



Issue 18, 4 October 2020

Dear Reader, welcome to issue 18, longer than usual to make up for its later than planned arrival! This issue features lockdown holidays, back to school and other news items, which I hope will bring you up to date and help to keep you involved and connected!

Lockdown Holidays - here are some of our readers' recent holiday experiences:

Jim Thomas writes, "Here is my experience of a Covid-19 holiday. I was fortunate to spend an enjoyable week in Paignton in Devon. The hotel adapted very well to the current restrictions. Breakfast had to be ordered the previous evening and there was a specific time to enter the restaurant. As I expected, the evening entertainment was cancelled. The local bus and train services were excellent - it was business as usual. Restaurants and cafés were open everywhere. Social-distancing was attempted to a certain extent and on two occasions I was asked to provide my address and phone number. Some places of interest were closed while others remained open. I had enquired about first class travel for my train journey from Paddington but this was unnecessary as I was told I could sit anywhere! In conclusion, one very visible reminder of Covid-19 in Paignton was that cruise ships, including Queen Mary 2, remained anchored off shore!

David & Thelma: At the beginning of September Thelma and David went on a **virtual pilgrimage** of seven holy places around the UK starting at **Iona** and finishing up at **Lindisfarne**. We stopped for just fifteen minutes at each place for a hymn, meditation and prayer - courtesy of Tom Bridges and YouTube! The only place we had visited before was **St David's**, memorable not only for its beautiful cathedral and a delightful walk through the fields to the beach but also for our first taste of a goat's cheese and onion chutney panini at the local cafe. After lockdown we would like to actually visit **Lindisfarne Island** - friends of ours have been there several times in the last couple of years.



LINDISFARNE

Revd Catherine, vicar of St Edward's, Mottingham emailed me about some holiday projects at St Edward's and an update on the foodbank hours.

"For many families this year going away for a holiday was not going to be a possibility; for some it isn't a possibility any year, even without Covid 19. St Edward's therefore wanted to be able to offer something to families who would struggle to get away and yet were also struggling with children being at home for the extended time resulting from the lockdown. At the end of July we launched a Treasure Hunt with 14 clues covering some of Mottingham's history and a trip into Marvels Lane Woods; the Treasure Hunt continued throughout August with small prizes for all who took part. In early August we sent out picnic parcels to 100 families with whom we have been in touch via the foodbank, prepared by a team of volunteers including two members of St Andrew's who made the mistake of coming to St Ed's for church that Sunday! From the 9th August we also cleared the nave of the church to host crazy golf, something active and fun to do, which many of the volunteers enjoyed as much as the participants. A big thanks to Mottingham Big Local for the funds for these projects and the various volunteers who helped make it happen. We are currently seeking funds to enable some activities for the half term and Christmas holidays too but in the meantime *the foodbank continues, with a new phone number (07395 565984) and slightly different opening hours - Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9.30am to 1pm and Wednesdays from 6-7pm.*"

Mary Sylvester sent me a holiday ‘tale from Wales’ - At 6.30am one morning Alan and Elizabeth Sylvester were suddenly woken by a loud crashing noise. They blamed it on early morning boaters or kayakers. Later that morning Mickey, found that his beloved boat, Lowri, had been damaged. Luckily some lobster pots had reduced the impact, as revealed by the CCTV recording. He was astonished to see that an SUV had driven up the road in front of the house and then went out of sight. A man then appeared, walking to the beach whilst taking selfies. Then, a driverless car came into view rolling backwards down the road until it crashed into Lowri! The man then returned to the car and drove away. The CCTV clearly showed the number plate so Mickey is now in contact with the person seen in the recording!

Mickey is the local commercial fisherman and head of the local Boat Club. On an earlier occasion he had used Lowri to rescue a small boat, adrift in dense fog, when the RNLI were unable to get close enough.



Mary Wyborn sent me the following - “I have been lucky enough to have had two holidays during the pandemic. The first was a week in early August (the really scorching week) to a farmhouse in Icklesham, Sussex with the family. It had been booked up before the onset of Covid and was still available to us. We had morning walks with the dog along the beach at Winchelsea, lunches under the trees in the garden with beautiful views of surrounding fields of sheep grazing peacefully. We also had a couple of trips into Rye for shopping and meals out. I visited an old friend from Mottingham (Jill Bruce) who now lives at Winchelsea and we both swam in the sea, which was very warm. Most afternoons it was too hot to do much except laze in the garden with our books, whilst the boys relaxed in the hot tub. A lovely break! Then In September a friend & I spent a few days staying with another friend in Bideford, Devon. We travelled by train from Waterloo (wearing our masks all the way) and she picked us up at Exeter. On arrival, after some welcoming tea and cake, we relaxed before dinner with a bracing walk along the huge sandy beach at Westward Ho which must have blown away any germs we’d brought with us! There are few cases of Covid in Devon so we were able to go out to pubs and restaurants for meals most evenings. We also visited RHS Rosemoor which had a lovely selection of autumn flowers, especially in their Jewel Garden. Their produce also looked delicious – lots of different species of apples & pears etc. plus many seasonal veggies. We are all keen walkers so we managed several local walks around Appledore and Croyde etc. and were able to use our Bus Passes for the return journeys. On our final day we drove to Bude in Cornwall which had many holidaymakers as it was a very hot day. We explored old haunts and ended up bodyboarding on one of the beaches. The waves were very strong and knocked us over once or twice, but it was very exhilarating and made us feel quite young again (we are in our seventies). We had a wonderful time and returned home with lots of happy memories to hopefully carry us through the winter months.”

Alison & Bob were unable to go on holiday to Norway in early May as planned because of the pandemic. By September things looked easier so we decided to visit old friends in Clearwell in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. The Tudor Farmhouse hotel, conveniently located in the village, was geared up for Covid-19 business, so we were able to stay there for three nights, allowing us to spend time with Brian & Margaret during the daytime catching up on the last 18 months. We were also belatedly able to celebrate the couple’s diamond anniversary by inviting them for dinner at the hotel!

Our friends’ cottage sits in more than an acre of garden which is now proving difficult for them to manage as they are in their 80’s. Nonetheless, it’s a beautiful space and attracts an abundance of wildlife, although hungry wild boar and deer have to be kept out! Autumn colours were appearing during our ‘Indian Summer’ visit, adding the finishing touch to our lovely short Covid-19 break!



Back to school!

Laura Baugh emailed me on her way home from Eltham C of E primary school with children, saying - "Just on bus to collect the children from school so instead of work emails I thought I'd try to get this one done for you. **Rosa** returned to year 2 this year and is enjoying it as much as ever.



Laura and Garf have signed her up for guitar lessons this year at school, so you never know, there may be yet another member of Laura's family joining the already increasing number of musicians amongst them.

Roman started school nursery full time. As an August baby he is almost a whole year younger than many of the others but as everyone knows he's a very big boy like his Dad so is towering over all the other children.



Life continues to be a balancing act for both Laura and Garf as they continue to work full time and Laura's promotion to Head of Royal Greenwich Music Service during lockdown has now fully kicked in as all the schools return. Laura has to advise all the schools on the ever changing guidance on music education.

Laura and Garf are both feeling very blessed to have work. Working within music, Laura is very aware of the struggle her peers, family and friends are going through as live music continues to be badly affected.



Julia Robinson sent me this photo of Eliza in her uniform eagerly waiting to return to Eltham C of E primary school in early September. Eliza is glad to be back at school and enjoy being with her friends once more even though it means spending less time with her guinea pigs Winnie and Podge!
A challenge for you dear reader; is the guinea pig in this photo Winnie or Podge? I have no idea, but I'm sure Eliza will tell me!



Imogen sent me the following piece with photos of Sophia, Theo and Rafe Day in their Eltham C of E primary school uniforms. "After a very excited Monday morning return to school, enthusiasm waned throughout the week for the little Days. By the weekend both boys had heavy colds, and by Tuesday of week 2 the rest of the family had succumbed. A high temperature for Sophia and Jack, plus a cough, prompted a Covid test – miraculously we found one available in Deptford just within the 5 days limit – and we spent a few days in isolation while we awaited this process of testing and result.

It turns out Jack is (and therefore we are) Covid Negative but having children in school, where every little bug is transmitted with lightning speed, has brought home with hammering force the need for us all to take as many precautions as possible. Hats off to the teachers who are at the forefront of this every single day. When our second lockdown comes and the schools remain open, keep them in your prayers.



TV Licensing for the over 75s - Nottingham community stalwart **Ray Andrew** keeps me updated on 'Silver Voices' campaigns. This item will interest the 'older' members of our community. A top level Zoom meeting has been arranged for 13 October to press the case for restoration of free licences for all over 75s. More details can be found here <https://mailchi.mp/silvervoices/tv-licence-talks?e=e713caacca>, if you have access to the internet. If not, please contact Ray (T: 020 8857 1351) for more information.



As I'm sure you will know, Ray has been a professional film cameraman for many years. Like me he has a keen interest in stills photography and videography. This, and his sense of humour provides a regular source of material for Keep Connected! Not a load of rubbish but a pertinent observation maybe? I'll let you decide! Joking apart, many thanks Ray and do keep on providing material for Keep Connected!

Don Wharton - RIP

Beryl Woodard reports - At home and together with his family, Don sadly passed away on Friday 25 September. Marjorie and Don had both worshiped at and supported St Andrew's church and SAGASSA for many years. Don officially checked the SAGASSA annual accounts until a year ago when he 'retired' saying, "I can still do the figures, but I am unable to see them!" It was always a pleasure when Don joined us for coffee mornings and monthly lunches. He was always generous, buying lots of raffle tickets. and on the occasions when he won, he would discreetly return the prize! Don will be greatly missed.

Revd Anne Hoad is a retired priest who supports the Rector, Revd Ian Welch, in officiating at regular services, principally at St Alban's. She also assists the Rector when and where necessary. She was a Deaconess for many years, a position women could not progress beyond in their ministry at the time. She was a prime mover in establishing the ordination of women priests. The introduction of Zoom services during this ongoing pandemic has allowed us to 'gather' and worship, albeit virtually rather than physically together. When Revd Anne's virtual presence became intermittent, a connectivity fault was suspected - and that proved to be the case. All is now remedied. With a new provider, super fast broadband, and a clear phone line, connectivity is assured. The process of changing provider resulted in a new phone number - 020 8852 9408. However don't rush to change your phone book entry, as it will revert to the old number 020 8297 8761 some time before the end of Tuesday 6 October!



In Closing:

Revd Dr Sam Wells, is the inspirational vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields (SMITF). He is a well-known author and radio broadcaster. His SMITF Parish Pipeline message on 25 September was based on his response to a question posed some time ago - 'What would you like to be written on your tombstone?' His answer was "If it can't be happy, make it beautiful.' He went on to say, "Beauty isn't an alternative to goodness; it isn't a distraction from depth, seriousness, honesty, or integrity." He closed his message by saying, "The pandemic has been an experience of powerlessness, and sadness, for most of us. It's kidnapped our hopes and dreams, and left them bound and gagged in the attic. It's not been happy. But we can still find ways to make it beautiful. Try it. I recommend it."

This is a powerful message when we are all struggling to cope in the absence of long-established 'normality'; in an atmosphere of changing rules and regulations governing what we can and can't do; rules that seem confusing and contradictory to many. This is the time that churches should be at the forefront; a time that presents real opportunity for churches to serve and grow in their communities.

It is heartwarming to see this in action at St Edward's. Perhaps St Andrew with St Alban could emulate this approach in the not too distant future, especially as parishioners without internet access have not been able to join in any services for six months now. Although the national 'R' rate has risen of late, reported Covid-19 infections in Greenwich and Bromley are low, so indoor services conducted in the prescribed way should be 'safe'. And there's always an opportunity to hold an outdoor service - see the Sunday Times 4 October 2020 - <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/outdoor-worship-can-bring-us-closer-to-our-faith-2zjllqnxj?shareToken=dccfdac04829766ca97ad0df97ae0254>. Perhaps we should try it - what do you think? Please let me know your views.

