

St John's Church

serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde

Hope:
pages 1 & 11



October/November 2020

£1



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From the Vicarage

I

Normally at this time of year I would be considering writing about All Saints day and All Souls day, or Remembrance Sunday. But to be perfectly honest as I sit down to write today I have just heard two scientists explaining what is going on with Covid-19, and how we may need to return to some stricter measures. At the same time I read an article on the internet sharing the headline that we could have Christmas Day off from the rule of 6 so that we could have turkey with our families. Is it a wonder that people don't know whether they're coming or going, or should I say coming or going in groups of six or more?



Talking to members of my churches and others in the community I have come to realise that there is a continuous battle between hope and fear in people's lives, no less than in mine. This leads to the questions: what are people fearing and what are they hoping?

We all know what Fear is and how it affects us but I think it is too simple to say we are fearful of catching COVID. I think really people are scared of dying in what is reported to be an unpleasant manner.

Hope though has different understandings. In today's usage the word is slightly wishy washy—to hope for something but without certainty of fulfilment, to really want something but without the assurance of getting your desire. The biblical understanding of the word Hope is different. It implies a level of certainty, a confident expectation. Hope can be equated with trust in the original languages of the Bible.

When you hear me say in my daily online prayers anything about Hope, it is in the way that the Bible uses it, that is with certainty that God will be with us. To me this concept is very important because it gives us courage and strength. Take Psalm 31:24 *Be Strong and take courage, all you who hope in the Lord.*

So, Hope in the Lord. He is with you and will support you and care for you because He loves you. **Paul**

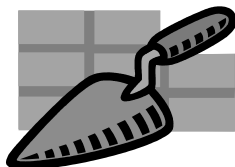
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You will find an envelope included with this edition of the church magazine. If you could kindly return it with a donation to cover the costs of printing and delivering the magazine for 12 months (6 copies) we would very much appreciate it. Thank you !

Harvest festival NB

This year falls on Sunday October 4th. One of the great sadnesses of the covid restrictions is that we cannot enjoy this great celebration in the traditional way. However, you can still contribute. In the week prior to Harvest Festival we are going to leave some big waterproof containers outside the church for people to fill with food which will find its way to the foodbank.

Pattern of Services

Because of the changing nature of the Covid Rules we have found it difficult to produce a definitive list of Services for the next two months as usual. To be kept informed please keep an eye on the weekly emails from **Frank Puranik**, which are packed with useful information, including details of the daily and weekly online services provided by Paul.

If you are not on Frank's distribution list please ask him to add you. **frank@puranik.org**

Christmas cards & notelets

We will be selling hand finished cards by **Kirsty Humphries** during October and November. This year, Kirsty is producing individual cards, priced at £1 each. The four festive designs are pictured inside the front cover. All are blank inside and measure 6x4 inches. And, we will be selling packs of 6 beautiful notelets. Ideal stocking fillers. £3 per pack. All proceeds will go to the Church. If you would like to buy cards or notelets, **Lucy Earl** is taking orders. Please email Lucy on lucy.earl2@btinternet.com to let her know which cards you would like. Lucy will organise delivery and payment.

Julian Sherriff

Thank you to him for making six visits of his tractor and trailer to clear away our green waste. His help has been invaluable in Mary Douglas's drive to renovate the Churchyard and Gardens.

Picture by Ian Douglas inside front cover.

Parish Magazine copy date for the next issue: **22nd November**

Our return to school was such a joy – to be back together again as a school community! Despite the restrictions (and there are quite a few!), the children are being so positive and well behaved and enjoying being back learning together again. The sun has been shining and so the children have enjoyed being outside for some learning and for their playtimes and lunchtimes, albeit in their class bubbles of course.

We are all keen to ensure that the heart of St John's school experience is not lost and we are continuing with our shared Collective Worship each day, using Microsoft Teams across all classrooms. Children, sitting in their own classroom, can share the daily talk and worship and contribute from their different rooms and be heard by all. As always our children love to offer individual prayers or read more formal prayers and are still able to do this. We are working towards re-starting our Worship Group in Class 4 so they can work together to present a Collective Worship session soon.

Thank you to everyone at Church for your forbearance, as we have commandeered the shared car park to use as our Class 2 bubble playground. This is working really well and giving our younger children a lovely safe space to play and learn. We do appreciate the inconvenience this may cause but it is so very helpful to us. Happily the car park is available as normal for Sundays! Our new Class 1 children are all settling in well and, of course, have no concept of how different things are at school. We celebrated their first full week at school with certificates and a class photo (*pictured inside back cover*). Hopefully it won't be too long before they can experience the welcome of St John's Church as well.

We are looking forward to contributing to the Harvest celebrations and donations in all ways that we can and are working with Reverend Paul to do this safely and meaningfully for the children.

We are missing our St John's Church friends and hope to see you again soon.



So this was the year. The year when 'Team Lemsford' decided it wasn't 'bike' but time for 'hike'. With the annual fund raiser for the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust still on but with all churches closed to visitors due to Covid, it seemed like a good year to try something different.



Instead of trying to visit 20 churches in a day by bike and consume excessive amounts of cake and cups of tea, we had a simple objective - walk from St John's to St Albans Abbey and back, 14 miles in total. Lucy and I were delighted that Paul and Cate, Gina and Paul, Mary and the entire Greenfield family were able to join us for the great trek.

We walked via Cromer Hyde, across many different fields (some only recently ploughed), and Sandridge. The weather was superb, just the right amount of warmth to make walking pleasant. The Abbey was reached in time for a bit of lunch and a pint (for some). Not long afterwards it seemed we had to assemble again for the walk back, aided by some rather good ice creams. By the end of the return leg a few aches and pains were developing but all 11 of us made it back bang on target, 5pm.

We had a great day and are delighted to report that the Just Giving page and cash sponsorship have raised exactly £700, so huge thanks to all those who sponsored us. We are very grateful for all your generous donations. As usual half of the money is for St John's and the rest for the charity. *Picture is at the start, inside front cover at the destination.*





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Jo Brooks has sent in the following extract from an essay written in 1948 by CS Lewis. It seems remarkably relevant to our situation today.*

In one way we think a great deal too much of the atomic bomb. “How are we to live in an atomic age?” I am tempted to reply: “Why, as you would have lived in the sixteenth century when the plague visited London almost every year, or as you would have lived in a Viking age when raiders from Scandinavia might land and cut your throat any night; or indeed, as you are already living in an age of cancer, an age of syphilis, an age of paralysis, an age of air raids, an age of railway accidents, an age of motor accidents.” In other words, do not let us begin by exaggerating the novelty of our situation. Believe me, dear sir or madam, you and all whom you love were already sentenced to death before the atomic bomb was invented: and quite a high percentage of us were going to die in unpleasant ways. We had, indeed, one very great advantage over our ancestors—anaesthetics; but we have that still. It is perfectly ridiculous to go about whimpering and drawing long faces because the scientists have added one more chance of painful and premature death to a world which already bristled with such chances and in which death itself was not a chance at all, but a certainty.

This is the first point to be made: and the first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together. If we are all going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They may break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds. *“On Living in an Atomic Age”*



** Clive Staples Lewis (29 November 1898 – 22 November 1963) was a British writer and lay theologian. He held academic positions in English literature at both Oxford University (Magdalen College, 1925–1954) and Cambridge University (Magdalene College, 1954–1963). He is best known for his works of fiction, especially *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Space Trilogy*, and for his non-fiction Christian apologetics, such as *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, and *The Problem of Pain*.*

David Sutcliffe

David's funeral was taken by Edward Cardale at Knebworth Crematorium on 22 September.

Ron Ingamells writes:

I was privileged to know David and liaise with him on church projects during my time, 1979 to 2002. David was always helpful and a delightful person with whom to work.

St. John's needed a meeting room with kitchen and toilet. It had to be appropriate to the site and not interfere with the many memorials.

This limited the space available but David's skill and professionalism produced a design that came to the rescue. The Annexe which has proved such a valuable addition is due mainly to David collaborating with the PCC and the Diocese. He also worked with the (then) Manpower Services Commission which had been established to train unemployed young people and at the same time improve community projects. Many of those trainees were then able to find work. The Annexe is a lasting memorial to David.

The next project was to improve the Garden of Remembrance. I visited many churchyards and was generally appalled at the awful Gardens of Remembrance with memorials overgrown and often uneven giving the appearance of being uncared for. In St. John's Garden many ashes had been interred in front of the small wall near the cross. It was a tight space and it did not seem right to continue placing so many ashes there. I asked David what he thought of my ideas and once again he generously stood with me many times contemplating possible designs. We aimed to make the area a place where the bereaved could meditate as well as having fitting memorials with names that were identifiable. We agreed that the cross should be the focus together with a central stone reflecting the Christian understanding of remembrance. I was so grateful to David for his design skills. When the Garden of Remembrance was dedicated I recall the Archdeacon saying that it was a fine example of how a Garden should look and he sent a number of people to view it from other churches where they considering improvements.

David was also the church architect for many years. What we have today with the Annexe and the Garden of Remembrance owes much to him and I shall always be thankful that he was in the village when I was Vicar.



From the Welwyn Times 16th March 2020



On Friday March 13 a flag designed for the Centenary of the town was flown outside Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's office. The flag was made by Welwyn Garden City born **David Sutcliffe**, (on left) who qualified as an architect in 1951 and then ran his own partnership for the next 37 years.

During that time he played a part in the design of 500 houses in WGC. He was also responsible for the completion of St Francis Church, including St Francis Hall, the Jack Lee Hall in Woodside House and the Elizabeth House Care Home in Panshanger.

His initial sketch has been worked up by Paul Hillary of Red Echo Design Ltd to the final design, strongly influenced by the bold, artistic style of the 1920s (*in colour inside front cover*).

Mayor Councillor Roger Trigg and Scouts Sid Sweeney and Lenny Warner jointly hoisted the flag, which will fly for several key WGC100 centenary celebration events throughout the year.

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The picture on the cover is a modern painting after a famous original by the Victorian artist Edward Burne-Jones, commissioned by Mrs. George Marston Whitin of Whitinsville, Massachusetts in 1896. (The town was created by and named after her husband's grandfather, a textile miller).

Mrs. Whitin originally requested a painting of a dancing figure, but Burne-Jones, devastated by the recent death of his long-time friend and business partner William Morris, struggled with the work and wrote to ask if a painting of Hope would be an acceptable alternative. The result was an allegory with the bound personification of Hope reaching skyward despite her bars and chained feet.

The painting is based on one included in a set of stained glass designs of the Christian virtues Faith, Hope, and Charity created by Burne-Jones for Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Company. A three-light window based on these designs was commissioned for Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, (see inside back cover) and used in several other churches. *Hope* was donated to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston by Mrs Whitin's children.





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The Celts celebrated their new year on November 1. This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter. Celts believed that on the night before the new year (October 31st) the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred and the ghosts of the dead returned to earth, causing trouble and damaging crops. Celts thought that the presence of these spirits made it easier for the Druids to make predictions. For a people dependent on the volatile natural world, these prophecies were important. To commemorate the event Druids built huge sacred bonfires, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to their deities. During the celebration, the Celts wore costumes, typically of animal heads and skins, and attempted to tell each other's fortunes. When the celebration was over, they re-lit their hearth fires, which they had extinguished earlier that evening, from the sacred bonfire to help protect them during the coming winter.



After 43 AD, when the Romans had conquered the majority of Celtic territory, the Celtic New Year celebration was gradually combined with Feralia, a day in late October when the Romans also commemorated the passing of the dead. On May 13th 609 A.D., Pope Boniface IV dedicated the Pantheon in Rome in honour of all Christian martyrs, and established the feast of All Martyrs Day. Pope Gregory III later expanded the festival to include all saints as well as all martyrs, and moved it to November 1. In 1000 A.D., the church made November 2 All Souls' Day, a day to honour the dead, which too was celebrated with bonfires, parades and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels and devils.

In Middle English *Alhallowmesse* meant All Saints' Day and the night before it began to be called All-Hallows Eve and, eventually, Halloween. Tricking and treating was developed in the USA between 1920 and 1950, and Halloween is second only to Christmas there as a commercial holiday.

Following my piece in the last issue about wood pigeons I was interested to hear a neighbour 's story about his campaign to stop feral pigeons nesting under his solar panels. After failed attempts to rig up netting around the edges of these panels, which the pigeons easily defeated, he turned to more serious means and bought an air rifle. One evening an unlucky pigeon was parading on the ridge of his roof. My neighbour took aim from the garden at the back of his house—and shot it dead. Its lifeless body fell down the other side of the roof, facing the road, and lodged in the edge of the top panel, for all to see.

Now, opposite my neighbour lives a lady who is a very keen birdwatcher. He was rather nervous about her reaction so early next morning he got a ladder out, planning to dislodge the corpse with a long stick.. No need! It had vanished and he believes it was taken by one of the red kites that often circles over our houses. Suddenly I understood what these kites are about. In many ways they resemble the scrap metal dealers who drive around our estate looking for booty. Anyone who has an old boiler or redundant radiator has only to leave it out on the verge and it mysteriously disappears, just like the dead pigeon.

In my own garden a pair of wood pigeons have built a rather fine nest, secreted in a laurel tree. Readers will remember that I am not too fond of these birds because of the awful mess they have made on my recently cleaned paving—especially when they have been grazing on my blackcurrants.



Curious to see what sort of nest they had built, I got a stepladder out and got a sight of it. Inside were two beautiful white eggs, only slightly smaller than a hen's egg,. Wikipedia revealed why birds eggs are so mathematically perfect. The ovoid shape is easy for a hen to lay, and makes an egg lie safely in a nest, rather than roll out as ball-shaped one might.. Wonderful!

So an ethical dilemma suddenly appeared: should I cull these eggs and stop two more pestilential pigeons emerging, or should I leave them to hatch for their parents to enjoy. What would you have done??



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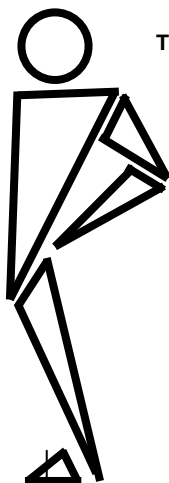
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We are not meeting at the moment but are still receiving emails asking questions after visiting our website www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk. Recently, we had one from Elizabeth Archer, née Sharp, granddaughter of Frederick Sharp Headmaster of St John's School 1936 – 1946. She had read the article on her grandfather and offered us an image. In her email she mentioned an Italian POW, called Lorenzo. This reminded us of our display for 2020 Lemsford Fete which we could not use this year, but which we would like to share with you.

Lemsford WW2 Prisoner of War Camp

This POW camp was situated between Green Lanes and Sheriff Farm drive on the Marford Road not far from the church, from about 1943 until sometime after 1946. All POW camps were inspected by representatives of the Red Cross, who reported on all aspects of the camp. Unfortunately, those of the war years appear not to have survived.

Batford POW Camp opened in May 1943 for Italian prisoners. It had three satellite hostels, one at Hatfield Hyde with 60 men, another at Stanborough with 56, and the largest at Lemsford which held 265. There were also 932 men in the main camp at Batford. The Lemsford Camp was run by the War Agricultural Committee (WARAG)

The camp consisted of many wooden buildings; these buildings were where the prisoners lived. Behind the huts was a concrete building sunk into the ground which was soldier's accommodation and administration. The camp was surrounded by a high barbed wire fence.

In October 1943 the Italian government signed a peace treaty with the Allies, and shortly afterwards declared war on Germany. This altered the status of the Italians, they were not allowed to return home to Italy and although still prisoners, they were granted certain privileges and better treatment and were given more freedom to work on local farms. The POW cookhouse ran parallel to the fence. The Italian POWs would give the village children baked potatoes as they passed by on their way back from school.

In March and April 1946 there were two large intakes of German POWs, one from Canada and one from the USA, with a total of 939 men, 200 of whom had gone to Lemsford, the remaining 739 men staying at the Batford POW camp. Morale amongst these men was not very good.

The Camp was demolished in the early 1960's. Some of the Nissen huts in which the POW's were housed were later removed to Bray's Farm to be used as farm buildings.



Lemsford Parish Magazine August '46 Vicar's letter (R.R.P. Rigby)

Ixpect most of you know that there is a service in our church once a week for German POWs in the locality. I was asked by some of the men whether such would be possible and I was very glad to be able, with the consent of the Bishop, to offer the hospitality of the Church to the German Pastor. We believe that Christ alone offers the way to the peace of the world. I hope that what is happening in Lemsford and of course at many other churches may go a little way to removing the hatreds which lead to war."

Memories of the Lemsford Camp

Elizabeth Archer nee Sharp recalls: Each morning the POWs were marched from the camp past the school and down the hill towards the mill. In the evening they took the same route in reverse.

The POWs wore brown boilersuit type overalls with round yellow circles on their knees and a big blue circle on their back. (The circles were filled in so like a patch not the outline of a circle). They also wore a soft brown cap with a small peak (similar to a modern-day baseball cap).

The children were told not to interact with the POWs but the POWs often waved and sometimes the children waved back. The children were not scared of the Italian POWs even though they were 'the enemy'. However, they were scared of encountering a German.

One particular POW called Lorenzo had Sunday dinner with the headmaster's family on several occasions. He was an officer, single and a doctor in civilian life. He spoke some English. For these visits he wore what may have been his military uniform. It certainly wasn't the 'work' overalls described above and nor was it an ordinary civilian collar and tie as worn by Mr Sharp.

The reverend from the local church also hosted a POW on at least one occasion. The POW was brought from the camp by a soldier then left in the care of the family until a soldier collected him to return to the camp later on. On one visit, Lorenzo took a small Christmas gift. It was a little figure with his arms above his head holding on to a horizontal bar. The figure swung round the bar like a gymnast when the sides of the toy were squeezed. Lorenzo had made it from wire and what seemed like some wood from a cigar box. The toy was treasured for several decades.

Rex Tait remembered as a young lad on his paper round one morning seeing a group from 12th SS Hitler Jugend alight at WGC Station, for the Lemsford Camp. Although very young these soldiers had fought in many battles in the Caen area of Normandy holding back the Allied advance. He also recalls an Italian prisoner who worked in Cochrane coal yard until 1944 with Peter Cochrane., who remembers him too - Carmelo Grasso of Catania, Sicily.



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Ena Wyatt German prisoners of War came to Lemsford after the war. Various Quakers invited 2 or 3 to Sunday lunch. Herbert Ritter was one - he carved a beautiful little train (he had been told there was a young child) and Janet played with it every day. He kept in touch until he died. To leave the camp the host had to sign them out and they had to return for the curfew at 8pm. They could only go locally - not into London for example.

An archives article reports a **Mr Arthur 'Pop' Freeman** who lived in 5 Bury Cottages, Stanborough he had two children Margaret June and Richard. Margaret courted and married in 1948 Ivan Lust a German sailor, who was a POW from the Lemsford Camp. Ivor was one of the few survivors of the Bismark and after a frosty start with Arthur he went on to be the 'best son-in-law' a man could want. Margaret June and Ivan became close associates with Lord Mountbatten of Burma through the North Atlantic Star association.

Herbert 'Jack' Brown recalls: POWs used to work for my Uncle (Ernest Chas Brown 1928 to 1952) at the Chequers (Crooked Chimney). I never met them but I remember him saying they were a quiet lot. I am not sure if he paid them in cash or with refreshment from the premises--knowing my Uncle he would have preferred the latter!

One lady's recollection was the site had been originally an Anti-Aircraft gun site, during which time she worked in the canteen and another lady recalled going to dances there. But when an AA gun was no longer needed, the wired and hutted enclosure must have been ideal for housing non rebellious prisoners.

The POW cookhouse ran parallel to the fence. Wartime kids would whistle to the Italian prisoner cooks and cadge cooked potatoes (at any time of day)!

Some of the prisoners worked locally, one recollection was two POWs worked on Cromer Hyde Farm, but she was unable to recall if Italian or German.

A lady who worked in a sweet factory in Broadwater Rd, recalled that Arrow Ltd who were precision engineers, had part of the factory, one of the Italian POWs worked in the Arrow Half.

One gentleman recalls transporting German POW's from Lemsford to St. Albans to work in the gas works;, but not sure when.

Another gentleman who lived in Redbourn and worked in WGC recalled he use to travel to WGC and back in a small green Commer bus or coach which held about a dozen people, it belonged to the WARAG (War Agricultural Committee) it was also ferrying Italian POWs from Hemel Hempstead to Lemsford Camp where they were distributed to the local farms where they worked all day, this would have been about 1944/45 after the Italian surrender.

Acknowledgements: PRO (Public Record Office): Harpenden History Group: Welwyn Garden City Library: Jeremy Summer: Ena Wyatt: Elizabeth Archer nee Sharp, Peter Cochrane: From Rex Tait's book 'Rex's Walk through Lemsford' an extract:.



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Forgotten: The British African Colonial Soldiers of the Second World War

Learning Through the Arts in partnership with St Albans Cathedral are delighted to display an exhibition commemorating the African experience of the Second World War.

Over half-a-million African troops served with the British Army as combatants and non-combatants in campaigns in the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, Italy, France and Burma - the largest single movement of African men overseas since the slave trade.

This presentation provides an insight into some of contributions and the sacrifices made by African Colonial Soldiers on the part of the British Empire during Second World War, through the perspective of The Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF).

Free exhibition, donations welcome.

Start: 1st October, 2020

End: 1st November, 2020

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*God of misty days and harvest moon nights,
there is always the dimension of mystery and wonder in our
lives.*

*We always need to recognize your power-filled presence.
May we gain strength from this.*

Beliefnet.

And finally—some topical tales:

WARNING—SOME READERS MAY GROAN AT THESE

ON HOPE: I was on a plane and the lunch choices were white meat chicken or German sausage. Unfortunately, I'm seated in the last row. I'm hoping for the breast, but preparing for the wurst.

ON COVID19: The government in Egypt has instructed the city's taxi drivers to travel around Cairo sounding their horns. It's hoped that a return to familiar noises will help restore calm after the pandemic. Operation *Toot N Calm Em* will last for one week.

ON RUSSIAN SPYING: A flying insect was apprehended in the offices of MI5 yesterday. He's avoided all questions about why he was there, but it's strongly suspected that he's the Cagey Bee.

ON HEALTH ADVICE:

- 1 I regret rubbing baked beans in my eyes, but that's Heinz sight.
2. What should you do if you are addicted to seaweed? *Sea kelp.*

ON PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS: There's a protest in London tomorrow about cake decorations. Police are expecting hundreds and thousands to turn up.

ON MARITAL HARMONY: Just had a text from my mate. He said: "My wife won't let me play word games. Now there's never a cross word in our household."



Top: see page 11 (Christchurch College); bottom: page 4 (School)





TOGETHER

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