

St John's Church

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June/July 2022

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Front cover: The fete was a raging success, thanks to supporters like the local Fire Brigade. See more pictures inside back cover.

Top is the Baptism of Reuben Davé reported in News section.

Jean Mitchinson is seen with the flowers she arranged for Easter. The church would not look half as beautiful without the floral displays.

In theory I have two months to prepare each issue; in practice it usually gets done in a stressful couple of days just before the print deadline. In part this is because of procrastination, but also because things turn up at the last minute.

As an example, consider the piece by **Prof Tina Beattie** on page 11. She is a leading Catholic thinker and broadcaster, who contributes to Thought for the Day on BBC Radio 4. By chance—or perhaps inspiration—with one day to go before cut-off, I was led to her talk broadcast on May 16th. Although addressed to Catholics it considered questions of clericalism, faith and worship which are also relevant to Anglicans. She answered my email seeking permission to print it within ten minutes, so here it is.



Also arriving near the deadline was **Mandy Evans'** School report, on pages 8 & 9. This was understandable because she is as usual terribly busy. I am in her debt that she finds time to pen something for this Magazine every two months. This is a special report though because it is her last as Head Teacher, prior to her retirement. Over a long period at St John's Church I have seen at least four Head Teachers at the School. All were special people. Mandy has been exceptional. On behalf of everyone in St Johns Church I would like to wish her a wonderful retirement. She has earned it.

Another paean of praise must go to **Paul and Gina Butler**. Paul worked ceaselessly to make the Fete a success and writes about it on page 5. Gina is Treasurer of both the Church and Fete. She also writes articles that make me laugh—see her report on the Pilgrimage to St Albans, on page 7.

While I am handing out Magazine awards, a special mention must go to **Andy Chapman**, who is the leading light behind the Local History Group. He too works really hard to collect the Group's invaluable records, and to help enquirers seeking information about the Village. A good example of the range of the Group's activities is in his report, starting at page 16.

Lastly, but very far from least, may I record my gratitude to our two Wardens, **Jenny Roden and Nigel Johnson**. They are tireless in their efforts to keep St Johns going in the absence of a Vicar. Both are happily standing again for another year—Hurrah!

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June

- 5th** 8 am MP — Frank Puranik
11 am All Age Worship - Rev Kathryn Alford
Acts 2.1-21 and John 14.8-17
- 12th.** 8 am HC BCP - Rev Susan Marsh
11 am HC - Rev Fiona Souter
Proverbs 8. 1-4 & 22-31 and John 16.12-15
- 19th** 8 am MP John Marks
11 am MP tbc
1 Kings 19. 1-4 & 8-15a and Luke 8. 26-39
- 26th** 8 am MP — Lay led
11 am HC - Rev Iain Lane
2 Kings 2. 1-2 & 6-14 and Luke 9. 51-62

July

- 3rd** 8 am HC BCP— Rev Edward Cardale
11 am All Age Worship - Rev Kathryn Alford
2 Kings 5. 1-14 and Luke 10. 1-11 & 16-20
- 10th** 8 am HC BCP - Rev Susan Marsh
11 am HC - Rev Fiona Souter
Amos 7. 7-17 and Luke 10. 25-37
- 17th** 8 am MP BCP - Lay led
11 am Morning Prayer - Rev Susan Marsh
Amos 8. 1-12 and Luke 10. 38-42
- 24th** 8 am HC BCP - Rev Susan Marsh
11 am HC Rev Iain Lane
Hosea 1. 2-10 and Luke 11. 1-13
- 31st** 8 am MP - Lay led
11 am HC - Rev Ruth Barr
Hosea 11. 1-11 and Luke 12. 13-21

HC BCP: Holy Communion, Book of Common Prayer MP: Morning Prayer
Please check website for updates. Readings subject to change.

Eveline Beswarick

It is with great sadness that we inform friends and neighbours that Eveline passed away peacefully, at the age of 95, in the Lister Hospital, on Tuesday 8th March. Eveline had spent most of her life living in Stanborough, either with her parents on the Great North Road or with her husband Jack in New Road. She leaves 3 daughters, 7 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren with many fond and happy memories.

Baptisms

On 1st May, **Ruben Davé**, and on 8th May **Edith Quinn**. Many congratulations to their families. *See lovely picture inside front cover of Ruben, Faye and Kieran with Sue Stilwell.*

Wedding

On 21st May, **Katherine Cheng** and **Alec Folwell**. This was a splendid day and everyone looked lovely, including Poppy Folwell, “Canine of the Groom”.

Funeral

On 6th May, **James Arthur**, son of Elizabeth and the late George Arthur, who were active members of St Johns for many years. We send our condolences to his family.

Bell tower

Judith Titmus writes:

On Saturday, 30th April a combined St John's and St Etheldreda's band rang a Quarter Peal in memory of **Gill Bottoms**. The tenor was rung by Gill's son **Jonathan** who rings at St Etheldreda's.

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Ron E Titmus
- 2 Judith E Titmus
- 3 Dianne E Crowder
- 4 Mary E Goss
- 5 W Robert E T Goss (Conductor)
- 6 Jonathan D Bottoms

Ron Ingamells

will be taking a service of Holy Communion at 11.00am in our church on the first Sunday in August. We look forward very much to seeing him in action again. It would be tactful not to mention Norwich FC though.

The Bishop of Hertford

Dr Michael Beasley has been promoted to be the Diocesan Bishop of Bath and Wells. He takes up this role in the Autumn. His two predecessors also became Diocesan Bishops—Christopher Foster at Portsmouth and Paul Bayes at Liverpool.

Parish Magazine copy date for the next issue: **24th July**

We're back! After the struggles of the last few years "we had a fete". The weather could not have been better. We worried that people would have forgotten us, but no, they came in their droves to give us our biggest grossing fete ever. We aimed for a traditional Lemsford Fete, and to do it well. We'll be more adventurous in 2023.



The good weather, ice cream and beer tent seemed to encourage large crowds to arrive, soak up the sunshine and spend time with their friends and family. Their old favourites had returned: archery, fire engine, bouncy castles and good music. Once again they could purchase delicious homemade cakes, jam and chutney. And they seemed to want to win something as the queues for the bottle and chocolate tombola were huge. Kids found lots of ways to use their energy throwing balls at coconuts or crockery, or leaping up and down on a bouncy castle.

The return of a brass band and addition of a Ukulele band were some of the central parts of our music presentations this year along with dancing and Taekwondo demonstrations. In addition, as we were celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the school, the children not only did their traditional singing and maypole dancing but added songs from across the last 150 years and readings about the lives of previous children who've attended the school

As a result of the generosity of the public, our growing list of sponsors and the unflinching efforts by our volunteers and helpers we have again raised an amazing amount in excess of £15,000 for the school PTA, church and our other local charities.

One day I'll tell you about the things that nearly ended in disaster, the toilets blocking, rides not turning up due to mechanical issues, bins not being taken away and ice cream wars. However, today I want to say thank you to all the volunteers who made this possible. It would be great to add to our organising group, when we start planning in November. If you have any opinions or suggestions on the event please let us know as it is vital to get feedback, positive or negative. Do speak to me or access the fete's website <https://lemsfordfete.co.uk/> and drop us a note.

Here's to 3rd May 2023

Pictures inside back cover



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At 10 am on Easter Monday seven intrepid pilgrims met at the church for the 7-mile walk to St Albans. Ian took our picture (inside back cover) and off we set.

After our disastrous trip back in September, where we tried out a new route and ended up going miles out of our way, Mary told us she had another route mapped and was going that way and we could join

her if we wanted. Whilst we were rather sceptical we couldn't let her go off on her own so Mary led the way down the road to the Crooked Chimney.

As we turned up Cromer Hyde Lane a taxi drew up and a lady shouted out "Are you going to St Albans?" "Yes" we replied and she promptly got out with her two-year-old son, Elijah, and so seven became nine. Our new companion was Augustina, although she wasn't born in August; her middle name was Abda, which is Ghanaian for Tuesday, but she wasn't born on a Tuesday! It really is amazing what you can learn on a 7-mile walk. She had intended to walk with colleagues from St Francis church and had they caught us up might have joined them. We did see a group behind us at one point, but they obviously weren't aware of Mary's new route and disappeared fairly soon!

Elijah was a super little boy, so happy, and very determined to lead the group; he obviously hadn't got the memo that Mary was in charge! The new route took us off Cromer Hyde Lane and through beautiful bluebell woods to Symondshyde. Elijah wasn't very happy through the woods though as sticks were on the path and this seemed to upset him as he had to shout at each one to get out of his way. At this rate, shouting at every stick in the middle of a wood, we weren't going to be in St Albans until nightfall. However, the sticks must have tired him out and his mum picked him up. There was no way she'd be able to carry Elijah all the way to St Albans, so Charlie was called upon. Elijah was hoisted onto his shoulders from which lofty height he could direct us on the route.

Mary, never one to follow the beaten track, preferred to walk on the side of the field rather than on the road. However at one location when she rejoined us there was a great big sign saying "Private, do not enter". Having chastised her (tee hee) we got to St Albans through Jersey Farm without much incident; Mary's new route was deemed a success. *Continued page 9*



School Report

I feel so sad that this will be my last School Report to the Parish Magazine after 13 years as Headteacher at St John's. I have really appreciated the support and interest that the St John's Church team, the congregation and the good folk of Lemsford Parish have given the school and this has helped us to build our feeling of a strong community. I am certain that Mrs Michelle Boylan will want to continue this precious relationship and it will go from strength to strength with our new, (and much loved already by school) vicar Kathryn who will be starting in September.



We are all still basking in the wonderful success of the Lemsford Fete and the fantastic numbers who enjoyed its revival after two barren years during lockdown! A massive thank you to both Paul and Gina Butler from St John's Church who have chaired all the meetings and drawn it all together with great leadership as always. A huge thank you too to our parents, who committed so much hard work and energy in organisation behind the scenes, endless donations and amazingly generous amounts of their time over the Fete weekend; and to the members of St John's church.

We are again in full swing this term; Class 4 thoroughly enjoyed the entering the Welwyn Garden Schools' Dance Festival, choreographing their own dance routine to Shakira's '*This Time for Africa*'. Not only could parents watch them perform at The Hawthorn Theatre at Campus West, but also their excellent performance at the Fete.

Class 1 and 2 had a super day at Paradise Wildlife Park, which supported their curriculum studies of life cycles. As always, the children were so excited to be going on a school trip (a first for many of them due to Lockdown) and a great day was had by all, with perfect weather too!

We are celebrating 150 Years of St John's School this year and have had the privilege of having our local historian Andy Chapman keen to help us explore St John's past. We held an assembly to recreate the first day at St John's School with Rev Edward, myself and Andy Chapman playing the parts of the first teachers and vicar. Andy then led the children on a historical 'tour' of the past both in Lemsford village and through historical documents and helped us prepare a display for the Fete. We like to thank Andy for all his support. We have a 150 year celebration picnic at Bocket Hall coming up –with a Victorian costume theme!

Class 3 have been learning about the Vikings this term and had a fantastic workshop from North Herts Museum, looking at Viking life. As always, these hands on sessions bring to life the topics and support great engagement and enjoyment for the children.

We will be celebrating the Queen's Jubilee at school on Tuesday 21st June with a Tea Party in the playground with rousing songs.

I am sure that as the term draws to a close, I shall have more time to reflect on my years at St John's, all the friends I have made, all the children who have kept me smiling and reminding why this job is so rewarding and can be such fun. I have been truly blessed to be the Headteacher at St John's and will always be thankful I was appointed Head of this wonderful school. Thank you for all your support. I hope to keep in touch with you all and pop in to services at St John's when I can. **Best wishes to you all**

G*ina's Pilgrimage continued from page 7.*

We stopped at a local hostelry to quench our thirst and have a small repast. Augustina and Elijah decided to try and find their own church group, so we were back to seven. Charlie also left to get his train back to London, so now we were down to 6.

We got to the Abbey at 2.15 pm, just time enough to get our badges before the parade starting at 2.30 pm. Paul, Kevin and Daisy decided to stay outside and soak up the sun whilst Mary, Lucy and I joined the throng threading into the Abbey. It didn't seem as busy as our last visit, but as always was friendly and full of love.

The new Dean, Jo Kelly-Moore, gave the address. She is from New Zealand and seemed lovely, very relaxed and we hung on every word. We had communion in stations all around the Abbey. The final hymn "Thine be the Glory" rang out and we burst back into the sunshine. We three true pilgrims found the three part-timers where we had left them, lazy lumps! So 6 intrepid pilgrims set off back towards Lemsford. At Costa coffee we parted company with Mary, Lucy and Kevin as they were getting a lift back with Ian. So, then there were 3!!!!

On reflection we decided to go our old way on the 7-mile return trip and off we set. Just the 3 of us, no little children, no one getting carried on shoulders so we took just 2 hours to get back to good old St John's. We were all exhausted but satisfied with our day's efforts.

See you all next year.

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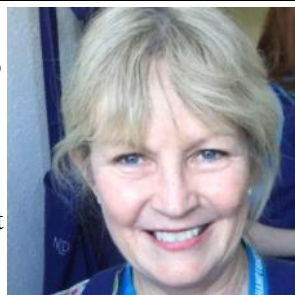
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Good morning. The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have issued an invitation to Catholics to return to weekly Mass attendance from Pentecost. They refer to this as “the Sunday Obligation”, which was suspended during the pandemic.

The Sunday Obligation has its roots in the belief that worshipping God is the most fundamental human vocation and duty. The right to freedom of religion enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that people of many creeds share this belief. But for me, the language of obligation is difficult, for it suggests hierarchies of authority and obedience which sit uneasily alongside modern sensibilities. The authority of Catholic Church leaders has been undermined by the sex abuse crisis and also by what Pope Francis calls clericalism – the tendency of some priests and bishops to see themselves as an unaccountable elite, remote from and out of touch with the realities of everyday life. Those who wanted to return to weekly Mass have probably already done so, and those who have not (myself included) are unlikely to do so because the bishops say we must.



For some of us, the last two years have been a time of spiritual reckoning and reawakening. The pandemic reminded us of how dependent we are on one another and how fragile our lives and institutions are. It was also a time when our cities fell silent so that even in the most built-up areas we could listen to birdsong and become aware of our natural surroundings. I doubt if any of us feels we are still the same person we were when this crisis began, and for some that means our faith too is being rediscovered and re-imagined. There is no normal to go back to, and new ways of believing and belonging must now emerge as we rise to the challenges of a world in crisis.

In the Catholic tradition, worship has its roots not in duty but in desire, not as an obligation but as an expression of yearning for the source of the love, beauty and goodness of creation. The Mass uses the simple language of human hunger and natural abundance to express this. The Eucharistic prayer speaks of the fruit of the earth, the fruit of the vine, and the work of human hands. This is earthy language: grace transforms nature’s goodness into nurture for our hungry souls.

When my spiritual hunger draws me back to the Sunday Mass, it will be because of desire and not obligation. It will be because I say with the psalmist, ‘As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, the living God.

Tina Beattie is a Christian theologian, writer and broadcaster. Until August 2020, she was the Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Roehampton. This Thought for the Day was broadcast on 16th May.



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A new book by Zoe Jasko, who writes:

Have you ever walked through the Parish and the surrounding countryside thinking, ‘Don’t I live in a beautiful place?’ Have you ever wandered through the villages, lanes and fields on your doorstep and wondered ‘Who has lived here?’



This is what happened to me when the first lockdown hit us in March 2020. I had been busy running a programme of musical events for my company Felici Opera and also the music and performing arts events for the Welwyn Garden City Centenary celebrations. Suddenly, overnight, everything came to a dramatic stop and it was not clear when performance would be able to resume.

If you remember, it was a beautiful Spring. I have always enjoyed walking, but now I had more time to walk around the local area. The time was precious – slow and calm. I watched the crops bud, I heard the cuckoos call and I felt my imagination come alive. Over the next 15 months these walks and my musings evolved into a collection of short stories called *What the Wind Saw*.

One Spring day, I walked the river path from Waterend, through the Bocket Estate and to the mill in Lemsford village. That day my head was full of fairies and as I walked I imagined a fairy teenage boy – the same age as one of my sons – racing to salvage an item of great importance carried by the river. I thought of the ‘Water Babies’ and what a modern, more loving, interpretation of that story could be, and I came home and wrote the story ‘The River.’

Across the Marford Road from Lemsford, I came across John Bunyan’s chimney – all that is left of a seventeenth century cottage. I was intrigued that the great preacher might have visited friends who lived here. I imagined him a young man preaching to a large crowd on Coleman Green before escaping from the militia just in time, and I imagined him an old man returning to visit his friends in the cottage.

It is difficult to have favourite stories in a collection. It is a bit like trying to answer the question which is your favourite child. It is not fair. It is not possible. That said, however, I am very fond of my story ‘*Guns for Mosquitos*.’



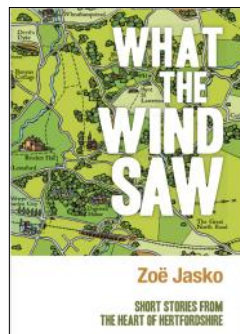
When researching, I found that during the Second World War there had been a heavy anti-aircraft gun emplacement in the fields opposite St John's, to protect the De Havilland factory and airfield at Hatfield. There is no trace of the encampment now. Although the guns would have needed a concrete base Nature has reclaimed the land in entirety; nobody remembers that the guns were there.

Sadly, despite the heavy guns at Lemsford, there was a successful enemy attack on Hatfield in October 1940 and many factory workers were killed. I found myself imagining the character of an old soldier who had served at the encampment, who had not been able to shoot down the enemy plane and now had returned to Lemsford as a very old man to find there was no longer any memory of the event left at the place.

There are 25 stories in the book. I probably could have written 250!

The stories follow the wind's journey from Wheathampstead to the

Ayots, through the fields and lanes and along the river to Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, before finally blowing to St Albans. I worked with local artist Stephen Hill, to create a bespoke map. We used the map for the cover and for the colour illustrations in the book. The book is published by The Endless Bookcase - a St Albans based publisher. The publisher and Stephen have made my book beautiful and I am very grateful to them. Robert Voss, CStJ, the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire has very generously written a Foreword.



Some of the stories are historical, some are contemporary, some are highly influenced by fact and others are entirely fictitious. If you read my book, I hope you enjoy the stories and I hope that when you have read them you will agree with me that we do live in a beautiful county filled with interesting people and places at every turn of the path.

What the Wind Saw: Short Stories from the Heart of Hertfordshire is priced £14.95 and can be bought at www.theendlessbookcase.com or at Amazon. It is also available from these sites in e-book format.

Zoe has generously offered to donate 20% of direct sales through her to St Johns. Email zoe@zoejasko.com quoting WWTS-Lemsford by 31 December 2022.



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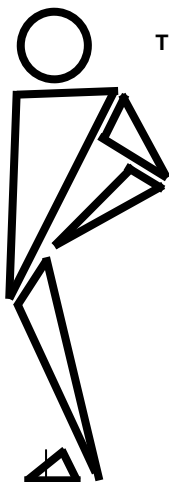
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The group attended the Lemsford Fete in early May. After two years of not meeting the public, it was great to see old friends and local people interested in local history.

Our theme for the display was the 150-year Anniversary of St John's School. The group produced a small display that recorded the history of St John's from 1872. We based the content on 'St Johns School by Keith Ladbury', 'Memories of Lemsford School 1924 - 1932 by Ellen Willox (née Murray)', 'A brief history of St Johns School by E. L. Temple' and 'Memories of St. John's School, 1945 - 1952 by Margaret Pugh née Killick', all accompanied with images from our archive. All of these articles can be found on our school website - www.lemsfordvillage.co.uk/Articles.html. What made the display extra special was that the children of St John's School contributed to it. They produced articles from the page on the website 'Adopt a student' www.lemsfordvillage.co.uk/Adopt.html and reports of their trip to the village organised by the history group.

A big thank you to Mandy and her staff with the help of the children in setting up the display with commemorative balloons and handmade bunting from the younger children celebrating this special year.

The group are still looking for more memories from the local community of their time at St John's. At the fete a local lady, Sue who lived in Brocket Road, told us a sad story about her Mum who was a Yeoman and came down from Sheffield (to be near a London hospital) in the 1930s with her Mum and Dad and many brother and sisters. Our records show six Yeomans went to St John's from 1932 to 1937 living at 'White Gates'. Many left on the same day May 10 1937 to 'attend Welwyn Garden City'; the family moved to WGC and started a new school.

Sue told us her mother never attended St John's due to having cancer from the age of two, but our records show a Margaret Yoeman started St John's on June 13, 1932, but left July 1932 due to 'To hospital permanently' (the word permanently seems very harsh). Sue tells the story that her Mother was banned from school and stayed at home sometimes working in the fields. The reason was they thought cancer was contagious. Sad times where lives were affected by ignorance.

But the story has a happy ending: Margret lived to over 70 years old, had a family, and her grandchildren attended St John's. We are looking forward to an article Sue has promised to write together with her daughters to share with everyone on our website.

If you have a memory please do send it to info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk

The Group received this email from David via the website:

“In hope! A deceased friend of mine was interned as a POW at the end of WW2, having been transferred from the United States to what he always referred to as a camp in Lemsford. I would be very grateful if you can direct me to any information as to whether such a camp existed or whether it may have had a different 'official' name. Many thanks, David

My reply: The camp did exist, some maps and image attached. No personal details. We know Germans were there and then Italians who were allowed out to make friends in the parish. I attached 2 images of huts that accommodated the prisoners that now reside at Brays Farm and a layout map of the camp which was in Marford Road next to the Crooked Chimney.

David replied: Great! Thank you so much, Andy. I'd heard so much from my late friend Heinz Martin about POW life in the appalling conditions in which they were kept in the US. He was a Luftwaffe pilot on the Eastern Front and then in the Mediterranean where he was shot down and captured by an American ship—hence ending up as a POW in America. Post-War he was among those who could never return to Magdeburg, where his brother was Mayor, as it was occupied by the Russians. On release from Lemsford with little more than the clothes he stood up in, he worked on farms and had a milk round in the St Albans area. Having trained as an architect, abandoned because of the hostilities, he stayed in St Albans and had a successful building business, mainly buying and doing up houses before renting out or selling. He and his wife 'adopted' us when my job as a journalist in London brought us South. We rented from him while we bought our house in Chiswell Green and our families became great friends. Sadly missed.

I have an interest in POWs from WW2 as part of our local history and as with many facts I discover I am appalled at the intolerance of our past generations. I read an article titled 'Sleeping with the enemy: 'The British women who fell for German PoWs'. After WW2 it was illegal to marry a German POW, incredibly the law changed in mid 1947. The article starts with 'They were spat at, punched, and shunned by their families. Their crime? Falling in love with German prisoners of war. The story was about June, three months pregnant, who married Heinz on August 14, 1947, at the Civic Centre in Southampton. It was the first marriage allowed. At 10pm sharp, Heinz was back behind the barbed wire at the POW camp - having been given permission to marry by the camp commandant - and June begged him not to slip out to meet her later, which would be punished by solitary confinement. Their "wedding night" took place the following day at June's home, when Heinz was allowed to visit his new wife. He was released from the POW camp one week before their eldest son Peter was born. In 2007 June and Heinz celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary'.



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Next is a Brocket Baby story I obtained during my lunchtimes talks at Brocket Hall. Michael was a Brocket baby whose mother was unmarried, born in 1947. For a majority of unmarried mothers, the Brocket Maternity Hospital regime dictated they did not live at Brocket Hall but the vicarage next to the church and had to skivvy by cleaning (unlike the married mums). They had to wear a brown coat to show they were unmarried and for many their child was forcible taken away from them and put up for adoption. Michael ended up with a nice family but in 1996 was allowed to trace his birth mother.

He traced her to the northeast and got his daughter to phone her. After explaining who she was, she asked if her father could talk to her; the phone was passed to Michael and his mother told him she did not want to see him and never to contact her again. It took 20 seconds and was the only time Michael spoke to his mum. He sent her a mother's day card every year with no response. When she died her granddaughters received the card and they started to find out who the sender was. Once contact was made, they met and the sad story of why his mum was unmarried unravelled.

She fell in love with a German POW, got pregnant but by law could not marry him. The irony was that three weeks after the birth she was allowed to marry Michael's father and moved up north to have a long and happy life and left her past behind. The story has a happy ending as he was accepted by his Mum's family and has enjoyed many happy days. It's sad that this intolerant society caused so much sadness.

Our next story by Bill Bates is about Arthur 'Pop' Freeman who Lived at 5 Bury Cottages.

Arthur had two children June and Richard. June must have caused some controversy when just after the war she courted and married Ivan Lust a German sailor, who was a POW from the camp near Lemsford Church. Ivan was one of the few survivors of the Bismarck. After a frosty start with Art and a shotgun, he went on to be the "best son-in-law a man could want".

The last story shows the kindness towards POWs by Frederick Samuel Sharp Headmaster of Lemsford School from 1936 to 1946. It is by Kath Atkinson his granddaughter.

One of the things she has told me was that an Italian POW, called Lorenzo, from a nearby camp was allowed to have Sunday lunch with the headmaster's family from time to time. He had at least one Christmas lunch with them. He was a doctor in civilian life and made her a little toy for one of his visits. Apparently the vicar also hosted a POW for lunch. Sounds like the village had a very big heart.

Her young age (born in 1933) may account for the fear of Germans. She had never seen one and only heard bad things so imagined them to be very scary people. One apparently parachuted down and got entangled in bush/trees in a neighbouring field. He was very young (20ish) but she was scared by the thought that a German had been so close.



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Recently my neighbour spotted a young Muntjac deer in her garden. This was surprising because we live on a small estate with only a small wooded patch nearby. These small deer are plentiful, and can sometimes be seen running to take cover. Their gait is an odd one, not at all graceful; they lope along with rear end raised, rather like a car that has its front suspension damaged. They get their name from the Dutch *muntjak*, which was adapted from the Indonesian *mēncēk*.



They are normally nocturnal so sightings are uncommon. They can though often be heard, sounding not unlike a dog, which has earned them the name of the Barking Deer. They are native to China but are now widespread, to the point that the EU has designated them an Invasive Alien Species of concern because of the damage that they can do to woodlands. They were introduced to Britain in the 19th century by the Duke of Bedford for Woburn Abbey, but the source of the ones we see is probably a later escape from Whipsnade. They are spreading and will soon be the most numerous species of deer in this country.

The Bible mentions deer a lot; they are classified as edible in **Leviticus**. Deer are used to make favourable comparisons, which make it plain that the Muntjacs had not reached Israel then.

Habakkuk 3:19, God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

Isaiah 35:6 Then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

Song of Solomon 8:14 Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.

Proverbs 5:18-19 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe.

Psalms 42:1 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. *This is probably the best known image, and I was delighted to note that coincidentally Tina Beattie uses it on page 11.*

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And finally Deer me!

What do you call a deer with hooves in his ears?

– *Anything you want — he can't hear you.*

How do you see a deer behind you?

– *Hindsight.*

What was wrong with the deer's smile?

– *He had buck teeth.*

Did you hear about the mad scientist who created deer-plant hybrids?

– *Apparently he wanted to introduce some variety to the local fawna.*

Who laughed and called Rudolph names?

– *Olive, the other reindeer.*

What do you call deer in outer space?

– *Star bucks.*





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