

Church Magazine



FREE

Steyning and Ashurst

JUNE 2021

Steyning Parish Church,

1 Vicarage Lane, Steyning BN44 3YL

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CHURCH SERVICES

Both of our churches will continue to be open seven days a week, and we continue with a reduced pattern of services as follows:

St Andrew's & St Cuthman's

9:30am Every Sunday Parish Eucharist

St James's

10:30am Second Sunday Family Service

Fourth Sunday 1662 Holy Communion

Wednesdays at St Andrew's & St Cuthman's

11:30am Midweek Eucharist

St Andrew's and St Cuthman's will be closed on some days during the week of 21 June as further rewiring takes place, in particular the replacement of the cables that run the electricity supply to the church tower.

Fr Mark, Vicar of Steyning and Rector of Ashurst

Parish Office Address:

Penfold Hall, Church Street,

Steyning BN44 3YB

Tel: 813276

office@steyningparishchurch.org

www.steyningparishchurch.org

THE OFFICE REMAINS CLOSED BUT IS STAFFED REMOTELY

Post is being picked up and the telephone diverted to the

Parish Administrator: Pat McMullan.

PASTORAL LETTER

Dear Friends,

This magazine is published as the colour of liturgical furnishings changes from white, which has been worn for the most of the Sundays in Easter-tide, to green. The priest wears gold robes for big festivals, such as Easter Day, Ascension Day and Trinity Sunday. Red, symbolic of the flames of Holy Spirit, was worn for Pentecost (the colour also commemorates the blood of martyrs). Nowadays we wear gold again for Trinity Sunday, which falls at the end of May this year. Then we return to the green – and 'Ordinary Time' – on Sunday, 6 June.



If you look up why the church had decided to use green for the Sundays after Trinity you will find all sorts of explanations. The real reason is more prosaic, however. In medieval times the best vestments were saved for the big seasons and days, and the faded, older vestments were used on ordinary days and lesser Sundays. In those days of natural dyes, these had usually faded to shades of yellow or green – a colour known in Latin as *viridis* – by the time they were relegated to such use. In later medieval times, colours were rationalised to be more consistent as different uses had grown up in different places, but new green vestments were not manufactured until modern times.

It was only more recently that a justification was sought for the use of green as the background colour for most of the liturgical year. Suggestions to be found online describe green as a colour symbolic of life, and hope. The idea no doubt stems from *vireo*, the root word for *viridis* as to 'grow' or to 'sprout' and its association with the colours of nature; from them is derived our English word, 'verdant'. Given our increasing and justified concern for the abuse and destruction by humankind of our planet, this association has a new importance. If we look to green as the natural colour of our surroundings, another reason it might have seemed appropriate for the ordinary time of year as it became established in the past, it can provide a helpful reminder of how easy it is to take natural things for granted. And let us not forget how the reuse of old vestments in the past was a precursor of the recycling movement, a reminder of how careful our forebears were not to throw away anything that was once seen as precious. See the article on pages 15-16.

Fr Mark

FROM THE EDITOR:

I have found myself looking often at the front cover picture for this month. It is taken from Pinterest, but I find it very peaceful and so full of hope, that Jesus is daily inviting us to follow Him. "Come and walk with me" could be a speech bubble. What do you think he is saying? Was He telling Peter that his wife would be fine, she would know and understand? There are so many ideas.

Thank you again for all that you so kindly send in to me. Here is a reminder of where to send your thoughts or pictures for this monthly magazine:

steyningchurchmag@gmail.com

PAUSE AND PRAY

Compassionate God, as you know each star you have created, so you know the secrets of every heart;

In your loving mercy bring to your table all who are fearful and broken, all who are wounded and needy, that our hungers may be satisfied in the city of your peace

O God, our sovereign and shepherd,
Who brought again your Son Jesus Christ
from the valley of death,

Comfort us with your protecting presence
and your angels of goodness and love, that
we also may come home and dwell with
him in your house for ever.

Almighty God, who inspired your apostle Saint Peter to confess Jesus as Christ and Son of the living God:

Build up your church upon this rock, that in unity and peace it may proclaim one truth and follow one Lord, your Son our Saviour Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever.

SUNDAY BULLETIN

The weekly Sunday bulletin sent from the Parish Office gives all the information about what is happening with services, local support etc, and how to access these. There is also the list of those needing our prayers. If you would like to receive the bulletin please contact:

office@steyningparishchurch.org or ring 01903 813276

or to add any new prayer requests please contact:

prayers@steyningparishchurch.org or ring 01903 813276

PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

Dorothy Mabel ('Dorma') Johnstone	Died 29 March 2021	Funeral 22 April 2021
Denise Jill Bedford	Died 5 April 2021	Funeral 21 April 2021

Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon them.
Our love and prayers for all their families during this time.

INTERMENT OF ASHES

Karen McCarthy	Died 17 Oct 2020	Interred 10 Apr 2021
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MARRIAGE REGISTRATION CHANGES

With effect from May 2021 the government has brought into effect a series of changes to the marriage registration process, which means that churches and other places of worship will no longer have the responsibility of completing marriage registers. Instead, couples will sign a 'marriage document' which will be forwarded to the civil registration service. Here is an explanation of the changes:

- The names of mothers as well as fathers will be recorded upon registration, and will therefore now appear on a reformatted marriage certificate for all marriages taking place on 5 May 2021 or later. There is flexibility to include more than one parent (that is, step-parents, adoptive parents, natural parents).
- The registration process is to be computerised. The old registers will be done away with, except as historic documents. Local churches will no longer have the authority to issue copy marriage certificates, even for historic marriages.
- Marriage certificates will not be available on the day of the marriage. Typically, a couple will need to wait up to fourteen days before a certificate can be issued. The fee will be payable to the civil registrar rather than to the church. The date of marriage and therefore of anniversary will not change, however. This will still be the day of the wedding service.
- A local register of marriage services must still be kept by churches. This record will carry similar information as in the old green registers as well as the names and occupations of both sets of parents, and the dates of birth of bride and groom instead of their ages. It will no longer be signed by the couple or witnesses, but only by the officiant.

The above changes have historical significance in that they will remove the historic role of Church of England clergy as registrars of marriage – exercised since 1538, under the reign of Henry VIII, one that therefore predates the civil registration process by some three centuries. These changes are separate from a continuing consultation on marriage law, begun in 2020 by the Law Commission for England and Wales, which could see more far-reaching changes to marriage law in due course, such as

- *the replacement of the current 'buildings-based' system with one that regulates officiants instead;*
- *permitting a wider range of officiants to conduct legally binding weddings, such as representatives of non-religious organisations (such as Humanists) and/or independent celebrants; and*
- *allowing couples and institutions to choose whether weddings take place outdoors, for example on beaches, in parks, in private gardens and in a wider variety of buildings.*

(For more information, see <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings>)

PRAYER DIARY FOR JUNE

Sunday 30 May Trinity Sunday

Thursday 3 June Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion (Corpus Christi)

The Eucharist united us to Christ in faith and loyalty - Liz Hoare

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you that in this wonderful sacrament you have given us the memorial of your passion:

Grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries of your body and blood

That we may know within ourselves and show forth in our lives

The fruits of your redemption;

For you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 6 June The First Sunday after Trinity

Friday 11 June Barnabas the Apostle

Bountiful God, giver of all gifts, who poured your Spirit upon your servant Barnabas and gave him grace to encourage others:

Help us, by his example, to be generous in our judgements and unselfish in our service;

Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 13 June The Second Sunday after Trinity

Wednesday 16 June Richard Bishop of Chichester 1253

Most merciful redeemer, who gave to your bishop Richard a love of learning, a zeal for souls and a devotion to the poor:

Grant that, encouraged by his example, we may know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day.

Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit are alive and reign, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 20 June The Third Sunday after Trinity

Thursday 24 June Birth of John the Baptist

Almighty God, by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way for your Son our Saviour, by the preaching of repentance;

Lead us to repent according to his preaching and, after his example, constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice, and patiently to suffer for the truth's sake;

Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 27 June The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Tuesday 29 June Peter and Paul, Apostles

Almighty God, whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul glorified you in their death as in their life: grant that your Church, inspired by their teaching and example, and made one by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever,

DENISE JILL BEDFORD 1944 - 2021



Denise Jill Bedford 12th August 1944 to 5th April 2021

Denise was born at 66 The Bishopric, Horsham at 1pm on 12 August 1944, Denise Jill Moore. Denise spent her childhood and formative years in and around Horsham. She grew up with just her Mother, Margaret, and brother, Richard, as her father Denis was lost at sea in the Bay of Biscay flying a RAF Liberator on an anti-submarine patrol on 17th April 1944 – they never met. Denise lived at three different houses in Horsham while growing up, firstly at 66 The Bishopric with her Grandparents, Nan and Pop, with the joys of the outside toilet!

When she was about 5 they moved to 57 Eversfield Road and then

on to 7 Saxon Crescent. She went to school at Clarence Road and then on to Chesworth Secondary Modern. At the age of 16 she left school to complete a three-year hairdressing apprenticeship at Locketts in Horsham. It was during this time that she met a couple from South Africa who sparked her desire for travel. She started a job in Knightsbridge, London at Richard Conway with the aim of saving enough money to travel to South Africa. Two years later, in 1965, she was aboard a passenger ship on a six-week voyage steaming to South Africa. Denise spent a year in South Africa working and travelling – a life changing and life making experience.

On returning to Horsham, she met George Bedford. George was an Artificer in the Royal Navy and had just been selected for a Commission and flying training for the Fleet Air Arm. They were married on 8 June 1967 at the Forest Church, Horsham - St John the Evangelist. They moved immediately to York where George completed his fixed wing flying training and then on to RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall for his helicopter training. This was the start of 10 years of travel with the Royal Navy as Denise and George travelled with the Fleet Air Arm, including: Singapore, Lossiemouth Scotland, Lee-on-Solent, Helston and Stithians in Cornwall. During this time Denise had, and raised her family – Melony was born in Truro, Cornwall in 1969 and Laurence in Horsham in 1971.



In 1977 Denise moved from Cornwall, back to Partridge Green, Sussex when George left the Navy and took a job as a pilot with Bristow Helicopters. This didn't stop Denise's travel as she spent time in Eket, Nigeria while George was flying there offshore. During her time in Partridge Green, she took a job as a Carer at a Rest Home for the Elderly. This was a small family run business at a house called Lloyts Croft. In 1986 Denise and her family moved to Lloyts Croft to take over the business and ran it for the next 8 years. During her time there she did a lot of work with 'Action Research for the Crippled Child' (as it was called then) running numerous fund-raising events.

Sadly in 1993 Denise and George separated. Denise left Partridge Green and moved to Steyning, firstly to Middle House, Three Tuns and then on to 4 Tanyard Lane Cottages. She spent 28 years in Steyning, a town that she loved for the people, friendship and happiness. Denise continued her work as a Carer working for Country Cousins, Southdown and Age UK and kept up her passion for travel visiting places such as Kenya, India, South Africa, Iceland, Norway to name just a few. She remained heavily involved in fund-raising, supporting groups such as 'Help for Heroes' and the RNLI. A special place for her was always St Andrew's and St Cuthman's Church, and the church community where she served as Churchwarden. This was a very rewarding time for her and something she always cherished.

In 2019 Denise was diagnosed with Stage 4 Ovarian cancer. This was the start of her courageous battle which she sadly lost on the 5 April. She was unbelievably strong and fought so hard, and she never stopped loving and caring for her family, friends and loved ones. Always happy and so very kind – always here with us and never forgotten.

Fly and sing with Angels.

Melony and Laurence Bedford

JESUS CALLS THE DISCIPLES



I make no apology for including this picture for a third time in this magazine, because I find it very evocative as to how I think of the scene 2000+ years ago. I have never been to the Holy Land, but I do know that the Sea of Galilee is not always calm and peaceful as shown here. I suspect however, that it was like that when Jesus picked out the two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew just about to cast their net again to make a catch. "Come with me - follow me". A little further along the beach there was another boat with two more brothers, James and John. I think these four

fishermen must have known each other and chatted each day as they worked. There must have been a good friendship and an encouragement for each other to drop everything and follow this charismatic man.

June 29 is the day marked in the Church of England when we remember St Peter. This is indeed the same person - Simon Peter - whom Jesus called from his fishing for fish and to follow him.

Simon Peter is known as Peter through most of the Bible. Think for a moment - What do you know about Peter?

My guess is that as we are not that far away from Easter you will have the picture in your mind of a cock crowing and a man saying fervently - I do not know Jesus. Actually Peter is mentioned quite a few times in the accounts of Jesus' mission here on earth, and then after His Resurrection and Ascension Peter became one of the most influential Christian leaders of the First Century,

He became a very gifted teacher and bold preacher and leader. In the gospels, he is portrayed as impetuous, always speaking his mind and acting on impulse. In the Book of Acts, Peter's decisiveness transformed him into someone the early Christians constantly relied on and turned to.

The name Peter literally means "The Rock" and Jesus said to him that he would "be the rock on which I will build my church". (John 1:42) Because Peter is regarded as the foundation of the Christian church many priests are ordained at Petertide, and it is a time of great celebration.

I think Peter was friendly with many of the disciples, not just because they had fishing in common. Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John and two others were fishing when Jesus appeared to them a second time after the resurrection, and according to the Gospel of John, Peter leapt out of the boat and swam to the shore to be with Him. Peter loved his Lord.

Families and friendships were important and deep during the life of our Lord and were seen as something that made people distinctly human. Today we can use the term "my friend" very loosely and often we can see that so called friends are used for personal gain or achieving a certain end - even relieving boredom. Our work colleagues are called our friends just because we spend time with them, but all this falls short of the ideals of friendship. True friendship involves trust, loyalty, commitment and an intimacy of sharing our true thoughts and feelings. Friendships have to be worked at and can often grow out of more simple relationships because two people enjoy being with each other and find they have values in common. True friendships can be a wonderful, but rare thing, but a friend is one of God's gifts to us humans.

God tells us that He desires friendship with us. To develop that friendship we must talk freely with Him, and trust Him with all our secrets, our plans and our innermost thoughts and feelings.

In Galatians 6 verse 2 Paul tells us that friends carry each other's burdens, and so it is a great privilege that friends are remembered, praised and honoured and their deaths are precious. For they have journeyed with us sharing our losses and gains, but the greatest sharing is in the love and knowledge of God.

Right at the heart of God is friendship. True friendship and love of another is the high point of being human, and therefore where care, concern, commitment, compassion, understanding and truth exist, there will God be too.

SAINT OF THE MONTH

THOMAS KEN, BISHOP OF BATH & WELLS (1637-1711)

Thomas Ken was born in 1637 at Little Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. He was educated at Winchester College and Oxford gaining a fellowship at New College in 1657. Ken was ordained priest in 1662 and held livings in Essex, the Isle of Wight and Hampshire. He then became a prebendary of Winchester Cathedral and chaplain to the Bishop whilst also acting as parish priest of a poor parish in the City. It was here where he wrote two of his most well-known hymns "Awake my soul and with the sun" and "All praise to thee my God this night".



In 1679 Ken was appointed chaplain to the Princess Mary who was married to William of Orange. However, he incurred the displeasure of William by publicly rebuking him for the treatment of his wife and, after only 12 months, he was sent back to England. Ken was then appointed as a personal chaplain to Charles II.

In 1683 Ken was living in Winchester and, when the Royal Court visited the City, Ken's house was selected as the lodging of Nell Gwynne, the King's mistress. Ken objected and insisted she live elsewhere. The next year the see of Bath & Wells became vacant and Ken was appointed Bishop. His consecration took place at Lambeth in January 1685 and one of his first duties was to attend the death bed of Charles and give him the last rites.

When James II ascended the throne he issued a pair of proclamations known as the Declaration of Indulgence which suspended the religious penal laws and granted toleration to various Christian denominations, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. Bishop Ken, along with six other bishops, refused to publish the Declaration and all seven were imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1688. The bishops were put on trial and acquitted.

Soon after, the Glorious Revolution happened but Ken considered he was still bound by his Oath of Allegiance to James II and refused to take the Oath to William of Orange. He was suspended from his bishopric and went into retirement. When his successor as bishop died in 1703 Queen Anne pressed him to resume office as Bishop but he refused.

On his death-bed he wrote "I am dying in the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith professed by the whole Church before the disunion of East and West and, more particularly, in the communion of the Church of England as it stands distinguished from both Papal and Protestant innovation and adheres to the Doctrine of the Cross." He is commemorated in the Church's calendar on 8th June, the day he was incarcerated in the Tower. Thomas Ken will be remembered not only because of his hymn writing but also because of his unstained purity and faithfulness to conscience.

TOLLING THE BELLS

Geoff
Goodman



Bells are associated with times both of celebration and sorrow; Steyning bells would have rung out many times over the centuries to mark significant national events. The passing of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh was no different except of course it took place during Covid restrictions.

The first job that needed to be done was to lower the flag, on top of the tower, to half mast. This task was carried out by Geoff Goodman (one of our ringers) in the early afternoon of Friday 9 April. Protocol dictates that if possible the Union Flag should be flown and so the St George's flag was replaced first thing on the morning of Saturday 10 April.

In addition an announcement had been made that there were to be forty one gun salutes across the globe at twelve noon the same day, and in addition a request was made that the bells at cathedrals and churches were tolled if possible. In normal times the complete set of bells would be rung half-muffled, again this couldn't take place. Half-muffling means that a leather pad is strapped on one side of the clapper which strikes the bell and therefore causes it to sound with an echo when rung.

As Geoff was leaving the tower on Saturday having exchanged flags, the tower captain, David Kirkcaldy, arrived to sort out the bell ready for midday. The request had been that those bells that could be tolled should do so 99 times. So everything was left ready and it was home for breakfast. Just before twelve noon David arrived back at the tower; count down to noon and at the appointed hour it was time to start. Attempting not to lose count, as there isn't really an opportunity for a second go, just over six minutes later the task was completed.

The ringers have never been able to ascertain why in the ringing chamber there is a portrait of Queen Victoria but she is there and has witnessed many times Steyning bells being rung in happy and sad times. We hope that she was impressed but not amused.

Hopefully we will be able to start ringing more regularly after the next step in relaxation of the current restrictions on meeting other people. In the last six months we have only been able to ring on Christmas Day and Easter Day, both for short periods of time. We trust that the return of the sound of bells will be a welcome one in the town.



David
Kirkcaldy

*David Kirkcaldy
Tower Captain*

CHAPLAINCY

A FEW WEEKS AGO Vicky Walker reported in The Church Times stories from Chaplains who were working in pandemic hit London. She was surprised to find how many places chaplains could be found across London, and her travels took her on a boat, an Underground station, a prison and a football club, as well as into the heart of politics in Westminster to talk to the Revd Tricia Hillas, Speaker's Chaplain at the House of Commons.

"I've always been intrigued by the little chaplaincy rooms in airports. I'd be curious who needs a chaplain at an airport? What's that about? And then, obviously, I got in touch with one and found out."

There was a picture of the Revd Jonathan Baldwin, head chaplain at Gatwick Airport. He was standing in front of an empty airport wearing a mask, a suit and clerical collar; all ready for business.

I quote his words:

"The airport is my life. It's my parish. You build up relationships, you get to see people regularly, and over 18 years here I've done baptisms, and, sadly, funerals.

We have a passing congregation except for our regular irregulars, who we only see two or three times a year, and there are currently fewer people coming into the chapel for worship, but the pastoral care hasn't gone. I'm still walking around and chatting at any time, but our passenger numbers have massively depleted.

The wonderful thing is that the staff have got a little more time, they're not so rushed or pressurised and you can pick up more of an in-depth conversation. Like with the cleaners, there was one lad who came up to me and said, "Can I have a chat?" I've not met him before, but, wallop, it all came out".

POVERTY IN GAZA

In the past 15 years, Gaza has experienced three wars with Israel, which have left thousands of Palestinians dead and tens of thousands homeless. Clean water is unavailable for 95% of the population, and electricity supplies have been as low as two hours a day. One Christian Aid partner, the Culture and Free Thought Association in Khan Younis, supports children and their families. Children do their homework by candlelight and in cramped conditions, but they are determined to succeed. Anas, aged 16 says "We are like other children all over the world... We have our hopes and ambitions for the future." He thinks about whether he will have enough electricity to help him study. Then there are those many people suffering from cancer and other chronic diseases which Gaza's health system cannot treat. Covid - 19 in Gaza has simply added to a long list of existing challenges that destroy the fabric of their lives.

William Bell , Head of Middle East for Christian Aid

TANKER TALES

I always remember a conversation I had with one of our previous incumbents many years ago. I was discussing the challenges of prayer with Fr Paul Rampton and he told me how he would be looking out of his study window and every morning he would see a jogger run past, no matter the weather be it rain, shine or snow, the jogger would go past every day without fail at the same time; Fr Paul commented on the dedication and commitment of that person and how prayer is not easy and it does require the same focus as that jogger.



Flight display teams such as the Red Arrows refer to 'muscle memory' when talking about how they train to perform such close flying, with frequently repeated flights they are able to naturally establish a feel for the correct level of pressure

to be applied to the flight controls in order to maintain formation in a safe manner.

During the past year of the pandemic and the restrictions placed on our liberties I have bounced between extreme levels of fear and anger and have often been left feeling disjointed, like a ship with a broken rudder unable to navigate out of a storm. I have had to reflect on the effect that constantly viewing news updates on the BBC has on my wellbeing as well as alternative & social media; it has sapped my energy. I was able to adjust these habits when I realised the impact it was having, if it is not energy giving then it is not good for me and to be avoided.

During these repeated lockdowns I have had the pleasure of catching up on some TV box sets, one of which was The Tudors. As is often the case it was more Hollywood than history but I enjoyed watching the portrayal of one of my heroes – Sir Thomas More. But watching the series again I was struck by the words attributed to Sir Charles Brandon of a French proverb – "Thank God in all things; drink the wine; and let the world be the world". Whether this was historically true matters not for it made me see my struggles in a new light or as I would rephrase it "Praise God; enjoy life; do not worry about things beyond your control".

From then on I began to make better use of my time by turning to prayer with renewed vigour and found I slowly became more centred and stable. Like the pilots of the Red Arrows we can exercise the same muscle memory but in our case prayer memory.

Clergy are obliged under canon law to read the Divine Office of morning and evening prayer each day which is rich in tradition and dates back to monastic communities praying at set

hours of the day. We as lay people can join in with this tradition and in so doing we are united in communion with many across the world doing the same thing, our individual voices are amplified into a crescendo of corporate prayer.

The Divine Office has adapted to the 21st C and is available to view on our digital devices but I much prefer the texture and smell of a book in my hand. With the passing of time the prayer soaked, well thumbed pages take on a life of their own and become an illustration of our Christian pilgrimage. At first glance you may be put off by the multiple ribbons and the numerous words but like the jogger there is much to gain by keeping at it. There have been many times over the past year when I have had no words of my own to express in prayer, at times like these it is by following the Office we have words and a format to follow as a guide when we are wordless and can make no sense of all that is going on in the world around us.

How long must we repeat something until it becomes ingrained in our memory? Describing prayer as becoming a habit or routine seems disrespectful to our relationship with God (although we do experience such times) but by reading the Office intentionally and slowly we can allow the Holy Spirit to pray within us so that it becomes as close as breathing. The Office is interspersed with periods of silence and open prayer.

The pandemic and the response to it have been anything but predictable and this can be unsettling. But I think of how the apostles must have felt following Jesus whose life was unpredictable, for one moment he would be healing the blind, or going off and turning over tables in the temple, to regularly disappearing up mountains with the apostles unable to find Him. But throughout it all Jesus was grounded in a dedicated and committed prayer life which sustained Him.

Life during the pandemic for me has felt like a never-ending, mundane, monotonous cycle of work, eat and sleep whilst waiting for happier times to come. It has been by renewing my prayer life that I have been able to find new joy in each day.

It seems as a nation we have become so fearful of dying that we have forgotten how to live. Death is the one certainty in life but I trust that it will be at God's appointed time and in the meantime I will live the gift of life. We will all experience a physical death but as Christians our hope remains in Jesus Christ who promises us eternal life in paradise, for as the season of Easter demonstrates death is not the end, Jesus conquered death and through Him we can never be separated from the love of God no matter what happens.

Steve McGrath

Poverty is not God's plan. You are.

Tearfund

RETHINKING RUBBISH



“Throw it away” When we no longer need something or it appears broken, we tend to throw it away. But there is no ‘away’. Precious metals captured within electronic equipment are sent to landfill or incinerated, single use plastics are collected through Horsham’s waste recycling scheme and sent to Europe for incineration and use as fuel, and unwanted clothes are dealt with similarly.

Can you join us as we Rethink?

Can you **REFUSE** to buy something that is packed in single use plastic and buy something else instead?

Can you **REUSE** something rather than replace it? For example, go along with your containers to a local refill store for toiletries, household cleaning products or dried food? You can see your nearest stores on our website e.g. Steyning store and post office has refills for household products.

Can you **REPAIR** it? Our new Repair Café has a growing number of volunteers who will help you repair anything from a broken zip, toaster, chair leg or lawn mower.

Can you **RECYCLE** it? The lifestyle webpage on our website has lots of information about how and where to recycle things – from using Freegle or Give Your Stuff Away Day, to bringing specific single use plastics to the Farmers Market in Steyning. We work closely with Sussex Green Living and their Terracycle scheme and also Upper Beeding primary school.

We have three big bins for:

- ⇒ Flattened crisp and snack packets, including nuts and popcorn (bread bags are great to keep these flat and together) :Also at Upper Beeding primary school
- ⇒ Cake, sweet and biscuit wrappers including Kitkats and Cheddars
- ⇒ Cleaned and dried pet food pouches and dried pet food bags (these are also collected at 41 Breach Close in Steyning)



And six other bins for:

- ⇒ Toothpaste tubes and toothbrushes
- ⇒ Trigger heads from spray bottles (bottles go in your home recycling bin)
- ⇒ Plastic bottle tops
- ⇒ Used pens and pencils
- ⇒ Used and clean beauty product tubes
- ⇒ ‘Other’ specific plastic recycling: Cheese wrappers, dishwasher packets, baby food pouches, Marigold gloves, air fresheners and cleaning wipe packets.

No we can't take coffee packets or anything not on this list as there is no one paying for these to be recycled.

But did you know that if a food wrapper is not crinkly and can be stretched, and often says recycle with your supermarket carrier bags, then that's where you can take these. These are made from polyethylene and are infinitely recyclable. So please take them along to the supermarket collection points.

If you feel inspired, please join us! We are a small group of volunteers who are all trying to do our bit and we really welcome new faces.

You can find out more at www.greeningsteyning.org/lifestyle

or email us at: lifestyle@greeningsteyning.org

RETHINKING RUBBISH IS NOT TALKING RUBBISH

A WORLD CHANGING CONFERENCE?

ON FRIDAY 11 JUNE THE G7 SUMMIT BEGINS.

This will take place in Cornwall, and so we in the UK are the hosts. Our Prime Minister will lead the opening meeting, and I am sure he will be trying to unite the seven major countries to think how the world can come back as a better place after Coronavirus. This is a wonderful opportunity for the world leaders to agree on how they, together and individually, can tackle the climate crisis and poverty.

We are all aware of the global pandemic and the enormous challenges each country has faced over this last 18 months. But this is only a part of the picture of challenges.

- Extreme poverty is rife in many countries, and Covid-19 has only made this worse.
- Every country faces climate emergency and action must be taken urgently to prevent further damage to God's Earth.

These two challenges need to work hand in hand so those suffering climate change now are not pushed into poverty because of it. We all need to work as one.

Chris Fitton

Prayer points:

- Vision and wisdom for the leaders of all the countries at the G7 Summit. Both as they prepare and as they come together.
- Good relationships between world leaders.
- Unity of thought and commitment to help the poorer countries.

A GUIDED REFLECTION ON CHANGE

You may wish to have a notebook and write down your thoughts / answers, or maybe you would like to talk with someone you trust and take it in turns to explore these questions. Whether you are alone or not, please find a comfortable place to sit.

Take a few moments of quiet and close your eyes and concentrate on your breathing, just your regular in and out breaths. Feel your arms relax in your lap feel your shoulders relax downwards to your fingertips..... feel your head balanced and still. Take a few minutes again to concentrate on your breathing - in and out.

When you are ready open your eyes and think about this first question.

What has changed for you during these past months?

In your relationship with yourself? Your relationship with friends and family? Your relationships with work and with health – and any other important aspect of your life?

Maybe this is all you want to do in one session and you need more time to ponder on this large question. That's fine. Finish here and come back another day with the same friend or on your own.

From these changes...

Which ones would you like to keep? How might you support yourself to embed them? This will include what you say to yourself, as well as your habits and decisions.

This also means there may be some changes you would like to get rid of. How might this be accomplished, perhaps in small steps?

Consider also What are the things likely to get in the way?

Remember, small steps can have big outcomes.

Adapted from This Too Shall Pass, by Julia Samuel

MAKE ROOM FOR THE NEW

Yearning for a new way will not produce it. Only ending the old way can do that. You cannot hold onto the old all the while declaring that you want something new. The old will defy the new; the old will deny the new; the old will decry the new. There is only one way to bring in the new. You must make room for it..

Neale Donald Walsch, Facebook post, July 22, 2014.

PRAYER FOR JUSTICE

Written after the Minneapolis police officer was found guilty of the murder of George Floyd, USA.

**God of Truth,
We thank you today
For the Justice of this moment and a
Judgement according to
Your will.
You have again
Inspired action that
Brought down the arrogant and
Called the powerful to account.

May this give all people hope for our
Healing - together!
May you free us from vengeance
And clear the field to be ready for new seed.**

Richard Rohr 20 April 2021

*In a world of inequity and pain
May our actions be our prayer.
Let the Spirit of Truth guide us.
Let the Spirit of Love free us.....
Give us the compassion, courage and resolve
to become the light we seek
that many may see life and have their dignity
restored.
Inspire us to embody a world without injustice
and prejudice*

*Form us into channels of your love and peace
Let the river of justice and mercy flood our
imperfect world
Quenching the thirst of parched souls and lands.
Abide in us O Liberator that we become the
Word
so that the world may have Life, Life in all its
abundance.*

*Prayer for Racial Justice from
The Church of England*

SOUND BITES FOR JUNE

People talk of easing our way back to the new normal. But will that normal really be new? Or do people really just want to return to their old ways? The pandemic has made us forget about the biggest problem on our horizon: the fact that the earth is warming at an alarming rate. Air travel is a significant contributor to that. Surely, if we are to take seriously the Judaeo-Christian ideal of stewardship of the planet, it is time for a complete rethink of the idea of us all jetting abroad for a holiday every year.

*Paul Vallely
Church Times*

There is no single way of being a leader; every leader's approach depends on their own experience and the context in which they are operating. The Bible has plenty of examples of leadership, from Moses leading Israel out of Egypt to Peter's early leadership of the Church. There is no universal model of leadership to emulate, and the appropriate form of leadership depends entirely on context.

*Rev'd Canon Dr Vicentia Kgabe
USPG*

International 21st century mission and discipleship requires a return to justice as a core personal value. Just ordering of relationships involves treating all people fairly; ensuring equity; protecting the weak; extending mutual respect, care and concern; celebrating differences; promoting complementarity, equality and integration; honouring the dignity and intrinsic worth of every person.

Will our grandchildren inherit notions that a woman's right is in the pantry, and that God rightly ordained men to be in pulpits and in halls of power? Or will we faithfully persevere to shape Caribbean culture, free of unhealthy patriarchy and full of the treasures of our unique and shared humanity?

The Very Rev'd Shelley-Ann Tenia, Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago

Extra funds for humanitarian aid to Syria, pledged at recent donors' conference in Brussels, "are urgently needed by millions of Syrians at home and dispersed across the region", according to a joint statement from 37 aid agencies which says that "they are needed now more than ever."

The group includes CAFOD, CARE International, Christian Aid, the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Mennonite Central Committee and World Vision.

*Gerald Butt
Church Times*

CHILDREN'S INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

Can you imagine yourself being the nun sitting at her desk grading these papers all the while trying to keep a straight face?

Pay special attention to the wording and spelling and you'll find this hilarious!!! They all come from a Roman Catholic primary school test, at which children were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments.

The following statements were written by the children exactly as seen on the papers so all incorrect spelling has been left in.

- 1. In the first book of the Bible, Guinnessis, God got tired of creating the World so he took the Sabbath off*
- 2. Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was Joan of Ark. Noah built an Ark and the animals came on in pears.*
- 3. Lots wife was a pillar of salt during the day, but a ball of fire during the night.*
- 4. The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with unsympathetic Genitals.*
- 5. Sampson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah.*
- 6. Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the Apostles.*
- 7. Moses led the Jews to the Red Sea where they made unleavened bread which is bread without any ingredients.*
- 8. The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up to Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Commandments.*
- 9. The first Commandments was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.*
- 10. The seventh Commandment is though shalt not admit adultery*
- 11. Moses died before he ever reached Canada. Then Joshua led the Hebrews in the Battle of Geritol.*
- 12. The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.*
- 13. David was a Hebrew King who was skilled at playing the liar. He fought the Finklesteins, a race of people who live in Biblical times.*
- 14. Solomon, one of Davids sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.*
- 15. When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta.*

16. *When the three wise guys from the East side arrived they found Jesus in the Manager.*
17. *Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.*
18. *St. John the blacksmith dumped water on his head.*
19. *Jesus enunciated the golden rule, which says to do unto others before they do one on you. He also explained a man doth not live by sweat alone.*
20. *It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.*
21. *The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 Decibels.*
22. *The Epistles were the wives of the Apostles.*
23. *One of the Opposums was St. Matthew who was also a taxman.*
24. *St. Paul cavorted to Christianity, he preached Holy acrimony which is another name for marriage.*
25. *Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony.*

Sent in by several readers.

AND I GIVE THANKS FOR THAT -

Dallin Chapman is a novelist and poet. He has had Covid-19 twice, and whilst struggling with bout number two, he had a phrase slip into his mind "And we give thanks for that", used by Dean Roberts at Canterbury Cathedral whilst at Morning Prayer. This is the result:

*And I give thanks for that -
dawn whispering at the window nudging
memory, books by my bedside
waiting to be read,
far echoes of a kettle coming to the boil,
footsteps on the stairs.
I give thanks for that.*

*I give thanks for that -
kindness, a doctor who took
time, a nurse who ignored night to combat
fear,
care and circles of concern,
the distant telephone
I give thanks for that.*

*I give thanks for that -
grasses and scent of spring,
squirrel busy on the lawn,
birds enjoying our berries, faint murmur of
mowing,
wide morning sky, and snowdrops,
the trees' ancient lullabies.
I give thanks for that.*

*I give thanks for that -
for life and breath, and chance
to dream again of longer days, touch
of loved ones' hands, of laughter
For just being
I give thanks for that.*

RECIPE FOR JUNE

DRY ROAST POTATOES

1 potato per person although you may need extra depending on the size of the potato and how hungry you are, peeled and cut into small cubes.

Black pepper

3tsp of soy sauce although adjust to your taste

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200c
2. Boil the cubed potatoes for 10 mins
3. Drain the potatoes
4. Put into an oven proof dish
5. Season with lots of black pepper
6. Pour over the soy sauce
7. Stir the potatoes carefully to not break them up
8. Put into the oven for 30-40 minutes
Leave for a few minutes then serve



IN FOR THE LONG HAUL

Andrew and Maria Leake have been mission partners in the Chaco region of northern Argentina for more than two decades, monitoring deforestation and standing with indigenous people on land rights issues.

“If I just look at what I am doing today, especially now that Covid-19 restricts travel, it would be easy to despair. I get the sense I am doing nothing. Yet, looking back over 30 years of service, it is abundantly clear that the fruits of our service, combined with that of many other people and organisations, have rarely been immediate. Significant fruits tend to come over the long haul. In Argentina a struggle of more than 50 years for indigenous land rights is only now yielding results and now puts significant pressure on the Argentine state to provide not only land titles but also to ensure the ecological restitution of forests degraded by cattle and illegal lumber extraction.



So, a little peek over one's shoulder now and then may not be bad if it serves to encourage us going forwards. My sense, therefore, is that Jesus does indeed want us to commit to the long haul. He certainly does not want us to look back in terms of “going back”, but a little peek over the shoulder now and then can provide the reassurance we may need to keep going forward.

Andrew in 2012 debating a deforestation project with a local landowner

THE NINETEEN THIRTIES

Also known as the turbulent years (or the lost decade)

J. B. Priestley once wrote "Nobody will shift me from the belief which I shall take to the grave, that the generation to which I belonged, destroyed between 1914 and 1918 was a generation marvellous in its promise." The well-known historian, A. J. P. Taylor, readily agreed; others looked alternatively to the 1930s often described as the forgotten decade or even a dishonest time if you include extremist politics. These are differing views, so let me compare.

In the earlier years of the 20th Century, the question of air flights was very much put to the test; moving on to war planes from World War One, later to competitive flying at speed and passenger travel; including the use of airships. These were used earlier particularly for bombing in World War One, but by the 1930s airship design was quite sophisticated and to some extent widely used. Yet, the German airship R101 in extremely bad weather crashed in France in 1930 with a near total loss of all the crew and passengers. The ruined airship wreck was subsequently broken up and sold for scrap. No more passenger carrying airships were built again in Britain. Separately Britain's heavy industries, coal mining, ship building, steel, even extended to textiles, had become (since 1920) increasingly uncompetitive in world markets. Additionally, after the American 1929 Wall Street Crash, men forced out of work became commonplace. Living standards fell and unemployment was rife.

This was more pointedly in the north of Britain. The much-publicised National Hunger Marches occurred – creating large sympathy but little else. Even so, accommodation and facilities would be found for foot sore marchers, food provided and entertainment – even Trade Union help was sometimes forthcoming. There was little or nothing effective from the national government, only the 1931 Means Test! One aged granny from Burnley who joined such a march declared that she had been given so much good food by sympathisers during her march that she "really did not want to go home". Writers of literature played their part and gave support such as Wal Hannington's *Never on our Knees* and *Unemployment Struggles*, George Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier* and Walter Greenwood's *Love on the Dole* come to mind.

By 1932 unemployment stood at nearly 3.5 million. This was not good news at all although the south of England and the Midlands, where car manufacture and textile industries were situated gave better pay rates and thus suffered slightly less. Yet, politically, there was the sign of some new beginnings despite indifferent government efforts. Extremist political groups emerged, sadly, particularly the British Union of Fascists (led by Oswald Mosley) and to a lesser extent the Communist Party of Great Britain. Support for such groups was spasmodic but very newsworthy. Above all, fear of international events, threats of war and foreign troubles never seemed to go away. No one in Britain really wanted another war, hence the term appeasement found much favour to dominate the 1930s decade.

As far as religion was concerned, the Church of England attendance levels for regular churchgoers was about 10% of the population, with one fifth of the population going to church at irregular intervals. In either case about three quarters of those attending were women. Interestingly when J. B. Priestley was passing through Birmingham in late 1933, he recalled that earlier attendance levels were much less, particularly amongst young men. He doubted if there were less than half a dozen men in the chapel!

The main talking points of the later 1930s were firstly, the abdication "crisis" of 1936. The eventual and well-known decision of Edward VII (uncrowned) to leave the Royal Family split the country and was hotly debated, and still is today. Another aspect was focussed on the ill-advised trip, by the ex-Prime Minister (from 1916-1922) David Lloyd George, to an increasingly re-arming Germany, in September 1936. Given his earlier mastery of political manoeuvring this visit reflected his declining reasoning and influence.

On the home front, towards the end of the decade, jobs and work became easier to come by, overcrowded slums often becoming replaced by private house building and local government improvement schemes. In the 20 years up to 1939, 3 million houses were built for owner-occupation together with 1 million being funded by local authorities.

So, perhaps Priestley's words have some validity, as whilst the 1930s, particularly the final years of the decade did reflect areas of social betterment, it could be that the horror of world-wide conflicts meant a new order of political thinking.

Suggested reading:

The Thirties, An Intimate History Juliet Gardiner, 2010, Harper Press, London.

Ian Ivatt, Steyning History Society

THE STEYNING SOCIETY

Chanctonbury Ring by Dr Janet Pennington

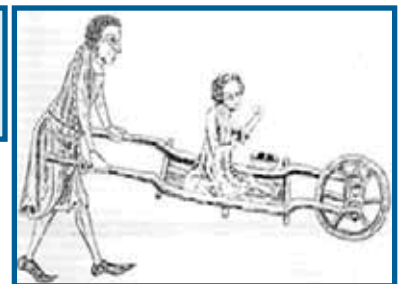
An illustrated talk, available to view via our website **from 14th June**

www.steyningsociety.org.uk/talks

Janet is well known in Steyning for her entertaining and informative talks as well as her books and themed walks. She was archivist at Lancing College and Wiston House.

This is the last of our planned talks until September 2021. Further details will be published on our website.

We very much hope to resume our Monthly meetings in The Steyning Centre in the Autumn.



DO YOU KNOW YOUR HYMNS?

Here are some lines from well known hymns with words missing. Can you fill them in?

1. All things ——— and beautiful, all ————— great and small.
2. When I survey the ————— cross on which the ——— of Glory died
3. Dear —— and Father of mankind, ——— our foolish ways
4. The King of Love my ——— is whose goodness faileth ——
5. It is —— with my soul, It is ——, with my soul, It is well, it is ——, with my soul.
6. I once was lost, but now am ——, was blind, but now I ——
7. O —— that wilt not let me go, I —— my weary soul in thee
8. To God be the ——, —— things He hath done
9. Amazing love how can it — that thou, my God, should'st —— for me.
10. Blessed assurance, —— is mine
 O what a foretaste of glory ——
 Heir of salvation, purchase of God
 Born of His Spirit, washed in —— blood

 This is my ——, this is my ——
 Praising my Saviour all the day long
 This is my ——, this is my ——
 Praising my Saviour all the day long



Answers

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|--|
| 1. bright, creatures | 2. wonderful, Prince | 3. Lord, forgive | |
| 4. shepherd, never | 5. well, well, well | 6. found. See | |
| 7. Love, rest | 8. glory, great | 9. be, die | |
| 10. Jesus, divine, His, story, song, story song | | | |

GUESS THE MIRACLE

Using these three words only,
can you guess which miracle?

FIRST
MOTHER
SIX

Jesus changes the wine to water at
the wedding at Cana.

ANAGRAM FOR JUNE

The anagram for June is: **FRIENDSHIP**

REMEMBER:

All words to have three or more letters, but only use each letter once.

NO capitalised words, and NO plurals.

I can make a few words from "friendship", no ten letter words, but my favourite is INSPIRED.....hope you are!

INDIA - COVID19 SITUATION

As you will have seen on the news, in India a second wave of Covid-19 is having a devastating impact. Infections are spiralling out of control and the country's health system is unable to cope. United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG) partners in India have initiated an emergency response. One of which is Khristiya Seva Niketan Hospital, Sarenga in the Diocese of Durgapur. They urgently need financial support to help slow and limit the spread of Covid-19 in the 10 surrounding villages where around 50,000 people live. They aim to provide PPE, facilitate early detection as well as ensuring the hospital is equipped for oxygen delivery and medicine. In this troubling time we need to support the Church in India both through our prayers and financially:

Please pray for:

Healing and wholeness to people in India

God's comfort and peace to those who are grieving

Timely provision of support and oxygen

Protection and strength to frontline workers

Strength, healing and comfort to the Clergy affected by the pandemic

Prayers for the authorities



Finally if you or your church can make a donation to this emergency appeal here is the address:

<https://donations.uspg.org.uk/give>

STEYNING MUSEUM IS REOPENING IN JUNE

WHAT'S ON

As part of our planned re-opening in June (COVID permitting), Steyning Museum will be putting on a number of new displays including a "VICTORY" in Europe and Japan exhibition delayed from May of last year due to lockdown. The exhibition centres on extracts from the Mass Observation Diary of a local resident and topics include "Danger from the Air", "Evacuees", "Canadians in Steyning", "Gert and Daisy go to War" and "Burma". A host of artefacts (including a Christmas Card on Izal Loo Paper!) illustrate a fascinating, and at times, difficult period in the history of local residents.



We have several items of military uniform in the museum including this REME uniform being modelled by Museum volunteer Guy Standen. The uniform was donated by local resident and Museum member Chris Tod whose father-in-law and one-time Steyning resident wore it whilst serving in Palestine, Lebanon and Italy. In a nice bit of a connection, Guy's father Vic also served in the RAF in Italy during WW2.

Curator of Exhibitions Andrew Woodfield adds "whilst Guy was delighted to model for us, what we could do with is a male manikin to display them on throughout the duration of the exhibition which lasts until August." So, if you have one you can lend to the Museum please contact Andrew on: richardaw756@gmail.com

There's lots more to see at the Museum including a new display in our Children's Corner celebrating our local children's author, Julia Donaldson and a "20s Plenty" display in collaboration with the current road group campaign highlighting the development of the road network in Steyning with reminiscences from local residents illustrated by photographs from the museum archives.

The museum is planning to re-open on Wednesdays to Sundays from early June always assuming COVID regulations enable us to. For up-to-date information on what's on and opening times please visit our website www.steyningmuseum.org.uk

Ray Powell

Steyning Museum

INTO THE GARDEN IN JUNE

There is an abundance of flowers starting to appear in June. Keep on top of supporting your plants and watch out for cold nights as some plants will still need protection. Keep on weeding, especially annuals.

1. June marks the beginning of summer and days are at their longest. June usually has the most sunshine. New bedding or container plants need to do most of their growing in June. Fertiliser will help them make the most of this light for good results later in the summer.
2. Sowings can now be made outdoors of Alstroemeria, Achillea, Arabis, Canterbury Bells, Coreopsis, Erigeron, Myosotis and Sweet William.
3. When planting containers or hanging baskets remember not to fill them right up to the top with compost, but leave a small gap so that when watering it will soak in and not run over the edge. Also give a weekly liquid feed to improve growth and flowering.
4. Dead head Roses as often as you can now they are flowering profusely. Prune to a bud or leaf below to encourage new growth.
5. Divide Primulas, including Primroses, Cowslips and Polyanthus.
6. Sweet peas will be starting to flower now so keep on picking and give them a weekly liquid Potash-rich fertiliser.
7. Sow seeds of herbs including Basil, Coriander, Parsley, Chives and Dill. Sow at two week intervals.
8. Grow edibles, such as Salad Crop, Radish, Lettuce with flowers together as companion planting.



Remember to give yourselves time to relax and enjoy the garden. A morning inspection is worthwhile and sets you up for the day.

Robert Hill - Snook

FROM BISHOP MARTIN WARNER

“Placed once more in paradise” is one of the great statements in the Easter Liturgy. It adjusts our perspective on earthly worship, reminding us that, in the Eucharist, we participate in a mystery and a gift: the foretaste of heaven.

This sacred mystery also presents the individual Christian, and the whole Church, with a moral challenge. How should worship inform the way in which we live with the hope of being placed in paradise?

April 2021

STAG BEETLES: TWO FALLS, TWO SUBMISSIONS OR A KNOCKOUT

I've only ever had one sporting hero. In the red corner, standing 6ft 6 and weighing in at 365lbs, Big Daddy kept my Gran and I glued to the TV set on wet Saturday afternoons as he wrestled Giant Haystacks or Kendo Nagasaki in his sequined spandex.



In June, Stag Beetles – the big daddies of the beetle world – are emerging from the ground and getting ready to rumble. There's around 3,000 different species of beetle in Sussex and an estimated 29,000 species across Europe. Just as Big Daddy's 64-inch chest earned him a place in the Guinness Book of Records, the 2.5 inch long Stag Beetle holds the coveted title of Europe's Biggest Beetle. And, like a 26-stone man

in a spangly leotard, the adult male Stag Beetle is equally impressive and ludicrous. Its 3-segmented black and maroon armoured body is crowned with a ridiculous pair of trademark stag-like 'antlers'. They are actually modified mandible mouthparts and are used to impress the antler-less females and to grapple rival males.

Before these tiny titans step into the ring they have to put in some long hours in training. The beetle's larvae spend an incredible 5-6 years munching on a deadwood diet of buried logs and roots, building the bulky body that will sustain them to survive above ground. As adults they will live for just a few weeks without feeding, relying solely on the fuel tanks accumulated underground. In early summer, after pupation and transformation, they burst from the ground and go looking for a fight. I always find it incredible that these chunky, bulky beetles can fly but on warm evenings they whirl through the air with the grace and subtlety of a Chinook on aerial reconnaissance for females. But if another male beats them to it that's when things get nasty. In my fantasies I imagine these beetle brawls to play out on a dead tree stump. A crowd of over-excited elderly invertebrates gather round; the grasshoppers and crickets chirping in with a chorus of "We shall not be moved" while the earthworms and earwigs chant "Eas-eh! Eas-eh!" The fighters face off before charging and locking antlers. With incredible strength a Stag Beetle can lift his opponent into the air, holding him there heroically before spectacularly body-slamming them down onto the stump.

We're fortunate that the Horsham district is a hotspot for these Herculean heavyweights but sadly our Stag Beetles are on the ropes. The loss of old trees from the countryside has had dramatic impacts on the survival of the beetles' underground larvae and their numbers are declining. So, if you see a Stag Beetle we'd really like to hear about it. Send details and a photo to wildcall@sussexwt.org.uk

Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST DISCIPLES



Matthew 4:18-22 New International Version

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.