



St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



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October 2020

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The challenges ahead

At the time of writing, places of worship are exempt from the "Rule of Six" guidelines and since early July we have been holding services at St Mary's and opening the church for prayer in the week. There are guidelines in place and on a Sunday morning, sanitisers are placed at the entrance to the church, track and trace details are taken, social distancing is maintained and unless there is an exemption face masks are worn. The most important thing is that anyone who comes feels safe and we look out for each other. Despite the challenges it has been really good to be able to come together and provide support and encouragement. Loneliness and anxiety can be overwhelming and it is helpful sometimes to know that there is help and support. We are also very pleased that in partnership with Northchurch Baptist Church a parish pantry has been opened that is open to everyone in the community.

One of the challenges of this period of coronavirus has been planning ahead. This time of the year normally involves making plans for Remembrance, Advent and Christmas. The details for these events will be provided by the end of the month depending on any changes to the guidelines. I have been thinking about how each one of us will have stories about the last six months and how it is impacted on us and those around us. Some of the stories have been very inspiring and the appreciation for the front-line services has been in the forefront of the news.

There is a long list of people in the community that have helped each other out and looked out for neighbours. There have also been the experiences of pain and loss. I have officiated at a number of funerals over this period and the strength and courage of families, who are grieving and dealing with issues that would not normally be present, has been deeply moving. I hope that at some point in the future there will be a time when we can come together to remember as we should.

The beginning of October marks the celebration of harvest. If you need any apples please help yourself from the church porch. (hands sanitized before picking). I watched the David Attenborough program last night on Extinction and if ever there was a time to consider how we care and protect God's creation, it is now. As individuals it is easy to feel that nothing we do will make any difference, but there seems to be a deeper sense of resolve that by acting together, change is possible. We are exploring how we can welcome the children from the school into the church to celebrate harvest, possibly class by class. This harvest is an ideal time to consider how we can make the chances that will give the next generation a world that has some harmony and balance. It is a huge task, but every journey starts with the first step.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

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Bike 'n Hike 2020



This took place on Saturday 12th September. Evelyn and Brian Hodgson cycled 41 miles through the Chilterns countryside and visited historic churches.



The money raised from their efforts is going to pay for hand driers in the Parish Rooms so that toddlers groups and

Brownies and Rainbows can start their clubs again. It will also go towards the electrical safety certificate and for the new lighting in the bell tower.



The fundraising appeal is still open. You can donate to Evelyn's JustGiving page by going to www.justgiving.com and entering "Evelyn Hodgson" in the search box. This brings up 'Evelyn's Page' with a picture of Evelyn and her bike.



Who Would Live in a House Like This?

Rossway – Part 3

The 1891 Census shows 37-year-old George Frederick McCorquodale and his family living at Rossway. McCorquodale had leased the estate a few years earlier from its owner, Charles Stanton Hadden, who had moved his family from Rossway to live in London following the failure of the Hadden's coffee plantation in Ceylon.

George Frederick McCorquodale ran a highly successful printing and publishing company which his father, George McCorquodale, had founded in Newton-le-Willows, Lancashire in 1849. Over the subsequent years the company had expanded rapidly, gaining a number of key contacts with the developing railway companies to print their timetables, tickets and posters, as well as their general stationery. In 1878, McCorquodales opened a new printing works in the railway town of Wolverton, and shortly afterwards an office was established in the City of London. With both sites within easy reach by rail from nearby Berkhamsted station, Rossway became the obvious location for a new prestigious home for the McCorquodale family. Among the most successful of McCorquodale's contracts was that of producing the various editions of the *Bradshaw* railway timetables and guides, made famous in many novels and in more recent years by Michael Portillo's television programmes on BBC2. The success of the company was reflected back at Rossway, where George Frederick McCorquodale was able to increase the number of domestic staff he employed in the house from seven in 1891 to eleven ten years later.

In September 1903, George Frederick McCorquodale's lease on Rossway expired, and having spent the previous few months auctioning his farm stock, including his prized herd of red polled cattle, he moved his family to Markyate. By the following year, the Hadden family financial crisis had ended and Lieutenant Colonel Charles Frederick Hadden, the son of Charles Stanton Hadden, was able to move back to Rossway.

To be continued...



This image of George Frederick McCorquodale dates from 1902 and is by the artist John Singer Sargent

How you are fallen, O Day Star, son of Dawn

The 14th chapter of Isaiah, which is not widely known today, contains a short poem¹ authoritatively described as “one of the most powerful poems of the whole literature of the world.”

Part of an “oracle against Babylon”, an empire that once dominated the ancient Near East, it has the form of a funeral lament for a great king. But it is no lament. It is a taunt.

What was the occasion for this poem? Possibly the overthrow of Nebuchadnezzar. Israel had reason enough to hate the Babylonian ruler who conquered the Israelites, deporting them to slavery, far from their homes. But to a people terrorised and exploited by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Medes, Persians and Seleucids, not to mention the Romans, “Babylon” came to stand for any oppressing empire and the poem taunts any tyrant who finally succumbs, whether to conquest, intrigue or simply the ravishes of time.

Its theme is reversal: the one who ruled in pomp is now broken, destroyed, powerless for good or ill.

It is made up of 5 strophes, each with a theme. When the earth hears that you are dead, it breaks forth in song; descending to Hades, you will find that even dead kings, revered as demi-gods, treat you with contempt; while they have their monuments on earth, your body will be devoured by dogs; you, destroyer, will leave no dynasty. You will be utterly forgotten. Those interested in poetry will find a feast of parallelisms and a chiasm, a reversible pattern which points to the middle as the true focus of the poem.

Ancient peoples, studying the night star-scapes through the clear air, saw how just before dawn

appears the Morning Star, brightest star in the firmament, which from the horizon ascends towards the zenith; but before it can get there, the sun comes up and it is completely extinguished. What they saw inspired them to tell stories of how Lucifer, the brightest of the stars, sought to usurp the throne of God himself, only for his vaunting ambition to be overwhelmed, in the greatest of reversals, as he was cast down to the depths.

That mythical story provides the metaphor that makes the centre of Isaiah’s poem so memorable; it addresses anyone, who, in the moment of earthly glory, forgets that he – most have been men – is but a man, mortal. It makes the hair stand on end, the spine tingle.

My mother used to say, as the radio announced the bad end of another tyrant: “Why can they not see? It always ends in the same way.” The moment of glory gives way to the rejoicing of those set free. There is no lasting memorial for the tyrant, no proud legacy.

Lies, betrayal, commitments broken, rivals ruined; little compassion, no solidarity with the vulnerable mars that moment of earthly glory as he asks “Am I not like a god, a lord of the universe?”

No. You will be cut down. No memorial will be yours. Your future is the depths of the pit. You will fall like Lucifer, never to hope again.

David White

¹Isaiah 14:4b-21

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Hello from **everyone at St Mary's Northchurch** and **we do hope that everyone is safe and well.**

Please do remember that we are here to help and support our community. If you or anyone you know is experiencing difficulties during this time, please do get in touch. St Mary's Church runs one of the Northchurch Community Pantry venues and is open daily for donations or if you need help.

- ✂ Our Sunday morning service is at 10am every Sunday morning, and on Facebook afterwards.
- ✂ Every evening at 10pm, we have a short Night Prayer (Compline) service on Facebook.
- ✂ Both services are subtitled. Both will be available to watch afterwards.

Look at our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/stmarynorthchurch> for these services and for more information.



Sue Hampton—Northchurch's Bald Green Author

Sue will be familiar to many of Northchurch's residents. She was a teacher at St Mary's School before becoming a full-time author. She started out as a children's author before moving on to writing for adults.

She is a trustee of the charity 'People not Borders' which St Mary's Church supports. She branched into giving creative writing workshops in schools, before realising that the only thing she truly wanted to do was campaign for Extinction Rebellion.

In recent years, Sue's writing has been on themes linked to her campaigning. Many of her own experiences of activism have been woven into her latest stories and her last three novels. She is someone who truly practises what she preaches; veganism and a simpler lifestyle. She gave up flying 15 years ago and has not been on a plane since then. She is a dedicated Quaker and recognises their tradition of doing "what love requires of us".

I have been privileged to be amongst the first to read many of Sue's latest short stories, and she emailed her latest book to me a chapter at a time.

Sue holds a stock of her own books and can be contacted via her website. If you want to sample her writing, which is wonderfully rich and descriptive with complex characters that grow and change throughout her books, she has some of her short stories on her website which you can read for free.

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

Her collections of short stories, 'Ravelled', 'Instead' and 'Woken' are beautifully written and stay in one's mind for months afterwards. Her most recent published novel is 'Intact' with a heroine who starts her life afresh at the age of 60. If you are looking for something deeper to read with complex characters and climate change activism as themes, do give Sue's writing a try.

Jill Hipson

Contacts for the Newsletter: **Currently we are only able to publish online.**

Distribution to Valerie Clark, 07821 896734. Advertising & editorial by email to the Editor, Jill Hipson Jill.hipson@live.co.uk.

All advertisements must be paid for before they can be printed. Copy date is 15th of each month.



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No words to pray



A candle prayer

God,
Wherever you are,
I have no words to pray.
I am in the darkness,
Aching,
Lost,
In pain.

As I light my candle,
I reach out to you,
For my family and friends,
For the world around me,
For myself.
Give me strength
To face another day.
Shine your light into my
dark places
And help me to know
I am not alone.

Amen

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