid-century, the Society was flourishing as it held its 18th annual show on Tuesday 16th September 1851. It took place in a field or park to the south-east of the castle, which may have been the Bath Grounds. As well as

sheep, pigs and horses, the show now included produce such as vegetables and, for the first time, cheese. The cheese prize went to “a bachelor” which the reporter of the Leicestershire Mercury found amusing as cheese-making was apparently thought to be the domain of farmers’ wives.

The company proceeded to the Royal Hotel where, once again, awards were given to “deserving labourers” in an expanded number of classes. Various people in the surrounding villages were awarded prizes for the best kept garden allotments.

The dinner took place in the Baths Assembly Rooms, attended by 80 or 90 persons. Speeches and toasts were reported at length in the newspaper.

In 1904, the Society became the Ashby de la Zouch and District Agricultural Society and continued to hold its ever expanding annual show. By 1909 the classes included various horse breeds, poultry and pigeons, and there was even a competition for bands which was won by Woodville Union Band. There were also horse jumping and carriage driving competitions, but the awards to “deserving labourers” had been discontinued and there was no mention of a dinner.

The Society and the annual Ashby Show has continued to this day, with breaks during the years of the First and Second World Wars and, of course, during the recent Covid pandemic. The Show is now held on Cattows Farm at Heather and includes all sorts of new displays as well as the traditional competitions. This year it will be held on July 14th. Full details can be found on the Ashby de la Zouch and District Agricultural Society website: <https://ashbyshow.com/>

Wendy Freer



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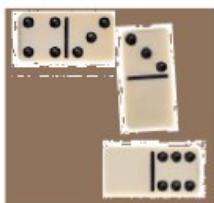
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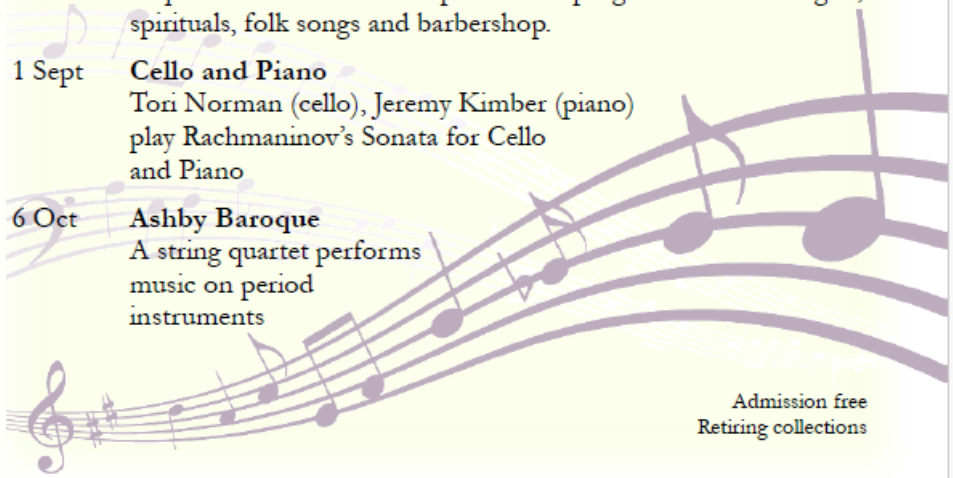


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- 5 May **Capriccio Ensemble**
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- 7 July **Tesserae**
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