

# St John's Church

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restart!



## Parish Magazine

*August / September 2020*

£1



**Front cover—St George trampling the Covid dragon (we will beat this beast!)  
Pictures: illustrate stories on pages 4, 5, & 9,  
about achievements during Lockdown.**



## From the Vicarage

I am writing this from the bench outside the Brocket Chapel on a sunny evening. The chapel is open for visitors; we have met a couple from Hatfield who came in because of the sign outside the church, and others have been regulars. It has been a joy to sit in the silent church and welcome those coming to pray.



On **Sunday the 9th August** we will have our first service since mid March in the church. The first few weeks will be Morning Prayer at 11.00 am but starting in September we aim to be back to our normal rotation of services, including the 8am Service. Please note that we will do our very best to keep you safe. We also ask that you follow any guidance given.. And please bring a mask—though there will be spares if you forget.

To say the least I am very pleased to see things beginning to move again. For some this has been a lonely, frightening time with few certainties apart from hair getting ever longer and waistlines ever larger. For others it has been a time of discovery, perhaps how much they like working from home and seeing more of the family they live with. Some of us have walked more or taken up craftwork that had long been put aside. We all will have an individual experience.

A lot of my time has been spent making services to put on YouTube and Facebook, during which I have felt closer to God. Morning Prayer has consisted of me saying prayers alone, but having to explain what the readings may mean has made me think deeper than normal.

Having found positives in this situation I can't help but be curious as to how others have found this time. I wonder if you would like to share your stories of this time and we could compile them as a small booklet to act as a permanent memory?

The most important thing that I would like to say to you is that those things that were good and true before this crisis remain good and true. While much has changed our love for each other and God's love for us has not varied. It is an eternal constant. As we move forward into the greater freedoms we are offered let each of take care of those around us and ourselves by adopting whatever protective behaviour is needed, and trust the rest to God.

**Paul**

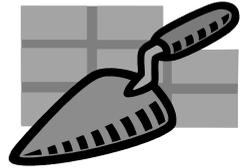
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For further information about prayer, or to join the prayer team, please contact Paul or the prayer coordinator, by visiting the prayer page of the church website and clicking **Email:prayer**, or use the contact form at the bottom of the Who's Who and Contacts page.

The website address is [www.stjohnschurchlemsford.org](http://www.stjohnschurchlemsford.org)

### **Lemsford Fete 2020 Cancelled!**

**Paul Butler** writes :back in March we postponed the fete to the 13th September. Since then the organising committee have kept an eye on the changing health advice and options to hold the event. It is with regret that as

September fast approaches and the ongoing advice about protecting school premises, to avoid contamination risks, it is clear that to continue with the event would not be a sensible option, not to mention the additional measures and complications of managing large crowds of people. We have therefore decided to cancel this year's event and start with the plan to prepare for the 2021 event on the 3rd May 2021.

Whilst the annual event is being cancelled the organising committee are looking to hold other fundraising events/activities to try and compensate for the lost revenue this event normally provides to the school and church. As such we will be setting up an online fundraising page and holding activities with ways to donate monies and we sincerely hope that you will please help us, by joining in or just donating when sponsorships come round.

**Parish Magazine** copy date for the next issue: **20th September**

**Sarah Lawrence** “For years I have wanted to learn how to sew up a garment or two—I have done many clothing alterations but never created something from scratch. My partner challenged me into action by ordering in the post a surprise outfit pattern. It was very difficult at first because vintage patterns are not novice friendly and assume a lot of knowledge which I did not have. I had to watch many 'How to...' YouTube videos to decipher the process. This two piece —**pictured inside front cover**—was sewn with inexpensive satin polyester costing about £3 a metre. Everything I needed for it had to come by post as the shops were shut. The pattern obviously needed tweaking for next time as the fit of the top is not perfect. Garment construction has been immensely rewarding and gave purpose to some otherwise long empty days. To anyone considering doing the same I would say just choose an easy looking pattern and get on with it. When restrictions eased I was excited to show my work to my Grandma who was a career seamstress. She had a wonderful time both enthusing over my progress and telling me where I went wrong.”

**Pat Lewis** Has been busy knitting for good causes during lock down. (**Pictures inside front cover**). A jumper and cardigan are ready for the winter. The necklaces (about 30) are to be sold for good causes. The hats are for premature babies, a project her knitting group took up. They have knitted over 80 between them. Pat got a lovely letter of thanks from Katie Chilton, Head of Midwifery at the Lister.



**Jean Mitchinson** “One of the things I am pleased about during the months of lockdown was mastering using Zoom. With lots of help along the way, but very pleased with myself as an achievement for a very elderly lady and so great to be able to join in with the coffee mornings and quiz. Also meeting up with family for chats.

The other great moment since lockdown. My second gt grandchild was born in April and recently I was able to be in the family bubble and hold my three month old gt granddaughter and cuddle my six year old gt granddaughter —**pictured inside front cover** A truly wonderful amazing moment!”

**Jackie Spry** "A big Thank You to Frank Puranik for helping us all stay connected especially those of us not tech savvy. Many people have told me how patient and helpful he has been."

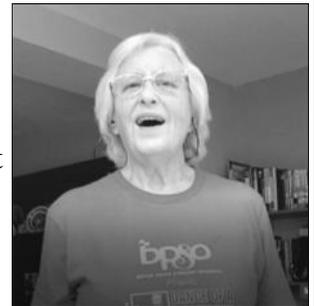
**Frank Puranik.** Replied "The way that I look at it is that prayer is good, but in the end some of us must be God's agents. I really don't think that prayer will 'directly' fix someone's phone, tablet or computer. Indirectly - now that's another matter.



Computers and tech are my thing, and I'm acutely aware of the very important role they have been playing in keeping us connected and less isolated, especially at this time. So, when I go to Coffee morning or a quiz and find that someone can't join, maybe can't work Zoom with their family, can't be heard ;) or can't email, it isn't really a technical matter (though the solution will be technical). So my mission is to help sort the issues out. Sometimes I can do this on the phone and a couple of times I have needed to visit. I get a huge satisfaction from seeing that person at the next Coffee or quiz etc without issues.

On the patience front - I'm normally very patient, *except* when I get told that people don't know their own passwords, have not written them down and have no way of recovering them! I have been known to "read the riot act" in this case - you have to know your own passwords especially your email password, (and for Apple users your Apple Id) as you can recover most of the other passwords if you know those.

**Carole Payne** Joined and sang with a virtual choir, made up of singers who have met up at Holiday Fellowship singing holidays. The choir is led by Liz Wilcox, who was the course leader at Abingworth last May. They are recording themselves and Liz is compiling it into a video. "Technology- wise I have found it very challenging but at the same time, extremely rewarding!! "



**Paul Seymour** revealed a talent for wood turning at one virtual Coffee Morning. During Lockdown he was busy making lovely objects—**pictured inside front cover**



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**M**y small band of volunteers has continued to work in the church gardens and the results are now very visible—but not yet finished. The care and nurture of the garden has some interesting parallels with living the Christian Life.



The gardeners have given time, much effort and in one super example by someone with connection to the Garden of Remembrance, money. This paid for contractors to cut the hedge between the church and school – and we are very grateful to them for their hard work. Two contractors spent 3 hours cutting back the neglected and overgrown hedge.

Four volunteers spent 2.5 hrs raking and removing the clippings and a further trailer-load will go on 5<sup>th</sup> August to Julian's Green Waste tip. Our volunteers spent 16 hours in completing this work, "for God loves a cheerful giver". The hedge must now be controlled every year and not allowed to get out of hand (and if there are no volunteers, it will need to be a job for contractors). So, there is a 'cost of getting the hedge in order and a discipline in maintaining it'.

**T**his is similar to being a Christian; the cost of 'getting a person in order' was paid by Jesus when he died on the cross to enable each one of us to start the journey of living the Christian life. The discipline of maintaining that way of life is up to each one of us. Yearly, monthly, weekly and daily, we need to weed ourselves of bad habits, prune ourselves into right paths and fertilise our lives with good encouragement from the word of God. Then we can see the seeds of Christian living take hold and develop in us.

PS Especial thanks to **Young Life International** youngsters and some others from **Monks Walk school** who helped to fill the trailer on Tuesday August 4th. The trimmings from both the school/church hedge and the Western Rd Cedar hedge were taken to the Green waste Tip at Sherriff's Farm. There is still more waste to send to the Tip!!

*See pictures inside back cover*

## Gardens of Eden

### Hazel Macarthur

“Every thing seems to peak earlier these days, the garden in full flourish and that includes my furry squirrel friends. They have already scrumped (some will know this word) my pears and now I am sure checking out the Hazel nut trees.



For some years I have thought at this season, about four weeks or so and I will harvest. Not so, after dining across the river Squirrel Nutkin zooms across the Sumac highway to mine . Maybe they watch me, an interloper stealing their food .

Would I have it any other way ? No, how fortunate am I to have a garden in these difficult times watching the wildlife come and go.”

### Marion Cleveland

“This year my allotment has been terrific with beautiful roses and masses of fruit and vegetables (pictured inside back cover). It has kept me fully occupied and helped me a lot to get



through Lockdown. The only downside is that it has reminded me of the happy time last year when a group from the Church came there for tea. (pictured) Won't it be great when we can enjoy each others company again in such a lovely way”

**John Blanch**

“Lena and I have been busy during Lockdown including, like many, with garden work. One project was re-making our rockery with new "steps" and stones.”

Here is the result.



**Bill Dance** has donated a bench to the Remembrance Garden in memory of his wife Jean. It looks splendid, a fitting tribute to a lovely lady.



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## Roger Brown RIP

**R**oger, our Tower Captain, died on 24 July following a short illness.

He was born in 1935 in Knotty Ash, Liverpool and attended Liverpool Institute High School for Boys (as did Sir Paul McCartney and George Harrison). At age 9 he joined Liverpool Cathedral choir. He learned to ring at the Cathedral in



1951 when the 12 new bells were consecrated. These are the heaviest ringing bells in the world with the tenor bell weighing 82 cwt – quite a contrast to Lemsford's 6 bells with the tenor weighing just 3 cwt! Roger was honoured to attend their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in November 2001.

Roger moved south in 1955 and qualified as a Chartered Engineer at De Havilland in Hatfield. He rang regularly at Wheathampstead, Harpenden and Kimpton churches before joining the Lemsford band and, following Geoff Beynon's retirement from ringing, took over as Tower Captain in 2001 and has kept us all in order ever since! Not only has Roger run the ringing but he has also been responsible for keeping the clock maintained and ensured the correct flag has been raised on the requisite days.

Roger was a Founder Member of the Fire Service Guild of Bellringers, a group of ringers with Fire Service connections whose members are based all over the UK – prior to retirement Roger having been a retained firefighter for 35 years at Wheathampstead. Hertfordshire members were due to host the Guild for their annual weekend in April this year, but much to Roger's disappointment this was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

We will miss Roger but remember him for his friendship, enthusiasm and all he has brought to the Lemsford band and to St John's.

**Judith Titmus**

I must add my tribute to Roger, who worked tremendously hard to keep all things in the Tower running properly. **Geoffrey Hollis**



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'I'm working in an emergency surgery ward, but I'm also doing bank shifts on some of the Covid wards. They can get a little bit short staffed.

'I've had to leave my house. My husband has a respiratory condition and is doing social shielding on the advice of his GP. Five weeks ago, I decided that I wouldn't be able to breathe on him. So, to keep him alive, I moved out. I am missing him. It's so horrible, so horrible. But, twelve weeks of missing him is better than a lifetime if he got Covid-19.

'The thought of being back together is so joyful. But there won't be a vaccine or a cure then. I think I will be too scared to kiss him or hug him. I want to keep him wrapped up in a bubble for the rest of his life. One day he will venture out, and I will move home. But it's not without risk.

'I love **Psalm 4.8**, *'In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.'* That keeps coming back to me. It's God alone, that makes us dwell in safety. I have had so much comfort from knowing that God gives us safety. It will be a challenge to go back home and be as relaxed and at peace as now. Here, I'm keeping Matt safe. But at home, I will be a daily danger to him. Resting in that verse will help. It will be the only thing I will be able to cling to.'

**D**uring Lockdown the paving in my garden got a thorough power wash, the first time for some years. There was a downside though—suddenly I became aware that the wood pigeons that are frequent visitors were repeatedly fouling the gleaming stonework. When it was covered in several years of grime I never noticed. Unlike mammals birds have only one excretory tract so their deposits are rather unpleasant—especially when they have been grazing off my blackcurrants. The result is a violet paste that causes a nasty stain.

New every morning I would get up with wire brush and bucket to tackle these deposits, which left me with unkind thoughts towards pigeons. These were strengthened by their unpleasant habit of fouling my bird bath after use—why I cannot guess. Suddenly a possible solution popped up in the form of an article by a lady journalist who had the same problem and had bought a titanium handled catapult to scare them off. Quite legal she said. Good idea! Within a few days I was in possession of a turbo charged catapult for only £12, and a bag of steel ball bearings, £3.

After some advice from a neighbour, who had learned how to use one in India when a boy, I was ready to go. Pigeons are wary birds but in a couple of days I got sight of one on the bird bath about 30 feet from my back door. As it bent down to drink I let fly—and amazingly landed a ball bearing smack on the side of its head. It toppled over and fell in a heap on the ground. Oh no! This was not what I had in mind. Just a warning clip on the wings was the intention, not to kill one of God's creatures. How to dispose of a dead bird?? Happily after a few seconds it tottered to its feet and flew in a wobbly way into the trees.



**T**o me all wood pigeons look pretty much alike so I cannot tell if this particular bird came back to my garden—lots of them still do. I have tried the catapult several times since and missed repeatedly. Sometimes the ball bearings get pretty close but the birds fail to notice them whizzing over their heads. So a lucky shot.

The journalist failed to hit any of her targets too and in her latest article says has now bought a monster water pistol. Not me though - I don't want to drown them.



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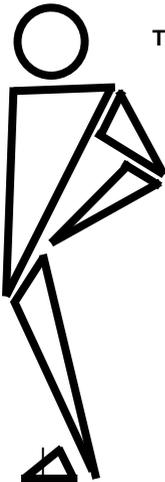
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## Lemsford Local History Group



Lemsford Local History Group (LLHG), formed in 2001, is interested in all aspects of the history and the people of this area - both

ancient and modern. We welcome correspondence from anyone who shares this interest. The group archives now include a significant number of photographs and documents and can be accessed from the home page of our website [www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk](http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk)

2020 has been a challenging year for LLHG as it has for all everyone. When lockdown started, we cancelled our 2020 programme and have taken the decision to postpone our September AGM until it is safe to meet. What does the future hold for LLHG? To understand where we are going, you have to understand the past and where we have been.

**W**hen a group of like minded people met in early 2001 in the annex led by Ron the popular Vicar at the time, I'm not sure what they thought they would give birth to. LLHG was lucky to have in its membership hard working members who started to research and build an archive that today comprises over twenty hardback files with hardcopy records from press cuttings, family trees, essays, maps and a lot more. Add to this over one thousand images, which for a small Parish is an impressive collection, and does provide a detailed insight into the past. The first rule was we only research Lemsford Parish which consisted of Stanborough, Cromer Hyde, Brocket Hall and Lemsford Village (Handside is also included as it was once part of the Parish).

Very early on, a founder member, the much missed Stan Borrie asked his website designer son Richard to build a website for the group which I took over and developed. Our main site is [www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk](http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk) which includes the majority of our images and all aspects of the past in Lemsford Parish. In 2014 we added our WW1 website [www.lemsfordww1.co.uk](http://www.lemsfordww1.co.uk).

During the past twenty years we have produced a Historical Map of the Parish, five booklets and an A4 full colour hardback book about WW1. All of these can be purchased; details on [www.lemsfordhistorynews.co.uk/Publications.html](http://www.lemsfordhistorynews.co.uk/Publications.html).

From the start, the group's format was monthly meetings with a speaker where we talked and met likeminded people. It was a great way to find out about the past and the wonderful residents. My favourite was the late Jean Dance who would sit there listening to everyone's idea of a topic about the past with sketchy ideas. You would ask Jean if she remembered anything and she would answer 'not really' then proceed to tell us detailed, fascinating information for twenty minutes painting a picture of the past with the added bonus you knew all these details were 100% fact. Like Stan, she is much missed by the members.

From the very start, the group always produced a display for the annual Lemsford Fete in May. This helped to build up the archives as each year we chose a topic to research. My favourite was The Great North Road Display; the road which made Lemsford what it is today.

I was lucky to be voted Chairman of LLHG in 2011. I continued with the same format until 2017 when we changed to six meeting a year and a few outings. I formed relationships with Welwyn, Hatfield, Wheathampstead and Ayot History groups. We started an annual Quiz with Welwyn History Society which is very popular and in its sixth year.

Attracting new members was difficult as the World Wide Web provides information and entertainment these days and the thought of going to a hall for a meeting to listen to a speaker became less appealing to the under fifties. Add to that the busy lives people have nowadays to earn a living plus family time; it is not surprising the membership dropped.

This was echoed by all the other local history groups and when I attended regular meetings at Welwyn and Hatfield Heritage Hub I heard the same conclusions.



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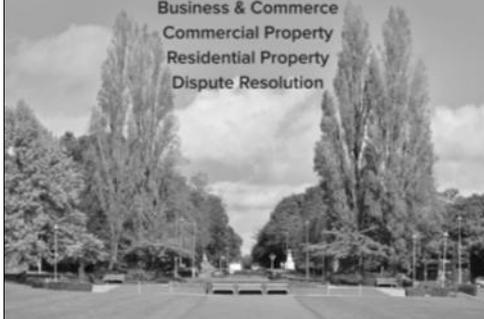
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I took a year off in 2017-2018, partly to concentrate on my website design business and partly to see if a new broom as Chairman could stop the decline. Unfortunately, the new chairman had the same problem with dwindling membership. Refreshed I re-joined the group and was elected Chairman again. I put in place a new format and built a news site called [www.lemsfordhistorynews.co.uk](http://www.lemsfordhistorynews.co.uk) as an easily accessible information site to keep the community updated on what the group were doing. The format is for less formal meetings and more social meetings asking guests to join us from other local history groups. We started lunch time meetings in various hostelrys in the Parish as well as meeting in the annex to plan our Annual Fete display. We also plan on four slide shows a season for the general public on local themes as well as arranging outings to local historical sites and, on request, guided tours around the Parish.

### **What is the future for Lemsford Local History Group ?**

Our last meeting before lockdown was an afternoon affair in the church Annex with a buffet lunch followed by a trip down memory lane; a slide show of our favourite photos from the archive. It was very relaxed and I think enjoyed by all who attended.

We are in a good position when we return to the new normal. Our changes in 2018 suit the new ways of the world. **If you want to be a member of the group you will be welcome to join us.** If you just want to join us as and when a subject interests you, you will also be welcome. I think anyone with a slight interest in local history will find valuable information on our website [www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk](http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk). If you need more information, email us [info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk) and will be more than happy to help you. You can keep updated with our news website and find out what's on at [www.lemsfordhistorynews.co.uk](http://www.lemsfordhistorynews.co.uk).



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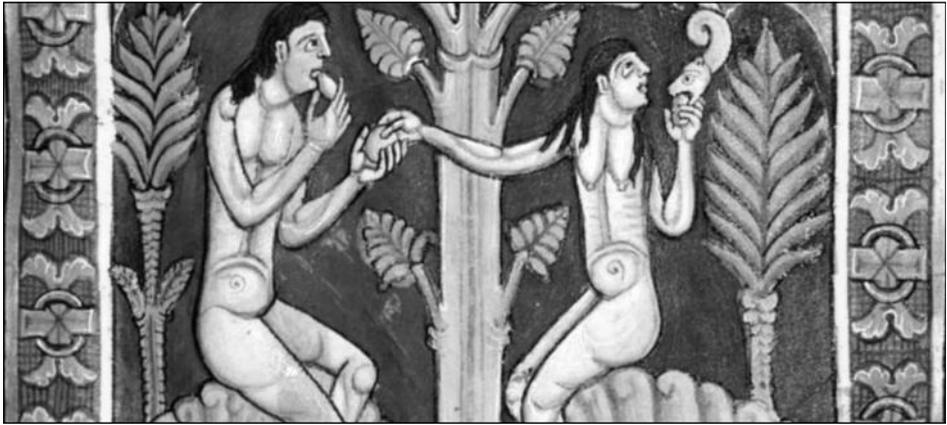
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**T**he opening chapters of Genesis contain very familiar stories: Creation, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, the Tower of Babel.

These are a puzzle: how literally are we to take them? Can we make sense of them in the light of scientific progress? In what sense can we consider them to be 'true'? Yet, by reading them carefully and critically, we find profound questions and insights, reflecting issues as pressing today as they were thousands of years ago: of human nature, gender, environment, creation and destruction, competition, the family of nations.

In this course we will reacquaint ourselves with these ancient stories, seeking a better understanding of them in their context, in the Hebrew Bible, and as Christian scripture. This course can be taken as part of the Certificate in Theology, or Certificate in Theology Plus  
 Speaker: The Rev'd Dr Kevin Walton, Canon Chancellor

Date and time: Wednesdays 23 September – 21 October 7.30 - 9.15pm  
 Participants will be able to join from 7.15pm on the first night of the course, thereafter from 7.25pm Price: £60 Venue: Online via Zoom

As this course will be hosted over Zoom, participants will need access to a computer/laptop/tablet/phone which has audio in order to be able to hear. In order to participate fully, a web camera and microphone are also advised. Instructions for signing up and joining the talk will be sent via email ahead of the first class. Please ensure that you provide a current email address when you book. You can book online (<https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/Event/genesis>), or call the Box Office on 01727 890290. Tickets will be on sale until 5pm on the day of the first class.

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If we are tired, fortify our spirits.  
If we are anxious, help us to consider the lilies of the field  
and the birds of the air.

Help us always to hold fast to the good,  
See the good in others,  
And remember there is just one world, one hope,  
One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.

*Methodist Church*

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**And finally ... *paws for thought***





**Mary Douglas gets new helpers – see page 7  
Marion Cleveland's allotment—see page 8**





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