

SPS

# De Trinitate

Slimbridge, St. John

Purton, St. John

Sharpness, St. Andrew

FEBRUARY 2022



50p

## **MINISTRY TEAM**

**VICAR: Revd. Bill Boon** Email: bill.boon@btinternet.com  
The Vicarage Sanigar Lane, Newtown (01453) 811 360 *Day off - Monday*

**COMMUNITY CHAPLAIN: Revd. Mary Tucker**  
Hinton Cottage, Hinton. (01453) 811 105  
Email: marycountry12@gmail.com

**READER: Mr. Stilman Davis**  
Orchard Lea, Churchend, Slimbridge. (01453) 890 783  
Email: stilman.davis@tolutim.co.uk

**WORSHIP LEADERS:**  
(*Slimbridge*) **Mr David Carrington**  
Email: davidwsp1@yahoo.co.uk

(*Sharpness*) **Mrs Carol Bailey** (01453) 810 850

**For Baptisms, Confirmations, Home Communions,  
Wedding Arrangements etc...  
Please contact the Vicar.  
Benefice Website: [www.heuristika.co.uk/lfgdiscussion/](http://www.heuristika.co.uk/lfgdiscussion/)**

## **CHURCHWARDENS**

**Mrs Margaret Price** (*Purton*) The Mill House, Purton (01453) 811 250  
**Ms Katrina Bailey** (*Sharpness*) 8 Jubilee Way (01453) 810 850  
**Mr David Carrington** (*Slimbridge*) 8 Lancelot Court (01453) 890 031  
**Mrs Sue Gibson** (*Slimbridge*) May Cottage, Shepherds Patch (01453) 890 820

## **Parochial Church Council Officers**

### ***Sharpness with Purton***

**Mrs Carol Bailey** (*Secretary*) 8 Jubilee Way (01453) 810 850  
**Mr Peter Crews** (*Treasurer*) 67 Oldminster Road (01453) 811 370

### ***Slimbridge***

**Mrs Pamela Storey** (*Secretary*) The White Lion. Bristol Road  
Email: pamelastorey@btinternet.com  
**Mr Pieter Koole** (*Treasurer*) April Cottage, Shepherds Patch  
Email: koole.pieter@googlemail.com

# Parish Diary - February 2022

## **(1<sup>st</sup>) SUNDAY 6<sup>th</sup> - 4 BEFORE LENT**

9.00am	1662 Prayer Book Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
9.30am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Sung Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Morning Prayer	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

## **(2<sup>nd</sup>) SUNDAY 13<sup>th</sup> - 3 BEFORE LENT**

9.30am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Sung Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Sung Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

## **(3<sup>rd</sup>) SUNDAY 20<sup>th</sup> - 2 BEFORE LENT**

9.30am	Sung Communion	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	All Age Service	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Informal Communion Service	St. Andrew's, Sharpness
2.00pm	Holy Baptism	St. Andrew's, Sharpness
2.30pm	Holy Baptism	St. John's, Slimbridge

## **(4<sup>th</sup>) SUNDAY 27<sup>th</sup> - SUNDAY BEFORE LENT**

10.00am	Benefice Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness
2.30pm	Holy Baptism	St. John's, Purton
<i>No Services at Slimbridge Today!</i>		

### **Coffee Morning & Produce Stall**

At Slimbridge Village Hall

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February - 10.30 to 12.00

In Aid of Breast Cancer Research

*All Welcome!*

**H**ave you decided to give up something for Lent, on what basis did you decide upon it? The chances are that you have picked one of the temptations that you come up against in daily life.

For me, for as many years as I can remember, it's been alcohol; although I have something of a confession – I often fail within the first week!

But even if you haven't given anything up this year, you can probably identify without too much trouble a couple of those things that so many of us wage a day-to-day battle with. For some it will be tobacco, or sugar, coffee or alcohol. Other habits and addictions might not have the draw of a glass of wine, or chocolate – but they can take hold of us all the same. You know the kind of things: lying in bed until late, watching television, using social media or online gaming for hours at a time. And then there are those addicted to power, money, or indulge in obsessive behaviours of one kind or another. Indeed, one per-

son's virtue can be another person's vice. For most of us, cleaning and housework are good things, although the desire to have a clean home can really take hold of some people, be-

coming nothing short of a malicious addiction – something, perhaps, to give up for Lent. Although there are many common vices, addictions, temptations and bad habits, in fact each of us has our own unique pattern – as personal to each of us as our thumbprint.

## Personally Speaking

*"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."  
(Matthew 4:1)*

Matthew's 'wilderness' recollection comes early in Jesus' ministry, forty days after he was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. After that, he spent forty days in the wilderness, fasting and praying, and now he is famished. Let's imagine the scene: "Hey, Jesus," says the voice of temptation. "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." Jesus is starving. It would make things so much easier if he could just have something to eat. Is it God talking? After all, God gave the

## Trinitate 5

people of Israel manna in the wilderness. But, no matter how much he might wish that this was the voice of God, giving him permission to use his divine power for himself, he knows that it doesn't have the ring of authenticity about it. Deep down he knows and, starving though he is, he decides to trust God to lead him out of this wilderness, just as he led Israel through the desert. "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Next, Jesus is taken to the highest point in the area – the pinnacle of the Temple. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down," says the voice. Here it's good to know that the devil knows the Hebrew Bible for he goes on to quote Psalm 91, where it says that God will command the angels to rescue any follower who risks so much as stubbing a toe. Surely God's Son wouldn't come to any harm? But again Jesus is resolute and, quoting from Deuteronomy, refuses to test God by being reckless: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

The devil has one more go, taking Jesus to an even higher point, from where he can see all the kingdoms of the world. "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Of course, he could do it, but that is not his purpose on earth.

The astonishing thing about today's Gospel story is that Jesus, in a state of real starvation after forty days of prayer and fasting – although always bear in mind that 40 is a special number in the Bible and appears whenever a period of time passes, is able to discern the voice of the devil, clear-headed enough to understand that these are empty offers that would lead him away from his true purpose, and resolute enough to steer clear of temptation.

Of themselves, you might think that there's nothing necessarily wrong with using social media, having the odd glass of wine or a bit of chocolate from time to time. Everything, as they say, in moderation. But it's when we start to do or consume things out of empty routine rather than making positive choices that we lose our clarity of purpose. Even so, just giving up chocolate for the next six weeks isn't enough, if you're not going to learn and grow from it. So whether or not you have decided to give up a vice, avoid temptation or drop a bad habit, if you are going to follow Christ's journey through Lent this year, you will do well to study and learn from his example.



## Moving Towards Retirement

As February gets underway I am reminded that some 26 years ago – 1996 – marked the beginning of a new ministry for me. Having served in the parishes of St. Katharine, Matson, St. Mary, Witcombe and St. George, Brockworth I was ready for a new challenge at Sharpness – which some folk thought to be somewhere in Scotland! A number of you will recall that Slimbridge would not join the Benefice until April 1997, although I was already aware that the link was in place when I came. My very first entry made in the January 1996 parish magazine read:

*“By the time you read this the rush and anticipation of Christmas will be over, the sales will, no doubt, be in full flow and we will be looking forward to the new year ahead. With the onset of a new year often comes the feeling of a new start, new expectation. That’s certainly true within the Boon family as we say our final farewell to Brockworth and begin a new life at Sharpness and Purton. The paint brushes have done their bit (hopefully) and we shall be in a position to physically move in during the week of the 15<sup>th</sup> January”.*

Well, that was then! As 2022 begins I can now report that I’ve informed Bishop Rachel (Bishop of Gloucester and Patron of the Benefice) that I intend to retire on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. This will inevitably mean that there will be a number of duties and responsibilities that I need to hand over between now and August. Not least the continuation of this magazine from September - it will depend on whether or not an editorial team can be found to run it. I can’t say loud enough how important it is for the life of our churches that people are prepared to stand up and be counted, offering their services and helping where they can to keep things running.

My leaving will trigger a number of pastoral changes, all of which are still in discussions at deanery level, but they should become clearer as we move forward to the summer months. I will keep you informed of developments, but for now - as the Dean of Gloucester said earlier in January as he announced his forthcoming appointment as the new Bishop of Salisbury – “It’s business as usual”. (See page 27)

## 2021 at a Glance

One of those annual duties I speak of over-page is to complete the required 'Mission Statistic Report' for our churches. This is something requested by the Diocese and used to compile the national figures for the Church of England. I have to say that this year is a little better than last year when I was giving the results of our 2020 – the year to forget - figures. However, we do still have a good way to go to get back onto our pre-pandemic results.

2021 began in lockdown with all Sunday services suspended until Easter Sunday. Thankfully from then on, we were able to hold services, although they remained under restrictions until July. At Sharpness we saw an average weekly Sunday attendance of 11 – this figure rose to 73 when all other services – funerals, baptisms etc - were added. Purton's Sunday figures were 14 rising to 19 when other services were included. At Slimbridge the average Sunday figure was 15 rising to 24 when taking other services into account. Of Baptisms Slimbridge held 2, Purton 6. There were no services at Sharpness. 16 funerals were conducted throughout the year – 2 at Purton, 3 at Sharpness and 11 at Slimbridge.

Once again the disruption experienced in the running of our churches had an impact on income, however, as you can see from the figures on page 11 Slimbridge and Sharpness didn't fair too badly. Not being able to hold fund-raising events at Purton resulted in a negative effect on their income and is something that hopefully can be put right this year. Having said that it should be noted that once again all three churches did not pay their full Parish Share (fee to the Diocese) for the year – we are not likely to fulfil it this year either.

I would like to thank all of you who have continued to support our churches during these difficult times. Please do consider ways of making regular donations – either envelopes or direct bank payments can be arranged – this is the only way we will be able to keep our doors open. Finally let us all pray for a much better 2022!

## Historical Snippets

*Taken from the Parish archives  
held at St Johns Church Slimbridge;*

*Years ago, each of the local parish churches submitted their news to a publication called 'The Parish Magazine'. Contributors came from quite a large area including: Lower Cam; Coaley; Eastington; Frocester; North Nibley; Stinchcome; and \*Slymbridge. It was printed by: O. E. Hill, Cam, Gloucestershire, for the cost of 2d (tuppence) per copy.*

*This month's historical snippet is taken from February 1948*

*\*Slymbridge is the old-fashioned spelling for Slimbridge.*

-0-

Rector; Rev. W. H. Thomas, M.A.

Church Wardens; Mr. J. Wherrett and Mr. W. P. Hill.

*The Rector earnestly desires to be informed in all cases of sickness and sorrow.*

My dear People, [February 1948]:

Lent:

Commences on Ash Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>.

Children's service 4pm

Evening service 7.30pm

Short service with a reading every Wednesday in church at 7.30pm.

When the end of the season of lent comes, let it not find you just where you were at its beginning. Aim at making some definite advancement during the season in your spiritual devotions and life. If you feel you want individual help or advice, I will most certainly give it, if you will only come and talk things over with me. I can help you much more if I know your own particular needs. Don't be afraid to come and see me. I am here to help you personally.

Confirmation:

The Lord Bishop of Tewkesbury will conduct the Conformation Service in the Parish Church on Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm.

Mothers Union:

Our best thanks are accorded the members of the Mother's Union who have repaired the Choir Cassocks and Surplices.



**Choir outing:**

Full account of the Choir Outing to the Bristol Pantomime, the Bell Ringers supper and the Sunday School party, have appeared in the local press and no doubt you will read them there. Our best thanks to all the organisers.

**Christmas collection:**

The Christmas collection for the Church's Children's Society (Waifs and strays) amounted to £6 15s 2d. The receipt is in the porch.

**Lebombo Missionary:**

Will members of the congregation who have Lebombo boxes please bring them to the church for opening on Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Summer fete:**

Mrs Thomas is hoping to start a working party for a stall at a Summer Fete and appeals for any kind of scrap material which may be used for making small articles for sale.

**Slymbridge School:**

The end of 1947 brought a great change to Slymbridge School. After 23 ½ years as Headmaster, Mr. G. H. Randall has retired and Mr. C. Wall, of Bristol, appointed to take his place. Our best wishes for health and happiness in retirement go with Mr Randall, and at the same time we extend a warm welcome to his successor.

*Your friend and Rector.*

*W. H. Thomas.*

*~O~O~O~O~O~O~O~O~O~*

**NB**

*Our archives containing these magazines can be viewed by mutual arrangement with the Vicar, Church Wardens or any member of the PCC but not to be taken away.*

*David Carrington*

*Vicar's Church Warden*

*Nigel Beeton writes: 70 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1952, the first TV detector vans rolled onto our streets, in an effort to increase the ratio of those paying their licence fee to those who forgot, or didn't bother. I haven't seen one for years, but I remember them when I was a boy, ordinary looking vans with an array of aerials on the roof, and Mum always kept the licence to hand, in case they knocked at the door (which, of course, they never did!):*

## *The TV Detector Van*

*Deep in the suburbs something stirs  
 Within a van, a motor purrs  
 And rattles, clunks, beeps and whirrs  
 As it performs a scan.  
 A worker sits alone, unseen  
 Peering at a flick'ring screen  
 He will know what it may mean –  
 The TV detector man!*

*Within a house, without a care  
 A couple sit and gaze and stare  
 At their TV – but what's out there?  
 A TV detector van!*

*For, in their hall, unopened, laid  
 Their licence bill, unseen, unpaid  
 No licence payment have they made!  
 Though that was not their plan.*

*They just forgot, so easy done!  
 The TV shows, they are such fun!  
 The doorbell rings, and their stands one  
 TV detector man!*

*No place to run, no place to hide!  
 The TV still is on inside!  
 They'd left themselves so open wide  
 To the TV detector van.*

*Nigel Beeton*

## From the Registers - December 2021

	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Gift Aid</u>	<u>Envelopes</u>	<u>Cash</u>
<b><u>Sharpness:</u></b>	<b>55</b>	<b>£148</b>	<b>£80</b>	<b>£121.65</b>
Donations: ( <i>General</i> )				£160.00
Bonus Ball:				£236.00
Magazines:				£ 10.00
Printing:				£ 29.62
PCC Fees:				£ 90.00
Fabric Fund:				(£ 20.00)
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)	
<b>For the Month:</b>	£875.27	£1,850.91	-£975.64	

2021 closes with St. Andrew's receiving **£1,414.74** more than it has spent

<b><u>Purton:</u></b>	<b>53</b>	<b>£60</b>	<b>£60</b>	<b>£127.80</b>
Donations: ( <i>Gift Aided</i> )				£ 50.00
Wall Boxes:				£ 58.90
Printing:				£ 29.63
PCC Fees:				£ 90.00
Fabric Fund:				(£1570.00)
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)	
<b>For the Month:</b>	£476.33	£1,049.54	-£573.41	

2021 closes with St. John's spending **£1,570.76** more than it has received

<b><u>Slimbridge:</u></b>	<b>59</b>	<b>£375</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
General Fundraising:				£1449.66
Charity: ( <i>plate collections</i> )				£285.40
Churchyard:				£250
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)	
<b>For the Month:</b>	£2,360.06	£1,752.55	+£607.51	

2021 close with St. John's receiving **£2,398.97** more than it has spent

Thanks to all who have supported our  
three churches throughout 2021

## **FUNERALS:**

*We commended to the Lord's keeping:*

RITA ROCK (*Slimbridge*)

4<sup>th</sup> Jan

PATRICK BIRMINGHAM (*Slimbridge*)

19<sup>th</sup> Jan

## **ASHES:**

*We laid to rest the remains of:*

DAVID ROBERTS (*Slimbridge*)

2<sup>nd</sup> Jan

## **LENT 2022**

Easter – our great moveable feast – falls on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April this year, which means that Lent comes a little later this year.

Thus, **Ash Wednesday** falls on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. To mark the day there will be a service of Communion with the Imposition of Ashes at St. Andrew's, Sharpness and St. John's, Slimbridge. Both services are at 10.30am.

**Lent Night Prayer** returns once again this year starting on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March at St. Andrew's, Sharpness, and runs until 13<sup>th</sup> April. This is a simple, reflective format, which has been used over many years lasting for about three quarters of an hour. Our theme this year is 'Superstar'. Using material produced by 'York Courses' we have an opportunity to listen to theologians as they consider questions relating to our theme. Taking part are Carmody Grey, Professor of Catholic Theology at Durham University. Steve Chalk, a leading Christian thinker and broadcaster. Catherine Fox, author, and senior lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University. Stephen Wigley, Chair of the Welsh Methodist Synod.

**Please do support our Lent services.**

# Close Attention to Text

Written by Malcolm Guite

## **Matthew 26:36-46**

*Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane and he said to them sit here while I go over there and pray. He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him and he began to be sorrowful and troubled then he said to them: "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, stay here and keep watch with me". Going a little farther he fell with his face to the ground and prayed: "My Father if it is possible may this cup be taken from me, yet not as I will but as you will". Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour", he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak". He went away a second time and prayed: "My Father if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it may your will be done". When he came back he again found them sleeping because their eyes were heavy so he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time saying the same thing then he returned to the disciples and said to them: "Are you still sleeping and resting. Look the hour has come and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise let us go. Here comes my betrayer".*

## **‘... Your will be done’ (v42)**

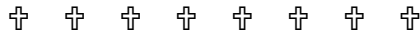
There is so much in this harrowing passage that speaks of Jesus’ humanity: the anguish of a man who is about to suffer horribly, but who still trembles as it were in the waiting room, before the torture starts.

There's the desperate need to have his friends with him for this last hour, to know that they are there to witness the struggle, though that intensely private agony has drawn him apart for a while. There's the sense of the unsustainable: the collapse of the physical frame even as the mental frame sustains an unbearable burden, as he ‘threw himself on the ground’. There is the desperate desire to escape, which only brings him

sooner to the intimate and inexorable moment of choice. Whose will is to be done? And perhaps barely in a whisper, unheard by the sleeping disciples, the resolution: 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done'.

And so the central petition of the Lord's Prayer is fulfilled: 'your will be done'. Had the disciples been alert, they would have seen what their daily prayer meant and what it cost, and the gift of Christ's self-sacrifice disclosed at the heart of it. But they were asleep, and so, quite often, are we. But sometimes, God willing, drowsily mumbling the Lord's Prayer in a drafty church, we will open our eyes and see what Christ has done for us.

Almighty God,  
whose son revealed in signs and miracles  
the wonder of your saving presence:  
renew your people with your heavenly grace,  
and in all our weakness  
sustain us by your mighty power;  
through Jesus Christ your son our Lord. Amen.



## Red Letter Days

**Cyril and Methodius - 14<sup>th</sup> February**

Cyril and Methodius are saints for anyone with good secular qualifications, who now suspects that God may be calling them to use those skills in His service.

Cyril and Methodius were brothers, born into a wealthy family in Thessalonica, in 826 and 815 respectively. Their upbringing destined them for lives of respect and influence.

Methodius, the elder brother, was appointed governor in a Slav province of the Roman Empire, although within a few years he became a monk

on Mount Olympus in Asia Minor. Meanwhile his younger brother, Cyril, went into academia in Constantinople, becoming a lecturer in philosophy and librarian.

But then, in 863, the ruler of Moravia, Rostislav, asked the emperor to send him some Christian teachers who could conduct services and teach his people in the Slavonic tongue. Emperor Michael III chose Cyril and Methodius.

It was a daunting task, for the Slavonic language had not yet been written down. But nonetheless, the brothers methodically set about their great work.

Cyril used his academic ability to create an alphabet for the Moravians, which eventually became the Cyrillic alphabet. The brothers then used this written language to teach Christianity in Slavonic, and to provide a way for the Moravians to worship in their own language. The brothers translated much of the liturgy and the gospels to this form.

During their time in Moravia, the brothers faced opposition from missionaries of the German Church, who believed that the official languages of the church should only be Hebrew, Greek or Latin. But the Pope pronounced that both brothers were orthodox, and made them both bishops, with Methodius ending up as Archbishop of Rastislav and Svatopluk.

Cyril and Methodius have been held in high honour, as men who pioneered the use of the vernacular language in church services. Cyril would have been astonished if he had known the eventual consequences of his hard work. For not only did the Slavonic language spread quickly, with him becoming known as the Father of Slavonic Literature, but Slavonic went on to become the language of the Liturgy in the 9<sup>th</sup> century Russian Church



## **Smile for a While**

*With Valentine's Day in mind...*

### **The Rules of Marriage -**

*real-life answers from a group of children:*

#### ***How do you decide who to marry?***

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming. - Alan, age 10



#### ***How can a stranger tell if two people are married?***

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.

- Derrick, age 8



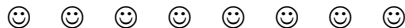
#### ***What do you think your Mum and Dad have in common?***

Both don't want any more kids. - Lori, age 8



#### ***What do most people do on a date?***

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, age 8



#### ***When is it okay to kiss someone?***

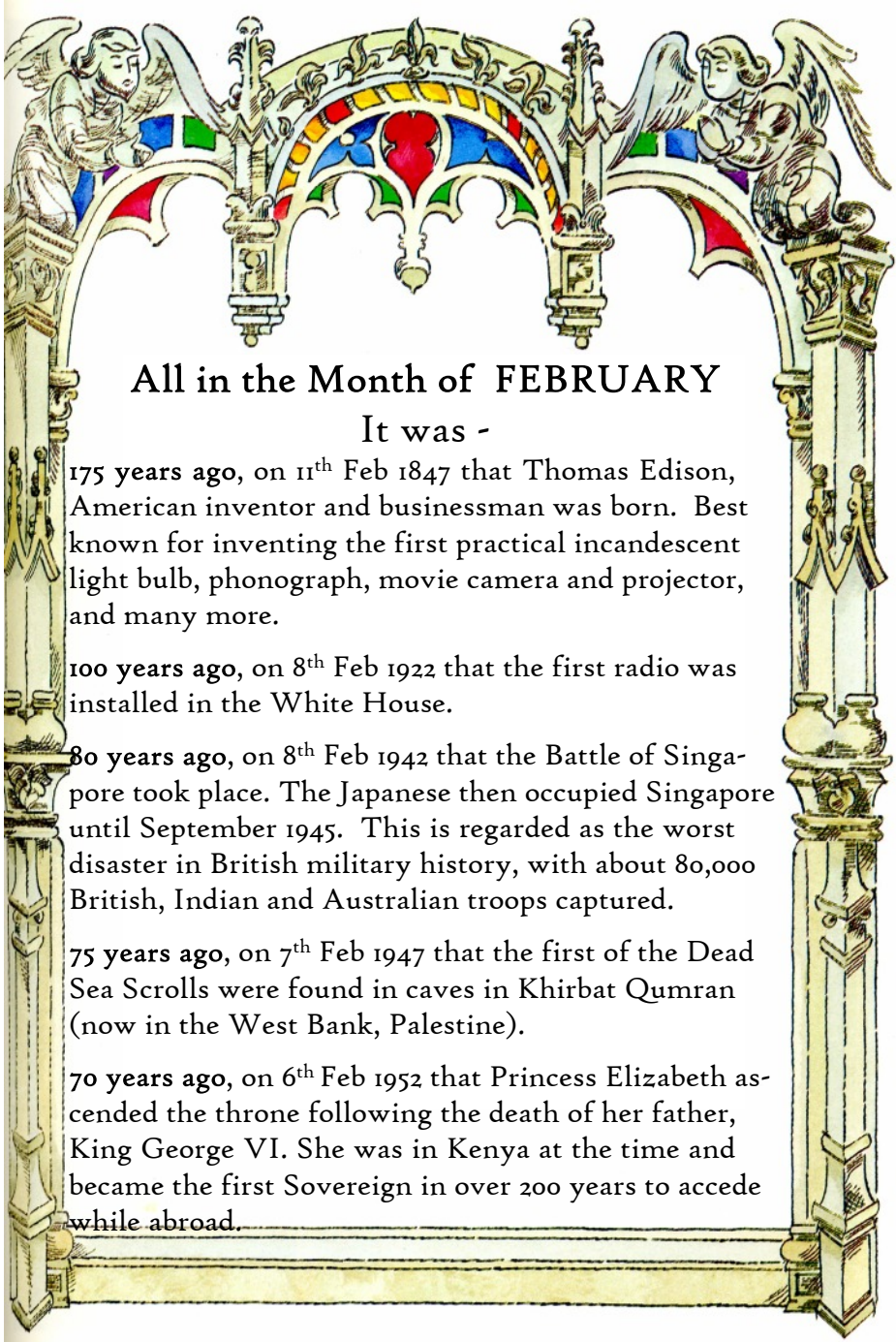
When they're rich. - Pam, age 7



#### ***How would you make a marriage work?***

Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a lorry. - Ricky, age 10





## All in the Month of FEBRUARY

It was -

175 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 1847 that Thomas Edison, American inventor and businessman was born. Best known for inventing the first practical incandescent light bulb, phonograph, movie camera and projector, and many more.

100 years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 1922 that the first radio was installed in the White House.

80 years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 1942 that the Battle of Singapore took place. The Japanese then occupied Singapore until September 1945. This is regarded as the worst disaster in British military history, with about 80,000 British, Indian and Australian troops captured.

75 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 1947 that the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves in Khirbat Qumran (now in the West Bank, Palestine).

70 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 1952 that Princess Elizabeth ascended the throne following the death of her father, King George VI. She was in Kenya at the time and became the first Sovereign in over 200 years to accede while abroad.

## The Story Behind. . . Be Thou My Vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,  
Naught be all else to me save that thou art;  
Be thou my best thought in the day and the night,  
Waking or sleeping thy presence my light.

The Royal Irish Academy Library in Dublin holds an 8th century Irish manuscript containing the pearl that is the ancient Celtic hymn - Be Thou My Vision. It needed an expert in the language, Mary Byrne, to translate it (in 1905) and a scholar of Old Irish to put it into verse. This was her contemporary Eleanor Henrietta Hull, a journalist, author of such books as *A History of Ireland*. The hymn first appeared in the Irish Church Hymnal, 1919.

The music for Be Thou My Vision is also very old; it is the Irish folk song 'Slane', whose author may have been the saint and martyr Dálán Forgaill (530-598 AD). This Irish Christian poet is said to have studied so hard that he became blind. He was a martyr, beheaded by pirates in Donegal, though tradition has it that God rejoined his head to his body. He is buried there in the monastery of Inniskeel.

Both the music and the original words of Be Thou My Vision were written during a period of uncertainty and warring clans in Ireland. The hymn vividly reflects this time of insecurity, particularly in the third verse, where it is asked of God: 'Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight. . .'

So strong is the music of *Slain* that at least two other hymns have been set to it: Lord of All Hopefulness and Lord of Creation. Slane Hill is about 10 miles from Tara in County Meath. It was on Slane Hill around 433AD that Saint Patrick defied a royal edict by lighting candles on Easter Eve.

High King Logaire began the pagan spring festival by lighting a fire on Tara Hill. Logaire was so impressed by Patrick's devotion that, despite his disobedience, he let him continue his missionary work. Not surprisingly, this popular and powerful Irish hymn is often sung on the 17th of March, Saint Patrick's Day.

With its sincere words and achingly beautiful melody, Be Thou My Vision has become a very popular hymn in the last 50 years or so, widely chosen as a school anthem and interestingly, although written as a Catholic hymn, it is now sung in Protestant churches throughout the world.

### **St John's Church Slimbridge. . .**

**are re-launching the Bonus Ball Sweepstake** to provide a regular income towards the upkeep of our beautiful and ancient parish church at Slimbridge as well as giving you the opportunity every week to win. For a weekly stake of £1 payable in advance quarterly or annually (or monthly if you prefer) you will have your own number between 1 and 59.

Each Saturday, the person with the number corresponding to the National Lottery Lotto bonus ball will win half of the total weekly stake with the other half going to the church. This is equivalent to £29.50 when all 59 numbers are in play. This means the church will benefit by up to £1534 each year.

To join, please email, text or phone the coordinator, Ros Davies, with your name, the first line of your address and your first three choices of bonus ball number. Numbers will be allocated on a 'first-come, first-served' basis so don't delay in contacting Ros. The first draw will be on Saturday 2 April to give time for all 59 numbers to be allocated and for everyone to have paid their first instalment.

Contact details:

**Slimbridge.bonus@btinternet.com or 07481 018988**

## Out of the Silence . . .

*The monthly journal of the journey of a Priest, Contemplative and Community Chaplain.*

At last! At last there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel! Light in the mornings; light at the end of the tunnel that is winter; perhaps (though we've said this before) light at the end of the two year tunnel that has been and is COVID. But . . . the light of early morning sometimes only reveals cloud or rain or frost and, round here MUD! And the light of a reduction in COVID restrictions may shine only to show that all those silver linings we thought it might bring have not come to pass – except that's not true and recent journal entries compared to those of early 2020 serve to bring light to the heart in many things still going on most wonderfully in our communities.

### Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

A gentle rosy glow on the horizon heralds another beautiful spring day. What a gift this weather has been for us all at the beginning of this 'lock-down' experience – and yesterday too – what a lovely day! One feels almost guilty for saying so in such dark and frightening times yet there was more good news than bad this morning. The sunshine, half a million people across the country volunteering to support the NHS, lots of distant cheerful chat with folk we hardly know as they pass; people enjoying a local walk, at last responding properly and staying at home or getting their one bit of outdoor exercise for perhaps the first time on a regular basis and staying separate. And . . . thanks to Stilman - our church website coming together really well – it's going to be a real boon and point of contact with churches closed. I'm hearing of so many groups and people locally getting organised to look after the elderly, the housebound, their neighbours . . . so, so much good news . . . a truly silver lining and hopefully when all this is over these new attitudes will continue.

### January 13<sup>th</sup> 2022

It's not good to lose a parishioner. And I don't mean that someone I've been travelling alongside on the long and winding road to death has finally found peace – I mean lost, mislaid, can't find!!

The vast majority of those with whom I have contact in my Community Chaplaincy role are not church goers, may not even claim any faith

or belief but, either by visiting or phoning, or just being there for them to call on seems to be my role, Lord. But in your leading (and it's sometimes VERY obvious – go and see . . . phone . . . walk this way and you may meet . . . !) and with your guidance I've never before totally lost someone!

For a person who prefers not to be visited in their home (and this has increased since COVID) the phone is often the only way and you, Lord, have prompted me numerous times since well before Christmas – I've left messages but . . . all that was left was prayer.

“Prayer . . . is a condition of mind, an attitude of heart, which God recognises as prayer whether it manifests itself in quiet thinking, in sighing, or in audible words.”

Ole Hallesby

I was worried I hadn't prayed enough but this 'thought for the day' and your very clear answer yesterday have reassured me.

I don't know why I suddenly went 'off-piste' and turned to walk a 'road less travelled' (Robert Frost) but it was definitely an answer to prayer – an answer to two prayers really – my worry about my 'lost sheep' and a growing disappointment I was feeling in, what I perceived, as the lessening in those positive attitudes that grew up in the lock down days of the early pandemic.

I turned down an unexpected route and ahead of me saw the elderly and infirm parent of my mislaid person – rarely seen out and about and only known slightly by me, I approached with caution but was greeted with relief and the information I needed – my lost sheep was in hospital and had been since being whisked off in an ambulance well before Christmas.

This of course led me to another worry – worry for the well-being of this frail and worried parent now living alone in a large house with no-one to care for them. I'm not aware that I prayed but if what I read this morning is true, and I think it is Lord, you accept my 'worried thoughts', my sighs, as prayer and had been there before me.

Last evening I received a phone call and then an e mail from the next door neighbour who has taken on the very necessary caring role, visits every day, has organised for hot meals to be delivered and keeps in contact with the hospital – something many very elderly people find difficult – WHAT A STAR! and I told him so.

The spirit of neighbourliness born of COVID is alive and well and living in our communities!

Thank you Lord.

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022

The evenings are noticeably lengthening but it has to be a very clear sky to see promise of the dawn this early. These misty, frosty mornings though are lit by a great full, if equally misty, moon and you work away at my inner darkness and mistiness bringing me into your light and your promise of light, to a place of solace.

“Why would God promise a refuge unless he knew we would need a place to hide in once in a while?”

Neva Coyle

“The Lord is good, a refuge in time of trouble . . . “

Nahum 1

You are at work in me directly but your work in your world is equally apparent and through those who would not perhaps claim to be your servants but who are fulfilling your caring role for others. The wonderful neighbour of my ‘lost sheep’ (now found and phoned in hospital) has been in touch and the silver lining of his care looks likely to spread. The chef at a local hostelry has been providing and delivering a hot meal every day to the lone Dad and has suggested that at some point this might become a service that could be offered to other housebound or needy people – another potential silver lining for the future. I should pray and then leave it with you, loving Father. As one of my favourite quotations from Julian of Norwich says,

“This is our Lord’s will: that our prayer and our trust should be equally generous.”

*More next month*

*With love and many blessings*

*Mary Tucker*



# Bible Bite

## A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Luke chapter 15 verses 11-32

Jesus spent his time teaching everyone who would listen, whatever they were. The Pharisees and Law teachers watched Jesus.



# Continuing Rhyming History of Britain

## House of Hanover

### 1714 - 1901

The reigns of Georges First and Second  
Are very generally reckoned  
The overture to what would be  
The Iron Age of Industry.

George II  
1727-60

But commerce would bring war again  
Halfway through George the Second's reign,

Louis XV  
1715-74

The French, now ruled by Louis Quinze,  
Were gaining rather useful lands  
In Canada, and India too,  
So action was long overdue;  
And Spain maintained a constant raid  
Upon our buoyant slaving trade.

But France was also threatening  
The safety of the British king,  
For Louis was a staunch defender  
Of 'James the Third', the Old pretender.

Feb 1744

Invasion forces at Dunkirk  
Were blown back, so that didn't work.

Charles Stewart  
1720-88

And then his heir, The Bonny Prince,  
The stuff of legend ever since,  
Collected hordes of Highland men,

Battle of  
Culloden Moor  
16 Apr 1746

Whose massacre at Culloden  
Preceded the extermination  
Of the remaining Gaelic nation.

*James Muirden*



## THE WAY I SEE IT!

*Dr Anna Rowlands considers the importance of paying attention.*

Something worrying has happened to our ability to pay attention. As we scroll our phones and watch TV, juggle zoom calls and childcare, most of us know this. We are attention saturated and attention poor. This theme of attention – it's loss and the need to reclaim it - is the subject of a recent book by Julia Bell. Her stark claim is that we live in an attention economy where our scrolling and clicking produces constant data - which sells. Our broken attention IS a lucrative product.

This isn't a new worry, we've been worrying about attention since at least the industrial revolution. But I found myself thinking again about attention this week during a phone call to a colleague in Ukraine. Fr Vitaly is a Catholic priest who works full time with the street homeless, and internally displaced. I was surprised that whilst deeply worried about the situation, he was calm. The source of his calm was the sense that finally the situation had captured the attention of the world. After 8 years of feeling deeply isolated, he felt some small measure of hope. 'Real attention brings hope', he told me, because careful attention to what's really going on, on both sides, is the only hope, for both sides, of de-escalation'. 'We need careful attention to what is happening to the architecture of our world and to what we believe our deepest human values to be' he said.

The philosopher and mystic Simone Weil argued that deep attention was the greatest gift we can give to another person, and incredibly rare, because in truth really paying attention is, if we are honest, incredibly difficult. When true attention is paid to us it appears like a miracle, it is transformative. The deep attention of a teacher changes a pupils life, careful attention to a text from the past speaks truth to us, the deep attention of someone when we are in trauma can bring us back to life. Weil believed that it was through prayer, where we open ourselves to a God who pays pure attention to us,

that we learn how to return that attention to the world; how we learn what deserves our attention and what does not.

Bell notes in her book that in English we talk about 'paying' attention, in Spanish we 'donate' or loan attention. I like the Spanish version – we loan our attention, onwards and onwards, so that it multiplies. That is what Weil believed, and what Fr Vitaly is hoping for

# SLIMBRIDGE

## *Local History*

### SOCIETY

Slimbridge Local History Society will be holding its next meeting on 16 February in the Great Hall at Berkeley Castle. The speaker will be Professor Ronald Hutton and the topic is 'The English Civil War'.

Prof. Hutton is widely considered to be the UK's foremost expert on this subject, and you are promised an engaging and informative talk from this charismatic speaker. The meeting is open to members and guests. Entry from the castle car park via the security gate from 6.30pm. Meeting starts at 7.30pm.

Full details of this visit and all of this year's programme are on our website [www.slimbridgelhs.com](http://www.slimbridgelhs.com) where you can also find 2022 membership application forms. The membership fee remains at £10 for the year. An absolute bargain, come and join us.

## New Bishop of Salisbury named. . .

No.10 Downing Street has announced that Her Majesty the Queen has approved the nomination of the Very Reverend Stephen Lake, Dean of Gloucester, for election as the next Bishop of Salisbury.

Stephen has been Dean of Gloucester for almost eleven years and will begin his new ministry in April, with his last Sunday preaching at Gloucester Cathedral on Sunday 3 April. In responding to his appointment Dean Stephen, said:

“Somewhat to my surprise, but with confidence in God, I am being called to be the next Bishop of Salisbury. The past eleven years in Gloucester have been an unqualified joy with the Cathedral, the city and the diocese all growing in confidence and reach. We shall leave Gloucester in April, and it will always be a special place in our hearts.

A cathedral is more than just a building and is only ever as strong as its community. I have been extremely fortunate to lead an effective team of staff and volunteers while working alongside some truly extraordinary partners over the last decade. I am immensely proud of the journey we have shared – it has been a privilege to be part of it. Please continue to support Your Cathedral.”



***The Right Reverend Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester said:***

“The announcement of Dean Stephen’s appointment as the next Bishop of Salisbury is wonderful news, both for the Diocese of Salisbury and for the wider Church, yet he will be sorely missed in the Diocese of Gloucester. Under Stephen’s leadership, the Cathedral has seen significant transformation, not only regarding the Cathedral building and its surrounds through the delivery of the Project Pilgrim initiative, but also in the growth of the Cathedral as a place of welcome to all. For more than a decade, not least during a time of pandemic, Stephen has ensured that the Cathedral has continued to develop as a Beacon of Hope, pointing to the love of God. He leaves the Cathedral in a good place with an able team of staff and volunteers.



## **BONUS BALL SWEEPSTAKE**

### **January WINNERS**

**Val Hogan 42**

**Heather Milliner 27**

**Maureen McIntyre 04**

**Linzi Moulder 28**

**Elaine Moulder 46**

**YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT  
TO WIN IT!**

*Thousands of Pounds Won  
Thousands of Pounds Raised for Sharpness Church*

*GREAT NEWS FOR SLIMBRIDGE!  
See page 19*

**THANK YOU!**



## **LETTERS TO UNCLE EUSTACE**

*On how to survive a residential conference*

The Rectory  
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I am glad you enjoyed your conference, but please do not be deluded into thinking that conferences are there to teach you anything. Conferences exist to provide another entry on your CV, to give you time off while flattering yourself that you are working, and to make the person leading it feel that their life is not wholly pointless.

As it happened, I was also invited to the same one, the one entitled 'Learning how to say no.' But I refused to attend, thereby proving that I didn't need it anyway.

There are certain useful points you need to learn for conferences. First, about half the attendees will have been together only the previous week attending another conference in another part of the country. They will be eager, enthusiastic, and overflowing with management platitudes. Avoid them at all costs. Should one of them say to you: 'expect the unexpected' you have my permission to strangle them. They won't have expected that!

Secondly, when you are all asked to go through that ghastly process of introducing yourselves to everyone else, make it up. I think the last time I was obliged to do this, I became a butcher specialising in exporting offal to Saudi Arabia. All your clerical colleagues will then panic that they have turned up for the wrong course and the leader will make sure that you are not asked another single question throughout the event. Both outcomes are satisfying.

Thirdly, do realise that when you are asked to divide into small discussion groups, it means that the conference leader has run out of ideas about what to do next. Do not, at all costs, volunteer to be chairman. It only means that when you have to report back – and if the leaders use the word 'plenary', then by all means contemplate strangling them also - you will be involved in sticking sheets of paper on to walls, which will then rip off the wallpaper when you try to remove them.

You will also have the embarrassment of finding that every felt tip pen you try to use will be empty, and what you thought were the conclusions your group had arrived at will be volubly contradicted by all the other members.

No, if you are ever obliged to attend another course, take a good book, enough claret to cover every evening away, and develop a debilitating illness that, while enabling you to attend every meal, obliges you to retreat to your room for the rest of the day. You will leave having learned as much on whatever the topic was as your colleagues, but you will return refreshed and eager to make the next booking.

Your loving uncle,

# PUZZLE PAGE

THE SPACES ARE MISSING FROM THE GRID  
ENTER THE WORDS BELOW TO FIND THEM

		E										
		P										
		I										
		S										
		T								B		
		O								A		
S	A	L	V	A	T	I	O	N	A	R	M	Y
		I								B		
		C								A		
										R		
										I		
										A		
										N		

EVERYDAY  
CANE  
TACKLE  
RODIN  
BEG  
ASIA  
BRONZE  
TENET  
STRENGTH

VOICE  
ARC  
ERASE  
RAHAB  
CAIN  
HONEY  
CREDIT  
COCK  
KENANIAH

HOPE  
DIRE  
GUIDE  
ADMONISH  
LEAVE  
SNEEZE  
MENE  
GUYS  
TAKEN



## **Sue Gibson School of Gardening**

**Shepherd's Patch, Slimbridge**

### **3-Term Courses in:**

- **Garden Design (beginners)**
- **Garden Design & Management (improvers)**

### **Saturday Workshops on:**

- **Pruning Shrubs & Roses (spring)**
- **Pruning Shrubs, Roses & Perennials (summer)**
- **Growing & Training Fruit in Small Spaces (summer)**

**Call Sue Gibson**

**on 01453 890820**

**[www.iteachgardening.co.uk](http://www.iteachgardening.co.uk)**

# *Backpage Picture*



A very special creature is arriving in Gloucester Cathedral on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> February - Luma, an eight-metre-long inflatable snail who loves an audience. A large robot, Luma champions both nature and technology, and reimagines what robots can be for.

Luma is a free event and there is no need to pre-book tickets in advance. Cathedral authorities recommend coming at dusk or after dark to see her at her best. She is part of 'Gloucester's Bright Nights Festival.

'De Trinitate is published monthly By Revd. Bill Boon at Sharpness Vicarage  
A an electronic version of this magazine is available in pdf - contact Bill Boon for details.