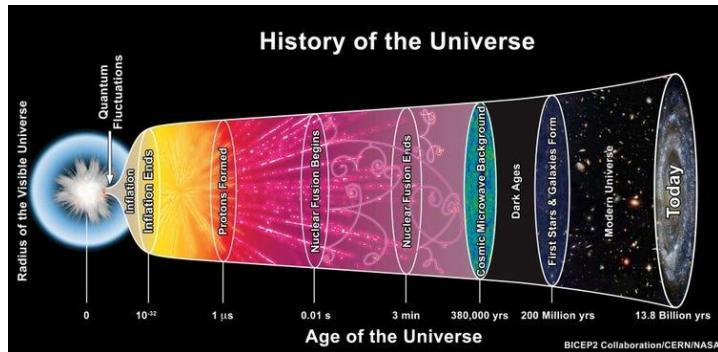


A candle in...



# THE WINDOW

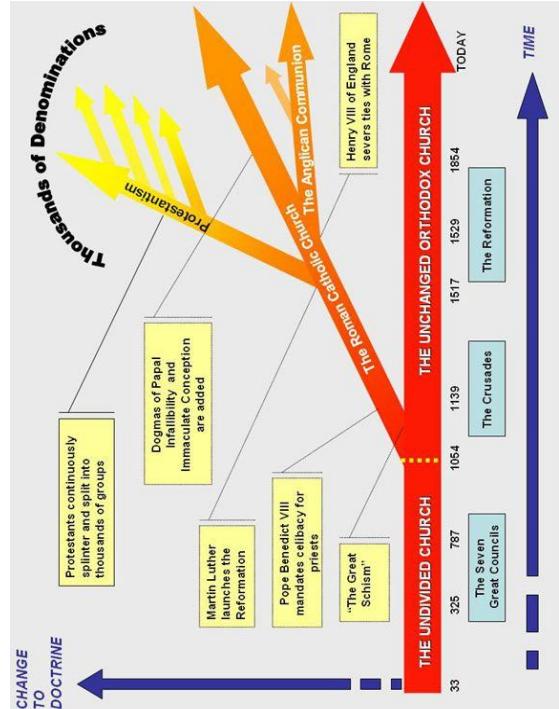
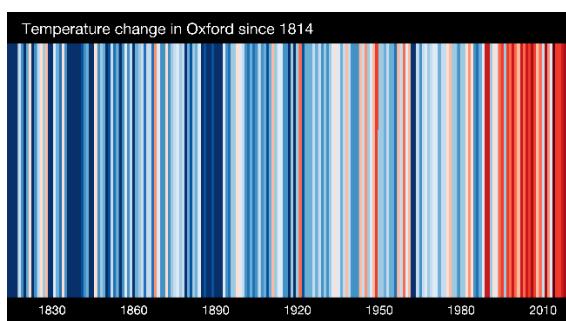
*News and Views from the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames*



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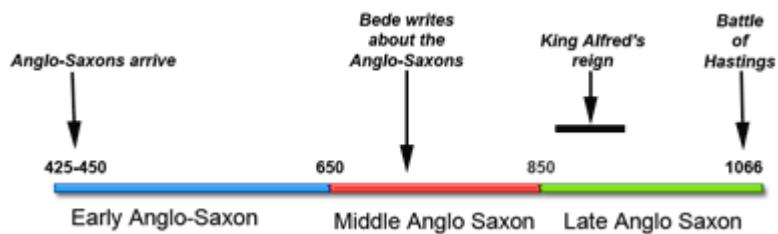
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Time!

## The Thought for the Day Ministry in the Parish

*The Revd Paul Smith*

The idea for broadcasting a Thought for the Day was first presented to the Clergy Team by Andrew Coker, Warden at St Nic's, not far into Lockdown. We are grateful to Andrew for this idea and for all who worked hard to make it happen; not least for the daily labours of Steve Thomas, in loading the Thoughts onto the website and sending them on to Alastair Fear for inclusion on the Abingdon Blog. We are grateful too to Alastair for giving us 'a slot' on the blog each week day. Thanks must go to my clergy colleagues and to all other contributors including our Licensed Lay Minister, Gwen Bevington, and Associate Clergy in the parish, Bishop Henry Scriven, David Bevington, and Rosalind Rutherford. Having a wide number of people participating added a variety and richness to what was offered.

The Clergy Team felt it was time to take a break from this daily endeavour and consider at another point when we might begin again for a particular season. I broadcast the final one on Tuesday 30 June, and the editorial team for this publication asked if I would re-produce the transcript which I happily do below:

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### The Gift of Time

Tuesday 30 June 2020

I bring the last Thought for the Day in this series, but we look forward to the possibility of having more in the future.

"Hang on a minute, I must check the enemy...." "What do you mean you must check the enemy", I said to my Dad. "The time, the time," he replied.

That's how my father referred to the time: as the enemy, because time was always against him. He was a hard-working man, over-conscientious in fact and he had high expectations of himself: he was a perfectionist. He squeezed as much as he possibly could into every minute of every day.

I wonder what he would have made of time during these past few months or so. During this Covid-19 pandemic, for some people, because of their situation of shielding or self-isolating, a day has sometimes felt like a thousand years. Others have experienced the privilege of having 'more time', enjoying things they do not usually have time for, or doing new things.

The theologian, John Swinton, in his book 'Becoming Friends of Time' has written a reflection on timeliness, disability, and Christian discipleship. He reminds us that time is a gift from God and a gift we should give back to God. He invites us to spend time with the experiences of people with profound neurological disability, people who can change our perceptions of time.

And for those whose physical movements are significantly impaired, simple tasks, like putting on shoes and socks for example, or making a cup tea take more time. (If indeed they can be achieved at all). This reality can point us to the truth that God takes time to do things too. Have you ever noticed that? God takes time to create, to bring about the glory of creation, and the beauty around us, and to bring us, and love us into being. To love us into being teaches us that love should take time. Every loving relationship needs time to be nurtured for it to flourish and last.

I have spent enormous amounts of nervous energy and time over the years trying to keep up in an 'able-bodied world'. I've mostly ignored the fact that my circumstances make this impossible. Yet I still persist in doing it. I have felt it is an expectation others have placed on me. But, I think that's unfair and wrong. Chiefly, it's a high and ridiculous expectation I have placed upon myself.

continued on page 3

Racing against time, trying to keep up, can be a serious, damaging mistake. For those of us with any kind of neurological condition know that we have to live at a slower pace, or I should say a ‘different pace’, in this fast, frenetic world. We can either accept that truth and see what it offers us, or instead go on being frustrated by it.

My greatest ‘Lockdown lesson’ has shown that a slower, different pace is not just a given for me, but a liberating truth. I must cherish time, value each moment, and be glad for every breath I take. That’s why, with respect to my dear Dad, I don’t want time to be my enemy. From now on, I want to spend my days, ‘Becoming a Friend of Time’.

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## Lord, I have Time .. an extract from Prayers of Life

*Michel Quoist, 1918 – 1997, French Catholic priest and writer*

*Suggested by Louise Heffernan*

I went out, Lord.  
Men were coming and going,  
Walking and running.

Everything was rushing: cars, trucks, the street, and the whole town.  
Men were rushing not to waste time.  
They were rushing after time,  
To gain time.....

.....  
Lord, I have time,  
I have plenty of time,  
All the time that you give me,  
The years of my life,  
The days of my years,  
The hours of my days,  
They are all mine.  
Mine to fill, quietly, calmly,  
But to fill completely, up to the brim,  
To offer them to you, that of their insipid water  
You may make a rich wine  
such as you made once in Cana of Galilee.

I am not asking you tonight, Lord,  
for time to do this and then that,  
But your grace to do conscientiously,  
in the time that you give me, what you want me to do.

## Carbon Emissions and Climate – Past, Present and Future

*Roderick Smith*

Past, present and future – this temporal framework is natural when we consider humankind's impact on the earth's climate through emission of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels in the present industrial era. Over a long period in the ancient past, geologically speaking, carbon was locked into earth's rock strata as (mainly) vegetative life died, rotted and was overlain with sediments. The fossil fuels we now extract from the earth – coal, mineral oil and natural gas – puts CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere as we burn them to provide us with energy.

Why is this a problem? After all CO<sub>2</sub> is a natural component of the earth's atmosphere (I never call it a 'pollutant'). What is more, CO<sub>2</sub> along with water vapour are the two main 'greenhouse gases' which make the earth's surface warm enough and otherwise habitable for life as we know it. But you can have too much of a good thing – if we put too much CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere the extra greenhouse effect increases the temperature of the lower atmosphere. The climate system is very complex with many feedbacks, positive and negative, involving cloud formation, interactions with the oceans, land and sea ice, and the land surface, particularly the vegetation on it. Nor is 'global warming' anywhere near the whole story of climate change – there are impacts on the intensity and frequency of storms, floods, droughts, and heat waves. All these feedbacks and impacts have been studied and modelled extensively by climate scientists. The overwhelming consensus is that the earth's climate is heading for changes which are highly detrimental, if not dangerous, to human and other life unless urgent action is taken to stabilise or reduce emissions.

The climate we bequeath to *future* generations of all life forms on the Earth is going to be largely determined by what we do over the next 20-30 years. The most recent target made by the international community is for 'net zero emissions' of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2050. One of the last things the government of Theresa May did was to make this official British policy. But putting this policy into action has so far taken a back seat to Brexit and the response to the Covid-19 pandemic for the present government. Changes to the way we generate energy are already being made, with more use of renewable sources, but there's still a long way to go. Ways of reducing energy use and making its use more efficient must also receive urgent action. What we eat as well as how much, and by what means, we travel must be on everyone's agenda.

What are the ethical and theological dimensions of human activity on the earth's climate? Justice is a constant theme in the Bible, particularly in the prophetic writings (e.g. Amos 5.24). There is an issue of inter-generational justice. What right have we, the current inhabitants of the planet, to make large parts of the world uninhabitable for future generations of all forms of life, including human life? There is also the issue of justice for the poorer peoples of the planet – they will suffer the most from the richer peoples' actions. Underlying all these is, for theists, the belief that "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (Psalm 24.1) – we are its stewards (Gen 2.15), not its owners, and should not exploit it for our selfish ends.

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## Operation Noah

*Rob Rutherford*

This should really come after Jen Brown's article but time is doing funny things in this issue!

One of the speakers at the Summer School Jen mentions was Dr Darrell Hannah, Rector of Ascot Heath and on the Board of Operation Noah, an ecumenical Christian 'activist' charity whose aim is to challenge the Church to take climate 'crisis' seriously. Their strap line is 'Faith-motivated, science-informed and hope-inspired'. More information on their [website here](#):

I've decided that we need to work individually, institutionally through the church and politically.

## A New Normal for the Environment?

*Revd Jen Brown*

Should Christians care about the environment? The answer to this would seem to be a self-evident ‘yes’, but the Church hasn’t always been in the forefront of environmental care. Despite this, there is much in the Christian tradition that does speak to humanity’s responsibility to care for creation. Numerous passages in the Bible, from the creation narratives of Genesis 1 and 2, to the opening verse of Psalm 24, “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it,” to the beautiful vision of peaceful creation in Isaiah 11.6–9, to the description of all creation worshipping God in Revelation 5.13 should inspire us in our environmental vocation. What these passages collectively show us is a vision of a harmonious creation nurtured and cared for by human beings in service to God. Beyond that, the tradition of the saints, many of whom have stories of kindness or companionship with animals associated with them, demonstrate that true holiness is linked to knowing how to live peaceably with the non-human creation. Christians have a duty to be concerned about the planet and non-human creatures, and to live in a way that serves God by caring for God’s creation. All creation exists to praise and glorify God. When we defile creation, cause suffering within creation, diminish the diversity of creation, we hinder the praise that creation offers to its Creator. When we nurture the earth and its habitats, when we show mercy and love to our fellow creatures, when we restore what has been damaged, we not only fulfil our task as God’s stewards but we also enhance the praise given to God.

I host and run the annual Biblical and Theological Studies Summer School at Ripon College Cuddesdon (being held on-line this year and only a couple of days away as I write this). The theology of creation care is our theme this year. Speakers will look at a variety of biblical texts concerning environmental care and stewardship, discuss specifically Christian initiatives in creation care, and specific areas of concern, such as ocean habitats and animal welfare. No doubt some of those who attend the summer school will already be enthusiastic about environmental and animal welfare issues. For others, this will be a challenging subject. But we can no longer deny that it is an issue that needs to be addressed. In a recent episode of *Countryfile* on BBC1, for example, farmers talked about the impact that climate change is already having, as changing weather patterns affect their ability to plant, grow and harvest crops, and feed their livestock.

As lockdown is coming to an end, we hear a lot about a ‘new normal’. What people mean by this, of course, is that we’re going to have to get used to interacting with others socially in a new way – social distancing, wearing face masks, not shaking hands and, at least for a while, no singing in church. But what if we could also introduce a different type of ‘new normal’?

A recent study\* that looked at the effects of lockdowns around the world calculated that global carbon dioxide emissions declined by 17% in the month of April, compared with previous months. In the midst of all the anxiety and pain of COVID-19, we discovered something positive – we can reduce our carbon footprint! Many places also saw an increase in wildlife activity. A variety of animals had space to move around safely, because we were all indoors.

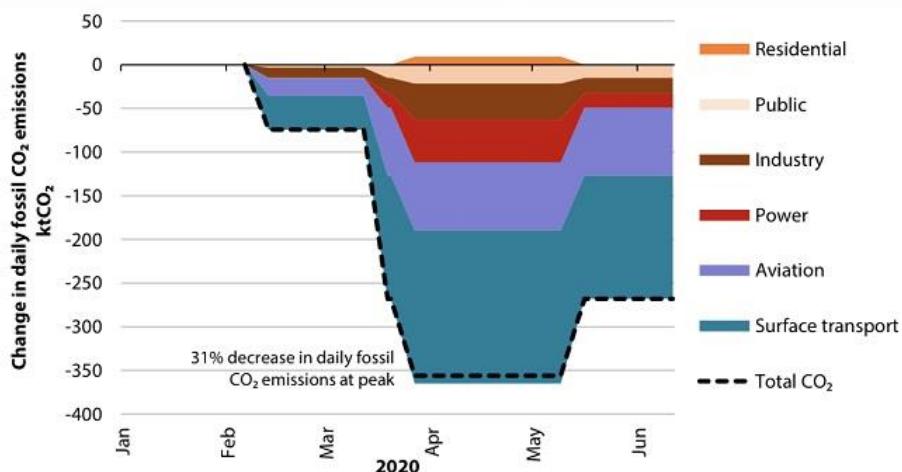
\* C. Quéré et al., 2020, Temporary reduction in daily global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during the COVID-19 forced confinement. *Nature Climate Change* (see page 6 for UK data Ed.)

As a society, we’re going to spend the next few months discovering our new normal and rebuilding our economy. We need to work to make sure that where we go from here takes account of the needs of the planet and our fellow creatures. We can’t just ‘build, build, build’. We need to build sustainably, with a view to the flourishing of all life. We can’t just go back to the way we did things before. We’ve enjoyed the presence of wildlife on our doorsteps during lockdown. We need to hold onto the joy those moments gave as inspiration as we think about how we emerge from lockdown – making space for wildlife benefits both them and us. We’ve seen the difference a few changes in lifestyle can make to our carbon emissions. We need to let that give us the confidence to do more. Each of us can make a small difference, and all of those small differences can, together, make for significant change.

## Thought provoking Images:

*Do make suggestions for future issues to [Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk](mailto:Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk)*

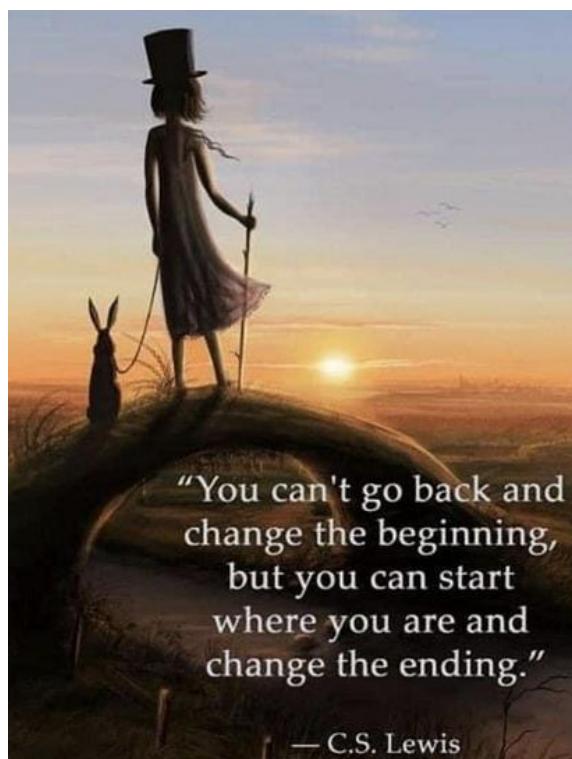
**Figure 5.1.** UK emissions have fallen by almost one third during the peak of the lockdown



**Source:** Supplementary data to Le Quéré et al (2020) *Temporary reduction in daily global CO2 emissions during the COVID-19 forced confinement*.

**Notes:** Mean baseline emissions for the UK are 1.16 MtCO<sub>2</sub>/day, taken from the Global Carbon Project using sector allocation from IEA (2019) *World Energy Balances 2019*.

This is the UK data from the study mentioned in Jen Brown's article on page 5. Remember that this means that the CO<sub>2</sub> stock in the atmosphere is still going up but at a slower rate. We are still filling the bath but we've turned the taps down a bit! There is another interesting effect. Nitrogen oxides are emitted by vehicles and [this study](#) shows a significant decrease (59%) in Nitrogen Dioxide concentrations in central Oxford.

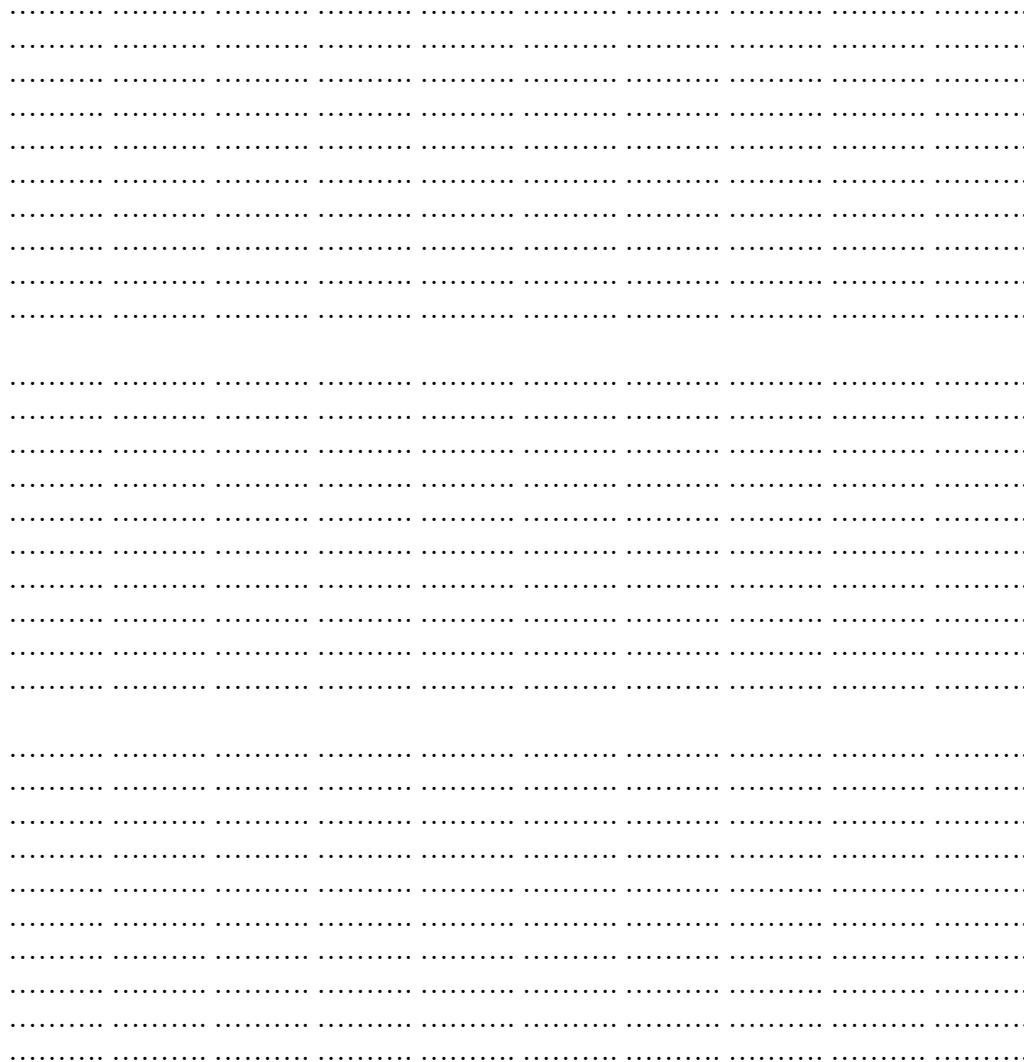


## Deep Time

*Rob Rutherford*

One of the gifts that science brings to us is the knowledge that the Universe is not static but evolving, had a beginning and is 13.7 billion years old (that is 13 700 000 000 years), plus or minus about 130,000 years (for example see [here](#):). The solar system dates from about 4.6 billion years ago. One of the reasons people doubt the theory of evolution is because we cannot take in such ‘deep time’. Here is a way to picture it.

Each dot represents 1 year, a line represents a century so the block is a millennium. Let’s go back in time.



So now, after 3 ‘blocks’, we are back to the late bronze age 3000 years ago. If we squidged the dots up a bit and reduced the font size, we might fit 10000 dots to a page, it would take 100 pages like this to accommodate a million years. It was very tempting to do that but it wouldn’t be a very exciting read! 3500 more of those books will get back roughly to the start of life on Earth (debatable but around 3.5 billion years ago – see for example [here](#):). You have to work hard to visualise these vast stretches of deep time just as we have to work hard to discuss the relationship between science and our faith but it is hugely important if we are to make our faith believable and relevant!

## A B/W Snapshot of Life

*Charles Miller*

Issue 5 of 'A Candle in the Window' took up 'difference' with not a little reference to the "Black Lives Matter" movement. That movement, originating in my homeland, has prompted a surge of protest in parts of the world, and accounts for images of peaceful protest as well as of violence against people and property. Page 6 included a brief report 'Abingdon supports BLM' and an example of 'Thought provoking images', all of which has fuelled my own varied reactions - feelings, memories, and thoughts. In what follows I want to share memories - vignettes from my life and family history. I haven't woven them into an articulated 'position' or political stance but reflecting on them assured me of what ought to be obvious to us all, namely, that in all instances of moral evaluation *context matters*.

### "Mill"

My mother was a southerner. She and her younger brother grew-up in Richmond, Virginia. Her father was a doctor connected with the Virginia Military Institute. The family hired a black teenager as a maid. Her name was Mildred, but they called her "Mill". By the time my mother married and I was born (the last of three children), the family home was in the prosperous, leafy suburbs of Fairfield County, Connecticut. My mother's brother, Uncle Jack, stayed in the south and pursued a distinguished career as a lawyer in Birmingham, Alabama. Throughout my childhood my mother regaled us with stories about "Mill", and so did my grandmother when opportunity arose.

You see, "Mill" wasn't just a paid employee. Though not so much older than my mother and her brother, she wasn't just "help", she was *family*. When the family went their separate ways, my Uncle Jack invited Mill to move to Birmingham with him and his wife to help keep the house and raise his three boys, my cousins. For them Mill was, as we sometimes say, "a force of nature" as well as a part of the family (though Mill eventually married and had her own family). Her word was law, she took no back-talk, you did what she said. The boys, my cousins, respected her, they obeyed her, they loved her. I visited once when I was young and met this mythic *persona* for myself. She was what I was led to encounter: larger than life (and she was a big woman!), full of hugs, clear in expectations, passing her love for my mother on to me as if nothing could have been more natural. I only had that one encounter with her, but her memory is sweetly lodged among my childhood memories.

When she retired from 'service' my uncle gave her a private pension to supplement Social Security so that she could live comfortably and without hardship.

### The Doctors Beasley

In the North the kind of role and stature that Mill had in my uncle's family was uncommon. In fact, I never encountered anything like it. The town in which I grew up was overwhelmingly white. But our family GPs were black: Al and Jean Beasley, husband and wife. I remember them as soft-spoken, gently-mannered and, so far as a child could judge, utterly reliable, professional and trustworthy. How on earth they decided to open a medical practice in lily-white Westport, Connecticut, I don't know; but, of course as a child that question never occurred to me. The point, I guess, is that to me and my sisters nothing seemed more natural than for them to be *there* doing what they did.

### "Rodney"

Politically, my mother was a southern Democrat. (This was before the Republicans launched their successful 'Southern strategy' for the election of Richard Nixon; the Democrats lost the South.) In other words, she was a liberal conservative. When I was eight or nine years old (my parents were already divorced) my mother responded to advertisements from 'The Fresh-Air Fund'. The Fund connected Afro-American city-dwellers with families (mostly white, of course) in the suburbs or countryside who would host a black child for a week or two or three. The idea was to get the city children out of their steamy, cramped urban habitat to enjoy a different way of life. We lived on a long, leafy "dead end" (as we called it) or cul-de-sac - totally white, totally middle-class, lots of Republicans and some Democrats (like the Millers). There were about twenty-five houses on the street, large lawns, surrounded by woods; dogs, cats

and children roamed freely, and people didn't lock their doors.

One summer Rodney Rodway joined us from somewhere in New York City (the Bronx or Queens, I suppose). I still remember his arrival: his mother and father pulled onto the driveway in a huge, brightly-coloured Cadillac (no one on our street drove a Cadillac!). Out stepped Rodney, my own age, slim, with closely-cropped hair (that fascinated me). He stayed a few weeks with us that first summer. We did everything together, and he joined in with 'the gang' as we played here, there and everywhere along the street (none of us went away to the great American institution: summer camp). He slept in my room, of course, or we both slept in the playroom, which was the one air-conditioned room in the house. We went to the beach (our town lay on the Long Island Sound about forty-five miles from NYC), to the town-owned country club where there was a swimming pool. One of our chief recreations was fishing in the Saugatauk (Indian name) River; I still have a photo of that.

During the school-year we wrote letters now and then.

Rodney came back at least two more summers during which he spent more and more time with us. Those summer included visits to my grandparents' dairy farm ('Bonnie Banks') in Massachusetts. (My mother's mother had divorced her doctor husband - he was violent - and eventually married a New England farmer; they bought 'Bonnie Banks' soon after they married in the early-1950s.) All of my summers were spent on the farm, and during those years Rodney joined us. There too was a small band of boys, and goodness, did we get up to things! And whatever adults may have thought (and who knows) none of us children thought anything of Rodney's being "black". Never a 'racist' word passed our lips or even, I think, entered our minds. In some respects he was different - colour, type of hair, accent and speech habits, a New Yorker! - and, of course, we were different too, different to *him*. Otherwise, though, we were a 'band of brothers'.

It wasn't long after those happy years that my family life became very hard both emotionally and practically. We couldn't have Rodney anymore; we lost touch. As I write this a buried grief rises within me. Until recently I haven't thought of Rodney, but now I wonder what's happened to him, and hope that those summers together were precious to him as they were to me.

#### **"Mother Ruth, CHS"**

My mother could no longer cope. In 1970 she sent us to live with our father in Manhattan. He lived in a studio apartment in a new development (Lincoln Towers) on the lower 'Upper West Side'. Though a very large studio apartment, it was cramped with three inhabitants! My father, in fact, slept on a roll-away bed which lived in the closet during the day but came out every night. We all had to manage, and we did.

The big question we faced was this: do we stay in the City in cramped quarters but attend a good private school? Or, do we move to the near-suburbs, live in a house but attend the state school in the neighbourhood? We had gone to look at the Episcopal day-school in Morningside Heights (near Columbia University) run by the sisters of the Community of the Holy Spirit (CHS), and decided that we preferred to go there rather than move out of the City. The school's Headmistress was the Reverend Mother Ruth. She was in fact the founder of both the sisterhood and the school. She was a tiny yet formidable woman.

As a teenager she had felt a call to the religious life in the Episcopal Church. But she was what used to be called a 'half-caste', that is, she was born of black and white parentage. Because she was racially "impure"



no religious community in the American Episcopal Church would have her. Refusing any deterrence, she went to Canada where she was accepted by the sisterhood of St. John the Evangelist (in Toronto, I think). Eventually, with a strong vocation to a teaching apostolate, she returned to New York City with one (even tinier!) sister with her. There she presented herself to the then Bishop of New York, the princely Horace Donegan (close friend of the Queen Mother) and, with just \$10 in her purse, announced to him that she and her companion, were there to found a school. Miraculously, it happened, so that by the time my sister and I appeared on the scene for high-school education in 1970 the school was a major educational enterprise, with a brand-new building, and an impressive staff of (in the high-school) mostly lay teachers.

Mother Ruth ruled with despotic force and unrivalled energy. "Yes, Mother" was the only reply to her that was countenanced! It was there that I discovered "my own" Christian faith. Her convent, St Hilda's House, became a second home for me, and her sisters a second family. (All "girls", of course; I'm not sure that was so good; still....) What's more, after my first rocky academic year, I rose to the academic challenges and opportunities and she gave me a sizable bursary for the rest of my time there. As I type this piece I see her in a b/w (how apt!) photograph in which she sits at her massive desk in the school, with pen in her right hand, her beloved dog "Jonathon" at her left, and the large Cross of the Bishop of New York on her breast, given for distinguished service. No one could have deserved that distinction more. She presented me for ordination to the diaconate in Dallas, Texas in 1982, when she gave me the photograph. Her inscription at the bottom left reads "...with blessings upon your life of Service to our Lord and to your neighbor".

As a teenager I became an 'associate' of her Community of the Holy Spirit and its 'rule of life' became and remains the foundation of whatever spiritual progress I've made. But above all I remember a conversation with her at the end of my priestly ordination retreat at the convent in Manhattan. "Remember, the only status a priest should ever seek is closeness to Jesus", she said. (I've wrestled with that through the years, yet her counsel has remained a lodestar, and explains why I've always found self-promotion deeply objectionable in the clergy.)

#### **"Bp T"**

I met some extraordinary clergy during my time at St Hilda's & St Hugh's School. One in particular became my 'spiritual father'. He was the Chaplain of the sisterhood and also father of one of my classmates. He was a brilliant man who, never having had a son of his own, took me in as the son-he'd-never-had. It was "Dr T" (as he was to all of us at the school) who shared with me his interests and in many ways opened up the cultural life of the City, especially architecture and visual art.

At the time when we met he was the Director of Trinity Institute, a centre for continuing theological education for the Episcopal clergy. It was bank-rolled by the vastly wealthy Trinity Church, Wall Street. Dr T led his 'brain-child' to nation-wide prominence during the late 1960s and early 1970s. After receiving his PhD in theology from Yale University he had been a parish priest in the Diocese of New York in the 1950s. Then he was head-hunted by a prominent urban church in booming Los Angeles in the early 1960s. It was his brilliant preaching that had caught their attention.

That was a period when institutional racism was still rife throughout the United States. President Johnson's 'Great Society' legislation and the civil rights marches through the 1960s were yet to come.

Dr T's church on Wiltshire Blvd, Los Angeles, was something of a society church. Its congregation included a potentially combustive mixture of congregants: on the one hand, wealthy businessmen of Los Angeles comfortable with the status quo and (some, anyway) sympathetic to the right-wing John Birch Society; on the other, young professionals from the east-coast who'd moved to the burgeoning, exciting 'new world' at the end of Route 66. One member of the congregation was especially noteworthy, the black singer Nat King Cole. He and Dr T became friends; Nat was often at the Rectory in the evenings; Dr T's daughter vaguely remembers his lullabies at bedtime.

**"Nat King Cole"**

On Easter Day 1962 Dr T planned for Nat King Cole to take a prominent role in the service. Vested, with the choir, in cassock and surplice he processed in and sang in his gentle, melodious voice 'Jesus Christ is risen today'. Those I interviewed years later about the episode remembered how moving they found it. But the 'old guard' thought differently. They withheld their pledges, turned the budget up-side down, accused the rector of failing, and called in the bishop to deal the death blow. He obliged. Dr T's low-key but clearly anti-racist ministry came to a sudden, brutal end. The family left Los Angeles, retreated back East and ended up eventually in New York City where the idea of Trinity Institute eventually came to birth.

Dr T never did much overt campaigning on social and political issues. When he was teaching at the General Seminary in Manhattan during the Vietnam War he attended an anti-war rally. But, as he once explained to me, he thought the church's role was to articulate the theological bases - principles, let's say, of social and political life but not to advocate *specific* policies. Individual Christians then needed to determine their posture in that light and make decisions and/or take action accordingly. The fact is, the brutal treatment in Los Angeles had damaged him, and the role of 'public prophet' was not one he ever sought. That has influenced me, to the disappointment, I suspect, of some of the flock at St Helen's.

In 1976 "Dr T" became "Bp T" in the Diocese of Dallas. He ordained me both to the diaconate and to the priesthood. He died in a nursing home about 1992 during my first sojourn in the UK. No one, I think, has had a greater impact on me than Bp T. In retrospect, though, I suppose that wouldn't have happened had it not been for Nat King Cole!

**Family Tree**

I can't end these black and white stories without telling you a bit about my family tree - further back than my mother and grandmother's generations. I am a descendent through the maternal line of the Lees of Virginia. It is, in fact, one of the most celebrated families in the history of the American colonies - leaders in the Virginia Colony in Williamsburg and fashioners and signers of the Declaration of Independence. The 'last and best' of the Lees, born on the family estate, Virginia's Stratford Hall, was Robert Edward Lee (1807-1870). He is best known to historians of the American Civil War as General Robert E. Lee, Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate Forces.

Though a tried and true Virginian with roots deep in the history of that prestigious colony and state, Lee was educated at West Point, the first in his class at that preeminent military academy on the Hudson River in New York State. His prowess in military tactics was honed in the Mexican-American War. When by 1861 negotiations to preserve the union of American states failed and war was imminent, President Lincoln invited Lee to become general of the Union Army. Lee was faced with a wrenching no-win choice. He could accept the commission, attain pre-eminence in the military he had served for 32 years and fight, as he put it, for "the Broad Union in all its might and strength"; or, he could remain loyal in responsibilities to family, friends and his native state of Virginia. His bitter-sweet choice: the latter. He could not lift his hand against "his own people", he told his wife.

Lee's command of the confederate forces, which he took up in the final years of the war, was brilliant. His campaigns are still studied as models of the science of war. His troops revered him. He shared their rations, slept in tents like theirs, and impressed them with his intelligence, daring, courage and integrity. Through that gruesome war his achievement was, from a military point of view, nearly miraculous: holding out against a northern army three-time larger and far better equipped, and almost winning.

In defeat Lee was noble. After the surrender at Appomattox, his counsel to all was clear: "Abandon your animosities, and make yours sons Americans". He worked tirelessly for a strong peace, and in the final years of his life committed himself to education as the president of Washington College ( later *Washington and Lee*). I have a small book of quotable quotes and aphorisms from Lee's writings and records of conversations. As they inspired others in his life-time, so, for me at least, they continue to impress.

Lee's own involvement with slavery directly evidences some occasions of morally repugnant treatment. Managing the manumission of his father-in-law's slaves, for instance, when executing his will involved Lee in deeply regrettable actions which one cannot but abhor from our current perspectives. Of that there is no doubt.

At the level of policy Lee regarded slavery as an evil but saw it in a context of other competing goods and evils. He was a gradualist, looking ahead to a process of liberation that did not put the Union at risk or involve the depredations of his native Virginia. Maintaining the integrity of a political union or taking arms against family and homeland: this was a choice none of us has ever had to make. His choice also reminds us that the Civil War was as much or more about the status and character of the political union of states than about the moral status of slavery (the vociferous challenge from 'Abolitionists' notwithstanding). That may disappoint, but it remains a fact. In their context the issues that weighted the moral scale were not as simple as we might prefer. Context mattered, just as it ought to for us as we look back and evaluate.

#### **Last word – for now**

My family and I are proud to be related to Robert E. Lee. My son and my grandsons all bear the family name "Lee". I deeply lament the spoliation of Robert E. Lee's memorials (for instance, in Washington's 'National Cathedral'). I regret that his loyalty to family and homeland -- a stance I respect -- implied maintenance, at least for a time, of a slave-based economy and a society of subjugation, and that his own familial responsibilities drew him into treatments to individuals which I count cruel. But, and here I speak as a Christian priest more than as a relation, it is vital to see individuals and their actions 'in the round'. It's true, of course, that different personalities will come out of such scrutiny differently. But just as I would wish to be remembered for the good I have done more than for the evil I have done or let others do, so I approach figures in history. I recognize too that scales of moral value change both for societies and for individuals (usually for better, but not always).

I wonder too how in the case of morally dubious or out-right objectionable behaviours and attitudes that we inherit as a society, economy and political system, how easily or clearly we can circumscribe the limits of participation, responsibility or guilt? St Paul's unnerving declaration to the Christians in Rome comes to mind: we have '*all* sinned and fallen short of the glory of God' (Romans 3.21)? And if that is so, then we must beware of the wicked tendency to scapegoat and throw stones at others, especially those who have gained a public reputation.

Perhaps this narration reveals something of the *in-the-roundness* of my own story, the context of my dis-ease with aspects of the current BLM movement, as well as something of the ambiguities that arise in the course of life's shifting path. My story reveals conflicting connections which evade simple resolution: proud and protective of my ancestry, while seeing its dark side, yet personally indebted to, and deeply thankful for, people of colour *and* some whom current political correctness seeks to erase.

Shall I conclude therefore (see the photo on page 6 of the last issue of the *Window*) that I'm a racist? What would you think, if my story were yours? Is that an imaginative step you're even able to take?

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An interesting quote from Frederick Buechner, 'Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale'

*Suggested by Sue Sheppy*

*There is a fragrance in the air, a certain passage of a song, an old photograph falling out from the pages of a book, the sound of somebody's voice in the hall that makes your heart leap and fills your eyes with tears. Who can say when or how it will be that something easters up out of the dimness to remind us of a time before we were born and after we will die?*

# Rain, Steam and Speed by J.M.W.Turner

*Rob Rutherford*

A Candle in the Window



To see a version you can zoom into, go [here](#):

It was the start of a new academic year at the sixth form college and we always had an induction day to get to know our new tutor group. For one of the ice-breakers, I brought in a selection of postcards, put them on the central table and asked my tutees to choose one that they liked. “OK Adrian”, a lad who was repeating some GCSEs, “why have you chosen this picture by Turner?” “Well”, he said, “I like the hare running ahead of the train that represents the loss of rural life” (I’m not quoting verbatim but it was lovely to learn from one of my students. It is definitely there but hard to spot!)

It was painted in 1844 and, as railway buffs will know, it shows an engine of the Firefly class travelling on the 7ft broad gauge, crossing Brunel’s bridge at Maidenhead. The engine is heading towards us and in some ways the painting depicts time. Is the engine to be welcomed or is it a threat? Is it significant that the horse-drawn plough to the right of the viaduct and the boat on the river are travelling in the opposite direction? Do they represent old technology? Progress was certainly fast. Stephenson’s Rocket won the Rainhill Trial in only 1829. It was controversial - would the train de-rail? Would the bridge collapse? Would ladies’ health be affected by the extreme speed?! Would it bring more harm than good? Do we feel similarly – is the future arriving too fast?

The carriage has no roof (look carefully!). The Railway Regulation Act 1844 was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom providing a minimum standard for rail passenger travel. It provided compulsory services at a price affordable to poorer people to enable them to travel to find work. What sort of regulation is appropriate for our society - should we regulate the fossil fuel companies, for example?

## Clocks Past and Present:

*Louise Heffernan and Rob Rutherford*

The pictures show the sundial at Sutton Wick, designed by Derek Pooley and built on the Drayton Millennium Green



The gnomon is parallel to the axis of the Earth's spin. That feels odd doesn't it? It is one of the oldest technologies. Perhaps invented by the Egyptians, perhaps the Babylonians. You may like to look up Isaiah 38:8 and decide whether it refers to a sundial!

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## Atomic Clocks

The most precise clocks are now atomic clocks based on the properties of atoms. The National Physical Laboratory ([NPL](#)) describes how the latest generation of clocks gives a time to an uncertainty of one part in  $10^{18}$ . I think this means that it might be out by less than a second if you wait the age of the Universe.

Atomic clocks can be made small enough to put on satellites and this technology gives us the ability to develop GPS systems and also explore and test Einstein's predictions that time changes with motion and also with your position up and down. You age differently at the bottom and top of a tall building!

The latest clocks can also tell us that the rate of rotation of the earth is not as constant as we might think and we sometimes have to change our clocks slightly to compensate.

The earth is a dynamic system so, for example, as land-based ice melts, the crust that had previously been compressed springs up slowly and changes the distribution of the earth's mass (strictly for those physicists reading this, the moment of inertia) and this in turn changes its rotation rate. Apparently they have also detected a seasonal effect – as the sap in trees rises, so the earth's rotation slows a little.

## Prague's Astronomical Clock

### (in Czech: *Pražský Orloj*)

*Rhianydd Hallas our Prague correspondent*

Prague's Astronomical Clock was first installed in 1410, making it the third-oldest astronomical clock in the world, and the oldest still in operation. It is believed to have been built by Mikuláš of Kadaň, aided by the Catholic priest and scientist Jan Sindel.

The clock is comprised of four important sections: the upper clock dial, the lower calendar dial, eight wooden statues, and the two windows at the top. The two dials are complex, and provide huge amounts of information for viewers: from their name-day date to the position of the sun.

The upper dial is an astronomical dial, a form of mechanical astrolabe, showing the position of the sun and the moon in the sky. The outer Gothic numerals are used to work out Old Czech Time (shown by the golden hand); the inner Arabic numbers on the blue represent planetary time; and, using the golden Roman numerals, 24hr semi-astronomical time (also known as German time) and sidereal time (used by astronomers to locate celestial objects) can be calculated. The blue and red areas represent day-time and night-time as well as sunrise, sunset, and the position of the tropics and equator, and the superimposed dial shows the marks of the zodiac and the position of the sun.

The lower calendar dial includes two rings of images: the outer illustrates scenes of rural life typical to each month of the year and the inner depicts the zodiac signs, this time in illustrated form. Around the edge (seen in these images as a blue margin due to the very small text size) are three rings of text: the outer gives the syllables of the *cisiojanus* (a rhyme to help people remember particularly important days of the year); the large middle ring gives the name of the saints for each day (known as a name-day: for example, people called Jan have the day of St John the Baptist as their name-day); and the inner gives the days of the month and the Sunday letters.

Eight wooden statues represent four Vices and four Virtues: the four Vices - Pride, Greed, Death, and Envy - are displayed around the upper dial, and the four Virtues - Kindness, the Archangel Michael, Charity, and Humility - around the lower dial.

The two doors at the top open on the hour between 9am and 11pm to reveal a moving procession of the 12 Apostles. During this hourly procession, the golden rooster on the top crows and moves, and some of the Vices and Virtues move their arms and heads as well.

The clock we see now is a far cry from its original form which included only the upper clock dial. The lower calendar dial was added in 1490 along with the gothic stone statues. The eight wooden statues were added in the 1600s and the upper details were added even later: the Apostolic procession in 1787-1797 (although replaced in 1865 and again in 1948) and the golden rooster right at the top in 1865.

Various renovations were needed, including a new calendar dial in 1866 and restorations in 1948 (after the clock was damaged in WW2 during the Prague uprising against the occupying Nazi forces), 2005 when the anti-pigeon nets were added, and 2018 which included removing the electric clock mechanism from the 1948 renovations and replacing it with the newly restored mechanism from the 1860s. The 2018 restoration also included creating a new calendar dial-plate, and placing the original face from 1866 in the City of Prague Museum.

During the 2018 renovations, a secret message was uncovered inside the statue of St Thomas, from the sculptor Vojtěch Sucharda. The message included his extensive plans for the clock which were never



## A Candle in the Window

carried out along with complaints about conditions in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and the start of the communist era.

The clock is also pivotal to many local Prague legends and superstitions. One local legend which sprung up about the original construction of the clock says that the clockmaker was blinded by city officials after completion of the clock in order to prevent him from replicating his masterpiece elsewhere. In revenge the blind clockmaker scaled the tower and sabotaged the mechanism so badly that it was over 100 years before it was repaired.

An old superstition about the clock is that all those who work on it will go mad or die quickly. Indeed Josef Mánes, who painted the 1866 calendar plate, succumbed to a mental illness in 1871, only 5 years after working on the clock, which fueled this particular superstition. For more information on the clock, the Prague City Tourism website has a 32-page guide with a lot of detail and close-up pictures of the clock and its mechanism (available in English, Czech, Spanish, French, and Italian):

For more information, click [here](#).

## Issue 6



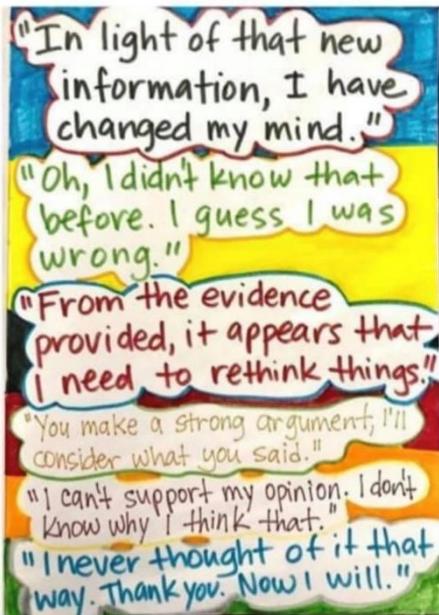
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## Other famous clocks are available!



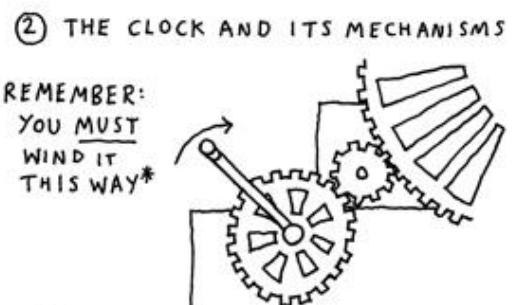
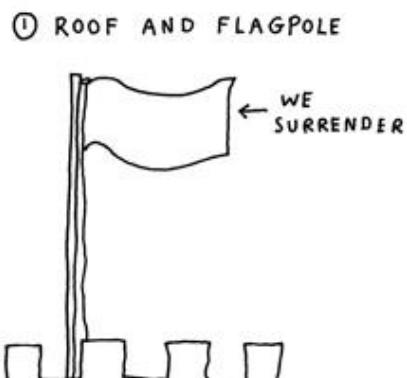
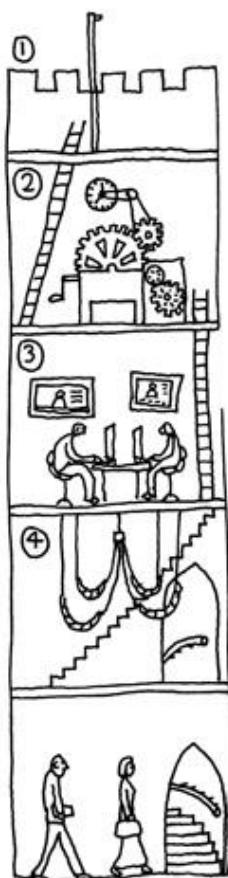
Here is Harrison's H4 chronometer of 1759 that eventually won the Longitude prize. Details can be found on the website of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich [here](#):

**Important phrases we should all be willing to say as we learn and grow.**

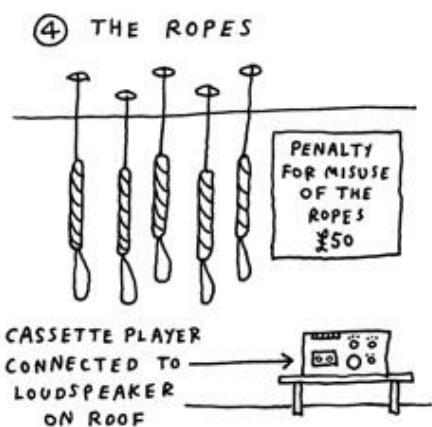


From the book of how to be a good cabinet minister..

## THE CHURCH TOWER



\* AT LEAST I THINK SO. ASK MR LAWRENCE AT ROSE COTTAGE



## Book Review

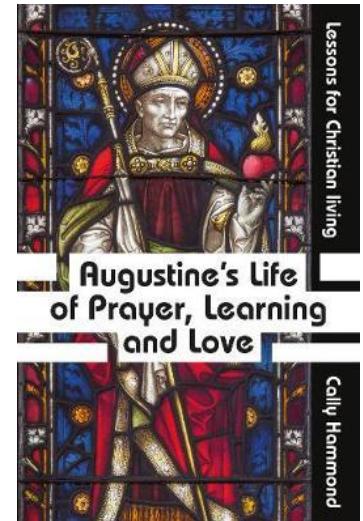
**Augustine's Life of Prayer, Learning and Love:  
Lessons for Christian living by Cally Hammond ([BRF, 2019](#))**

*Roderick Smith*

What do you know, or think you know, about St Augustine of Hippo? [He's not the Augustine who was the first Archbishop of Canterbury – that was a different saint.] Hippo was in Northern Africa, on the coast of modern-day Algeria, so we're talking about an African, not a European, saint. Perhaps you have, as many modern people do, a negative attitude to Augustine because you associate him with the doctrine of original sin. But there's much more to him than that.

In the introduction to this book the Revd Dr Cally Hammond states, "There are many books that tell the life story of Augustine and how he has been fundamental in shaping western Christian theology and practice. This is not one of them." That bold assertion is no doubt made to reassure potential readers that they're not in for a heavyweight theological ride. But we are taken on a wide-ranging exploration of aspects of Christian belief and living by the author as she introduces St Augustine and lets him speak to us. Chapters range from how we come to faith; how to get to grips with the Bible; doubts, debates and disagreements about the faith; how to live as a Christian; how to teach the faith; and how to pray, both alone and with others. By the end we do get to know St Augustine quite well and realise he was a Christian with many of the same concerns as us, despite the fact that he lived 1600 years ago.

Each chapter has a section written by the author with many apt quotations from St Augustine's *Confessions* (his best known and most popular book), a Bible passage for reflection on the general theme of the chapter, a prayer based on St Augustine's writings, and a series of questions to help us think further about what we have just read. These questions make the book ideal for a group study and discussion. Over the coming few months the house group (or in these extraordinary times, the Zoom group) which I convene will be reading this book to help us reflect on our faith in the company of St Augustine.



### St Augustine on 'Time'

"What is time then? If nobody asks me, I know;  
but if I were desirous to explain it to one that should ask me, plainly I do not know."

### St Augustine in 'Space'



## The Abingdon Community Response to Covid-19

*Gill Titcombe*



The Abingdon Community Response Group was set up just before the lockdown by a few ladies in Abingdon. They really got things moving swiftly, and after posting on facebook for volunteers to join the group in order to help neighbours and residents of Abingdon through, what was to them, going to be a long haul and a very difficult time.



They recruited well and had over 600 volunteers who over a short period were mobilized with areas to cover. It took a while to fill the missing gaps but eventually the whole of the town was covered. Initially we were doing shopping runs, regular phone calls to the elderly or people on their own vulnerable or not vulnerable, pharmacy runs, Post Office runs and during Easter Week, plenty of Easter egg purchases!! We deemed Easter Eggs essential supplies!!! It has been a privilege to be part of this group and to know that there are so many caring kind helpful people around. Since the Council (Government) set up their neighbourhood help system and Abi-Meds came to the rescue of the queues at Pharmacies certainly my requests have dropped way down, we are still working as a group for those who prefer not to brave the stores yet, and are praying that our services will not be required for a second wave of the virus. This group has rekindled my faith in human nature and through this I have met some lovely people in my neighbourhood, another “plus!”

An Across Town Team was set up recently to deliver food parcels for the food bank and food orders from various smaller stores in Abingdon, they cover most of the town as some of the original team members have returned to work. Sarah Jones, a member of the St. Helen's Choir is working with this group and finds she is still quite busy delivering to the people still in lockdown. They also collect from those stores which find themselves with surplus supplies and willing to donate food items to the food bank. Perhaps you will have noticed while in the town, people wearing bright yellow vests with black writing, "Abingdon Community Response", look out for them and say 'Hi'. There are still many people house bound through shielding/isolation and other such circumstances that have no way of getting out for food and other essentials, it has been a pleasure being part of this amazing team of people.

At a last count we were informed by “our bosses” that over 3000 errands have been run. I am sure that we have made a difference to many people’s lives during this lockdown and in return many people have made a difference to our lockdown experience.



## Time Past, Present and Future – a Christian Alternative to One-Dimensional Thinking about Time

*Roderick Smith*

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future  
And time future contained in time past.

*- The first lines of T S Eliot's Four Quartets, Burnt Norton I (The Complete Poems and Plays of T S Eliot, Faber and Faber, 1969)*

To many people these lines seem complete nonsense because they are stuck in a topologically simple, linear and secular way of thinking about time and causality. But Eliot, who by the time he wrote the Four Quartets was a Christian, expressed in poetic form the Christian view of time. For me they beautifully and succinctly express a profound truth. But I'm not the only one who thinks this way. In his recent novel Aftershocks, the author A. N. Wilson (probably expressing his own view) says of the main character Eleanor, the Dean of the earthquake-destroyed cathedral in the fictional Island, “. . if the first few lines of Burnt Norton are true (and, for Nellie, nothing was more true than those lines) . . .”

These few lines of poetry encapsulate the Christian truth of a realised, or inaugurated, eschatology in the incarnation of the Son and the coming of the Spirit as well as the prolepsis of Christ's resurrection. They tell of ‘the age to come’ already present – see John 4.23 & 5.25: “The hour is coming, *and now is . . .*” Through this God’s ultimate future graciously transforms our past and present and future.

### Silent Reflections...

... the theme this month is ‘New Beginnings’

The current phrase is “The new normal”. Some people want “The new normal” to eventually settle back into some semblance of what life used to look like. For others the future holds new beginnings – a new job, a move to another location, a new child to name but a few. Some beginnings are our choice. Others are not.

Isaiah 43:18-19

Do not remember the former things,  
 or consider the things of old.  
<sup>19</sup> I am about to do a new thing;  
 now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
 I will make a way in the wilderness  
 and rivers in the desert.

[Click here to find more](#)



## Carpe Diem? Is this relevant for Christians?

*Elizabeth Dawson.*

During the Covid 19 pandemic it has been part of my routine to begin each day on my exercise bike with a 30 minute cycle whilst listening to Classic FM. At around 8.30 am there is a “Carpe diem” cryptic clue which is usually connected to music, a book or film or a theme of the day. This set me thinking about the meaning of “carpe diem”, its relevance for the present situation and its value for me as a Christian. I am no Latin Scholar, despite 2 years of trying hard and with no certificate of competence at the end! So, I had to resort to a little research. “Carpe Diem” literally means seize or pluck the day. It originates from the writings of Horace from one of his books of “Odes”. However, beware! This is not all good news. There is a flip side which says you should live for the moment and not bother about tomorrow. Have a good time. You only have one life.



However, the more I thought about “carpe diem” I couldn’t help wondering if there wasn’t something better to be had from its use. Why had Classic FM chosen to have a “carpe diem” moment each day at this present time? I hope it was for the best of reasons, if for nothing else but to lift our spirits as we begin a new day. Whatever the reason, I have found it a comforting, joyful and helpful way to start each day whilst listening to music, which has always been so much part of my life.



So here are some of my “carpe diem” pleasures. As I am cycling, I look out from my elevated, bedroom view over our lovely garden. I have had the privilege of watching spring and early summer unfold before my eyes; bulbs, blossom, wallflowers, clematis, roses and the wonderful antics of the birds. I have watched squabbles at the bird feeders, nest building in the hedges and trees, bathing and drinking, fights at the bird bath and the first efforts of fledgling chicks as they start to explore the big wide world and learn to fly. Over the Hawthorne hedge, I can see the

playing field for Thomas Reade School. I have watched a heron, standing motionless as it contemplates its next flight; flocks of starlings flying in formation, and soaring above, our now regular residents, red kites. The neighbours’ cats usually put in an appearance as they scan the edges of the playing field looking for mice. Then in the middle of May, the groundsman appeared to mark out the field with running tracks and rectangular boxes for self-distancing, so that the children could begin returning to school in their small “bubbles”.

In another part of our garden, hidden from my view on my morning cycles, we have a feeding station for hedgehogs. They have provided another joy for each day. Being nocturnal we rarely see them in daylight, but we have a camera trap which records their night time activities. Each morning we have the pleasure of watching them, on film, scuttling under the concrete paving stone to retrieve the cat biscuits which we place there each evening. Recently there have been 2 hogs and we have also caught sight of one walking across the lawn at dusk.

So, is “enjoying yourself whilst you can,” something we should embrace during the present crisis? Taking delight in the simple pleasures of each day can have huge benefits. It has certainly helped me. But should we, whilst enjoying today, be thinking and planning about tomorrow and the future. Planning for a good tomorrow is not the same as worrying about it, nor should we be irresponsible or impulsive. Christ tells us to focus on God and to put his trust in him. Every day is God given – “This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it”. Perhaps “carpe diem”, seizing the day is not such a bad idea after all! Enjoy your day!



## Junior Church

*Sue Pemberton on behalf of the Junior Church leadership team.*

Junior Church continues to meet through the private Facebook group. We have been following the Gospel readings and making use of the resources provided by Roots.



On 21<sup>st</sup> June the theme was ‘Don’t be Afraid’. It’s not easy following Jesus, but God cares for us and we are more special than a whole flock of sparrows, and so special that he knows all the hairs on our head. As this was before hairdressers re-opened, we were all very conscious of the hairs on our head and we had some lovely lockdown hair pictures! We also had some lovely sparrows. As it was Fathers’ Day the children were asked to celebrate their dads and other father figures in their lives.



On 28<sup>th</sup> June our theme was ‘Welcome in the name of Jesus’. Whoever provides a welcome to other people is also welcoming God, and even small acts of welcome are appreciated. Our opportunities for providing a welcome are rather limited at the moment, but it was suggested that the children could make a welcome banner for a room in their house and/or set a really welcoming table for a meal. We had some pictures of beautifully welcoming tables and reports that Maia, Nathaniel and Miriam had cooked for their families as well. Eliza and Jemima made Welcome notices for their bedrooms.

On 6<sup>th</sup> July we focussed on the final part of the Gospel reading with theme “And I will give you rest” Jesus tells us that if we are tired and carrying a heavy burden, He will share it with us and give us rest. The last few months have been hard for everyone so it’s good to know that Jesus is there to help us when we are feeling down. If we have to do something difficult, it’s much easier to have someone to do it with rather than having to struggle alone. The children were challenged to cross the room standing on a sheet of newspaper, first on their own and then working with a partner. Some great videos appeared (it’s much easier if you have hard floors rather than carpet!!) The children were also reminded that it was the 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday of the NHS who certainly share people’s loads.



## St Helen’s Baby and Toddler Group

*Sue Pemberton, Helper*

The group has kept in touch via its Facebook page and a weekly singing session with lots of action songs on Zoom. Ideas for crafts and activities have been posted to the Facebook page weekly and Jenny Shouler has run the Zoom music sessions which are open to families from both groups. The year finished on 6<sup>th</sup> July with a Zoom Teddy Bears Picnic singalong. Families and helpers brought along their teddies and some refreshments (my bears brought a large pot of honey to keep them going!), and after a brief social time, Jenny lead us in our favourite songs accompanied by Andrew on the piano.



It’s sad that we haven’t been able to say a proper goodbye to children leaving to move on to school, nursery etc and we are yet to welcome in person our two newest members, Elizabeth Dowling and Arthur Taylor, both born since March. We don’t know when we will be back, but we will be!

## Looking forward

*Alexandra Green*

Lockdown during recent months has meant that church has been very different. But what does the future hold? What have we learnt as a church collectively and as individuals to carry forward into, using that dreadful expression, the ‘new normal’.

First, an appreciation of the variety of forms of ministry, both clerical and lay. The emergence of a new generation of lay leaders needs to be nurtured and not just regarded as a ‘temporary fix’. This includes people who we might regard as ‘church leaders’ such as members of the pastoral care group.

Secondly, having church buildings as a visible presence at the heart of the community is a blessing not merely a burden. We were reminded at a recent PCC that we as current members of the congregation are stewards of the building; it is not idolatrous to spend time and money on maintaining and improving them. A vision for the future could be to have St Helen’s open more. Philip Larkin says that a church is a ‘serious house on a serious earth’ and as such holds a unique place.

Thirdly, having ‘virtual church’ has provided access to services to people who were not regular churchgoers or who had never attended. There is anecdotal evidence people have come to faith. Some studies suggest that one in three of the population have attended online services since lockdown began; one Sunday the Christians crashed Zoom. So the church of the future needs to build on this new way of proclaiming and preaching the gospel.

Sr Catherine Wybourne, who blogs and tweets as @Digitalnun, wrote recently:

The being with others, united in purpose, experiencing all these things in different ways but at the same time, is intrinsic to our experience of beauty in church and of the divine beauty the Church exists to mediate. Can we do that in a Church starkly divided into clerical and lay, young and old, healthy and sick, to a degree we have not experienced before? Crucially, can we do that in a Church where privatisation of the experience of liturgy (as in live-streamed worship, where the worshipper decides which liturgy to follow and when, rather than simply forming part of a local community) is part of the ‘new normal’? How creative can we be, as distinct from merely being novel? Will we give time and effort to beauty or not?

Sr Catherine puts very succinctly what the future of the church might look like and what some of the pitfalls might be. Let us consider these as we plan for the post-lockdown Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

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## Hope for the future:

*Jill Gant*

My great hope for the world is the creation of a political economy in which people and planet matter more than profit and which does not depend on infinite growth in a world of finite resources.

My great hope for the church is that it can offer in principle and practice Jesus' core message of unconditional love to all people regardless of their beliefs. People will be drawn to such a loving community and the church will grow, with the eventual possibility of building the Kingdom.

## Hope for the future:

*Helen Owen*

My hope for the future is for our health and wellbeing to be viewed in an holistic way, incorporating body, mind and spirit, rather than the present mainstream reductionist approach

## Hope for the future:

*Susan Halstead*

Drama is a valuable means of approaching difficult subjects, and of helping both actors and audience to grow in empathy, imagination and human understanding. My hope for the future is that we may all learn to develop and manifest these qualities, both as a church and in our wider society.

## Hope for the future:

*Jenni Collins*

Many people have discovered the positive feelings that come from supporting elderly acquaintances. I hope that looking out for such friends and neighbours will continue.

Appreciating the beauty of where we live - through walking and cycling - is something we hope to continue to do instead of constantly going further afield in the car in search of new vistas.

## Thresholds

*Helen Owen*

When the easing of the lockdown was announced, I had the feeling that I had reached a threshold, a dividing line between the past days of restrictions and the present, a place to make a conscious decision to either choose to go forward, with caution I might add, or stay in what might be a safety zone.

I find it helpful to think of the word threshold not just as an entrance, a place where we enter physically but also as a metaphor. It conjures up a definite point in our lives where we can choose to act or to stay where we are, and it can present itself in a variety forms. When we find ourselves at one of these thresholds, can we let go of any preconceived ideas of how things may unfold? Are there things we want to leave behind? Do we guard the threshold until it's safe to proceed? Such questions may be asked but also feelings can be stirred within us before we decide to step over a threshold: fear, resistance, anticipation, excitement and challenge being just a few.

I think many of us are finding it harder to relax lockdown than we expected. There may be some anxiety about venturing out or making big plans for holidays etc. and perhaps a reluctance to rush around - although the mind does that well without any input!

It seems a most timely moment to reflect on how we are most called to respond to our current times, or to take more "time out" to see if the shape of how to respond comes into focus.

In a state of unknowingness as in post-lockdown, our individual purpose may be very different from what has gone before, so how do we resource ourselves in this state?

As we face our thresholds let us trust in the Divine Guide, our Protector and Security who is ever near to show us the way and lead us on the right path that offers hope, peace and is life giving. May we confidently say, "In You, Lord, my God, I put my trust." (Psalm 25 vs 1)

And just a final thought to ponder: has the experience of lockdown unlocked anything in us? Perhaps we have found new inspirations in our heart...



The tableau portrays the development from childhood to adulthood. One of the children is Jeff Dale.



Roger Cox on the cross channel ferry to France for his first school exchange and first trip out of the UK. Aged 13 and well equipped for the weather in the South of France. A good rain coat and underneath, a Harris tweed jacket! You can't be too careful visiting foreign climes!



Jill Gant and her first bicycle



Rob Rutherford and the class of '74 at Kasungu Government Secondary School, Malawi.



Norman Dawson, a newly promoted Assistant Chief Engineer with UKAEA, with one of the first IBM PC's



This photo of Rosalind Rutherford dates from 1977 and the era of the Youth Opportunities programme. One YOP project in Manchester was to make giant inflatables, the precursor of Bouncy Castles, for play schemes around Manchester. I was jumping on this “Bouncybouncy” which was in the middle of Manchester one lunchtime for some reason (I wasn’t part of that project but was setting up a Toy Library based in Wythenshawe)



Susan Halstead appearing as Polina Andreyevna in Chekhov's *The Seagull* on her 21st birthday in an open-air production at St. Hilda's.



Helen Owen preparing as a nurse to assist in a surgical operation

## Confirmation of the Election of Stephen Cottrell as Archbishop of York 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020

*Observed by RR. To find out more [click here](#):*



Another use for ‘Zoom’! The legal formalities came first, full of arcane sentences like ‘We do admit your Summary Petition so far as the same may by Law be admitted and do decree that you prove the matters recited in your Petition immediately.’ +Stephen must have complied because someone said ‘I pray that a Public Instrument and Letters Testimonial shall be made and issued by the Court’ and eventually we had an archbishop for the ‘cathedral and metropolitical church of St Peter in York.’ Phew.

In the more moving part of the service, a ‘charge’ was read by members of various churches across the North. Here is an extract from this challenging ‘job-spec’. How would you get on?

Archbishop Stephen, you are called:



To deepen the theological engagement of us all by rooting us in our Christian story yet casting a vision for a future which remains unknown; to give us Gospel-inspired confidence to be transformational in our life together in obedience to the Holy Spirit; to encourage and stimulate fresh ideas about models for existing and new worshipping communities and to bring life and shared purpose to our governance bodies as they discharge their responsibilities.

To build our confidence in our own prayer life, evangelism and discipleship; to have a particular care for the flourishing of the vocations and formation of lay and ordained people across the province and to equip them for ministry in the northern context.

To prioritise sharing the love and good news of Jesus Christ with those whom we never see in Church, particularly families, young people and those living in challenging social and economic circumstances across the Diocese.

To bring energy to our vision for change, to our aspirations for our life together as a Diocese, to open us up to fresh possibilities and to inject hope and realism into a challenging context.

To be an advocate for those whose voices are not heard and to connect with those whom society can exclude; to engage in public debate and legislative bodies to shape the life of the nation.

To contribute to the emerging social, community and economic agenda of northern England through working in partnership with wider community, business and elected leaders.

To welcome and support colleagues of other faiths, their voice in public discourse and their role in community life.

To build connections and partnerships with key community leaders to improve the quality of life of the marginalised and young people across our cities, towns and rural areas.



## The Passage of Time

*Rod Hunt*

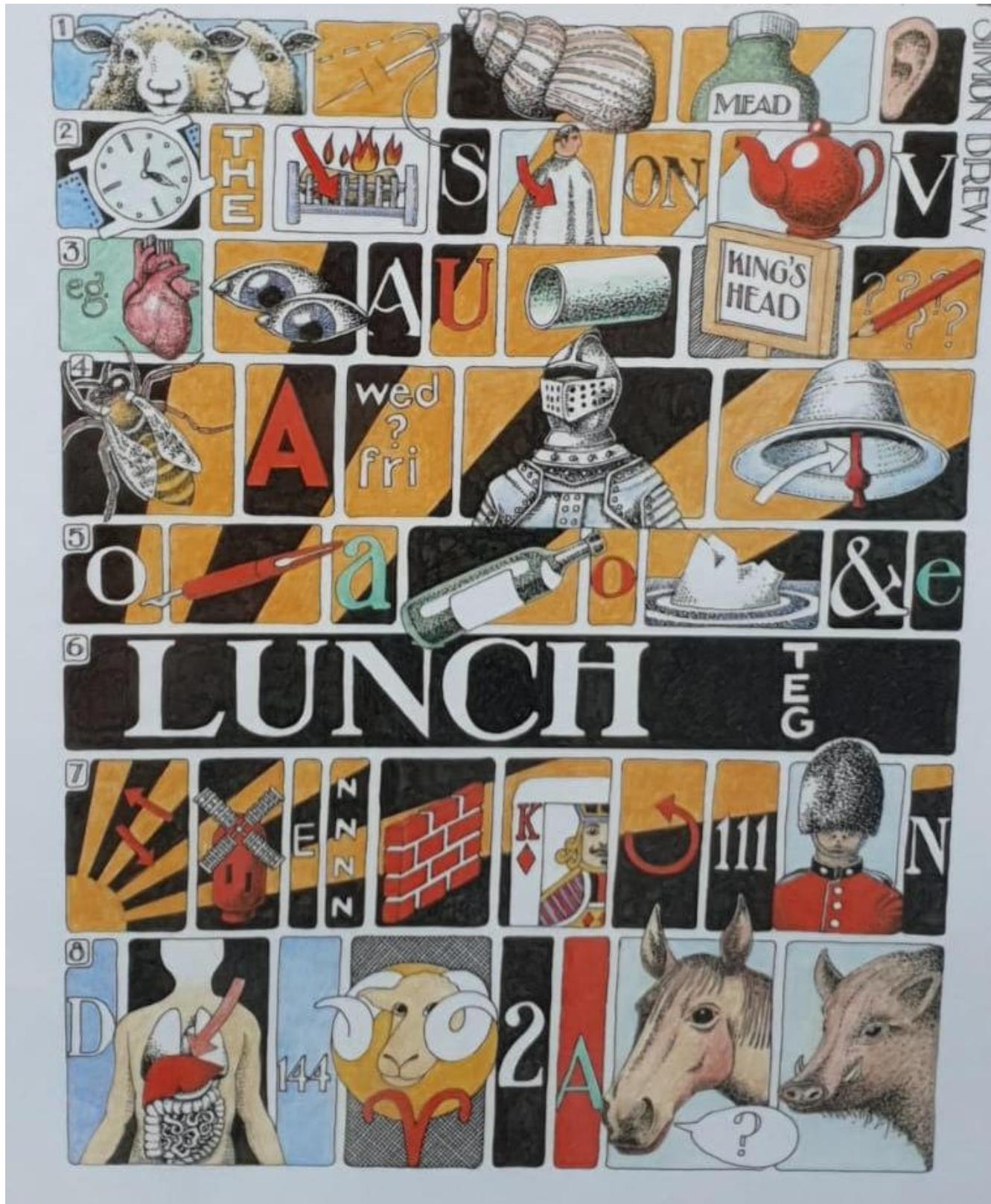
Each clue has to do with time passing –such as: time, seconds, minutes, hours, days, nights, weeks, yesterday, today, tomorrow, ever, eternity, infinity, future etc (answers are either in singular or plural)

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1 'Now is the _____' sentimental song often song before parting             | ..... |
| 2 'There is no time like the _____' (proverb)                               | ..... |
| 3 '_____ from Tulsa' song sung by Gene Pitney                               | ..... |
| 4 What diamonds are for (saying & Ian Fleming book and film)                | ..... |
| 5 'To every thing there is a _____' Ecclesiastes 3 1 -13                    | ..... |
| 6 Brief period of respect shown on Remembrance Day etc                      | ..... |
| 7 'But at my back I always hear time's _____ hurrying near' (Marvell)       | ..... |
| 8 'Back to the _____' 1985 American science fiction film                    | ..... |
| 9 What it is that 'saves nine' (proverb)                                    | ..... |
| 10 Tales which include stories such as Aladdin, Sinbad and Scheherazade     | ..... |
| 11 Procedure in Parliament allowing introduction of Private Member's Bill   | ..... |
| 12 Run by Roger Bannister in 1954   | ..... |
| 13 TV 'interiors' show 2004 – 2014 transforming four rooms in a house       | ..... |
| 14 Term describing period of time when happiness in a relationship declines | ..... |
| 15 'To _____ and beyond!' Buzz Lightyear                                    | ..... |
| 16 'The _____ of the Jackal' Frederick Forsyth story and film               | ..... |
| 17 'A _____ is a long time in politics' Harold Wilson                       | ..... |
| 18 'From Here to _____' 1953 film   | ..... |
| 19 'A _____ in the Country' J.L Carr novel and film                         | ..... |
| 20 'Dance of the _____' music composed by Amilcare Ponchielli               | ..... |
| 21 'When all my troubles seemed so far away' Beatles' song. So when?        | ..... |
| 22 '_____ Amber' novel by 1944 novel by Kathleen Winsor                     | ..... |
| 23 UK Govt 'Cold War public alarm system' in operation 1953 - 1992          | ..... |
| 24 '_____ Never Dies' 1997 James Bond Film                                  | ..... |
| 25 H G Wells' novel about travel into the future                            | ..... |
| 26 '... onward go the pilgrim band.' But through what?                      | ..... |
| 27 'Hold _____ in the palm of your hand ... (continued in next clue)        | ..... |
| 28 ... and _____ in an hour.' William Blake poem 'To See the World'         | ..... |
| 29 Boardgame - 'Othello – 'A _____ to learn, a lifetime to master'          | ..... |
| 30 'Do not put off until tomorrow what can be done _____' Mark Twain        | ..... |
| 31 'Time goes by so slowly and time can do so much' From what song?         | ..... |
| 32 Cache of goods or information to be discovered by people in the future   | ..... |
| 33 Waltz introducing panel game 'without hesitation, deviation, repetition' | ..... |
| 34 'Time is of the _____' - term used in contract law in England and Wales  | ..... |
| 35 'los días siguientes' is Spanish for?                                    | ..... |

## Spot the thing you can do under Lockdown!

*Sent from Z to X and passed on to R but included with permission from the artist Simon Drew*

<https://www.simondrew.co.uk/>



## Kakuro

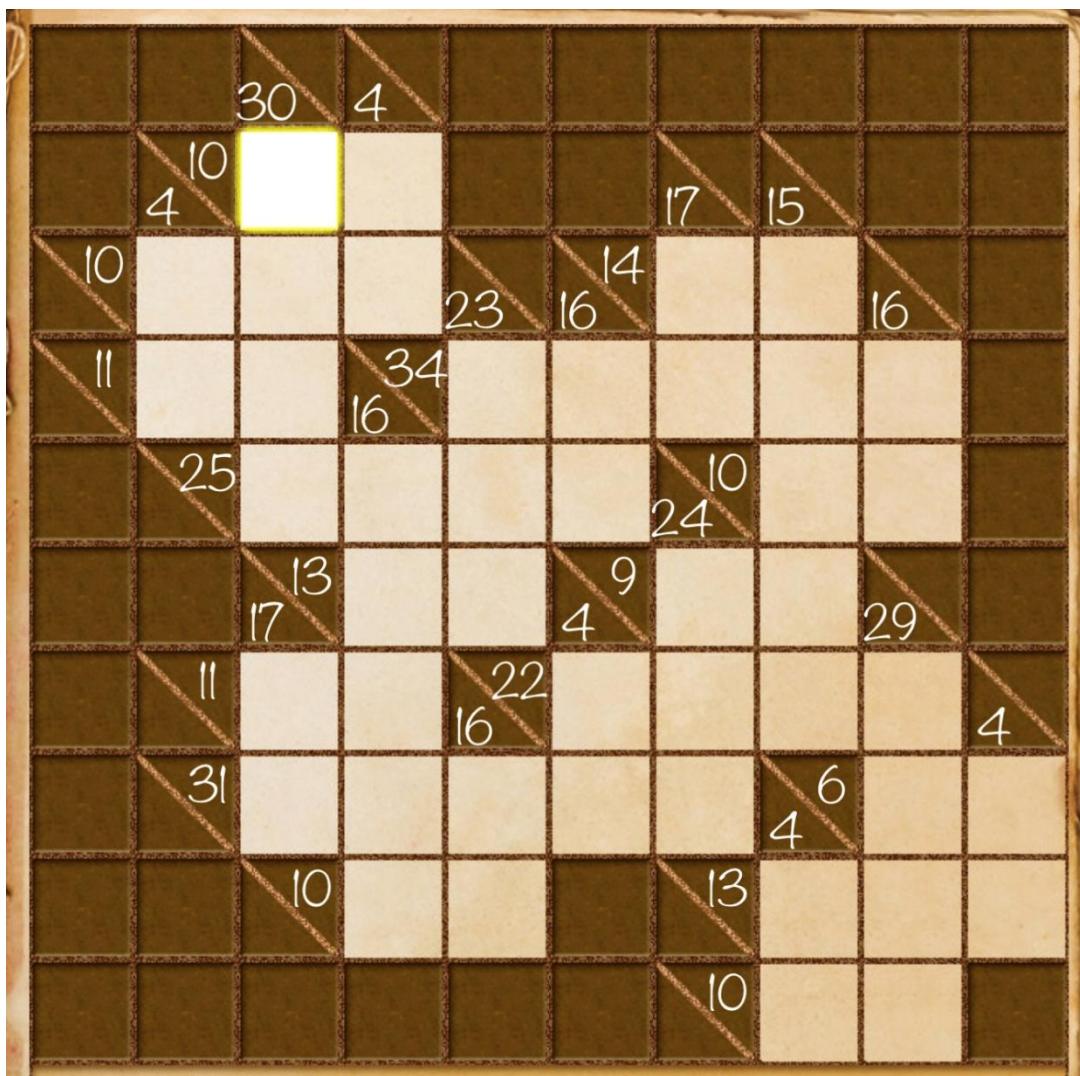
*With thanks to Rob's App*

If you haven't done one of these before, you fill the grid so that each 'block' adds up to the total above or to the left. You can only use the digits 1 to 9 and you mustn't use the same number twice in a block.

To get you started, a '4' can only be made from 3 and 1 (2 and 2 is not allowed)....

How could you make 16 with two digits?

What about 34 with 5 digits? Now you are underway!

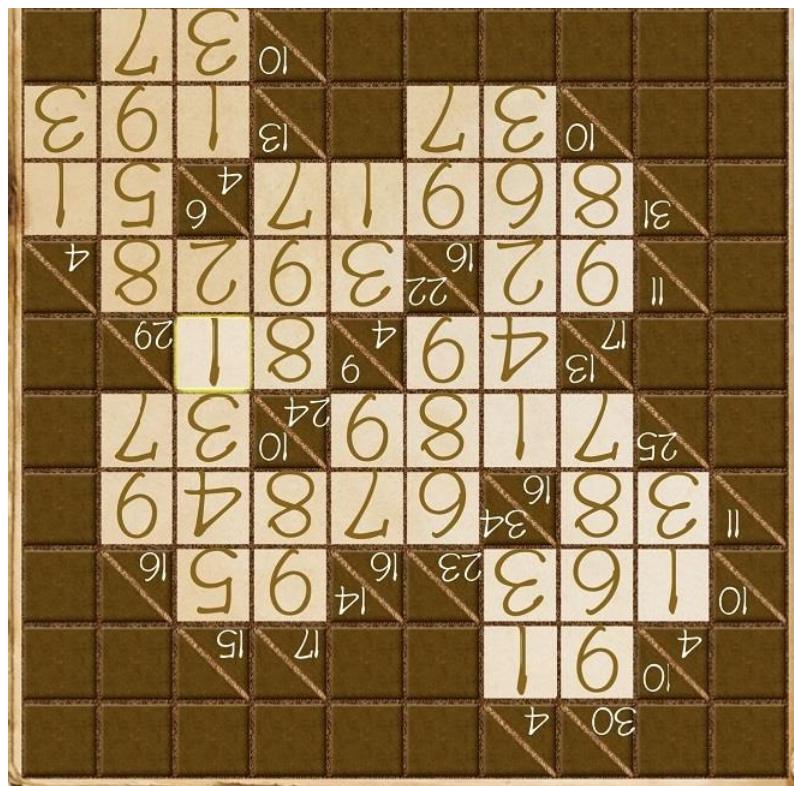


- 8 Deliver groceries to a neighbour  
 7 Raise millions walking round ones garden  
 6 Get up after lunch  
 5 Open a bottle of Burgundy  
 4 Be a Thursday Night Clapper  
 3 Organise a YouTube pub quiz  
 2 Watch the Great Escape on TV  
 1 Use social media

## Passage of time: Answers:

- 1 hour  
 2 present  
 3 Twenty-four hours  
 4 Forever  
 5 season  
 6 Two Minute Silence  
 7 time's winged  
 8 future  
 9 a stitch  
 10 1,001 Nights  
 11 Ten Minute Rule  
 12 Four Minute Mile  
 13 Sixty Minute Makeover  
 14 Seven Year Itch  
 15 Infamy  
 16 Day  
 17 Week  
 18 Eternity  
 19 Month  
 20 Hours  
 21 Yesterday  
 22 Forever  
 23 Four Minute Warning  
 24 Tomorrow  
 25 The Time Machine  
 26 the night of doubt and sorrow  
 27 Infamy  
 28 Eternity  
 29 minute  
 30 'the day after tomorrow'  
 31 Uncharmed Melody  
 32 time capsule  
 33 The Minute Walk  
 34 essence  
 35 the day after tomorrow

## Kakuro answers:



## Useful Weblinks:

To take part in the Diocesan services led by the Bishops and to find live streams from other churches:  
<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/livestream/>

Parish Resources: for worship and for reading  
[http://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/Parish/P\\_resources.html](http://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/Parish/P_resources.html)

The Abingdon Blog with its thought for the day:  
<https://www.abingdonblog.co.uk/>

Page for Church of England links: services, daily readings etc  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

**FOOD BANK.** The Abingdon Foodbank is still very busy and anxious to keep up the support even though churches are closed. **Northcourt Road (Christ Church) is open to receive donations on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm.** Their immediate need is tinned meat & vegetables (not tomatoes), long-life milk, fruit squash or juice, jam and sugar. You can also make donations by sending a cheque made out to *North Abingdon PCC Christ Church*, clearly marked 'for Food Bank', you can also donate via CCA website at <https://cca.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/njbejebi/foodbank> or the Parish office have details if you want to donate via online banking.

Thank you for reading.

Finally, we can hope..



**Thank you** to all contributors. After this bumper issue we are having a rest!  
 Please let us know what you think and, if we carry on, what you would like to see.  
 Please email to [Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk](mailto:Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk)