



St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



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February 2019

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Where do we go from here?

At the time of writing (January 16th) the headlines in the newspapers are focusing on the "historic" defeat of the proposed deal to leave the European Economic Union and the sense of uncertainty about what is going to happen next. On the news last night a journalist was talking about the potential crisis of democracy and the dangers of people losing faith in politicians to deliver the demands of the people. Although things can change very quickly maybe it is more the case that a divided parliament is a true reflection of the state of the nation. A wide range of different perspectives with no clear consensus and waiting on something that might provide a focus of agreement and unity.

Just before Christmas I spent a few days in Salisbury and at the cathedral before a service a prayer was said that God would guide the politicians and that there would be a spirit of reconciliation and generosity in public debate. At the present time that feels like a work in progress but there must be to quote Martin Luther King, Jr a way of "disagreeing without being disagreeable." You can passionately argue your case and stand up for what you believe without believing that anyone who disagrees with you is somehow deluded. I voted remain for a number of reasons but have had conversations with people who voted the other way and who feel that they have to stay silent. That is a great shame and part of living in a democracy is that we are able to respectfully listen and disagree. The headlines suggest that as a country we are split down the middle. Whatever the truth of that we are still in the future going to be living in the

same communities and we have to find a way forward.

One of the most difficult parts of the last few months is that the way Brexit has been presented is that we are in a race against time. After the passing of Article 50 we officially leave the European Union at the end of March. This has raised the issue of a "no deal" and huge questions and uncertainties about the implications. Yet the emphasis on deadlines is simply a reflection of how we live and the pressures that we are put under. We live in a world where there are constant demands to deliver and be accountable. This is something that is not necessarily going to change but there is a cost in terms of emotional and mental health that seems to particularly impact on young people. Part of the national debate might involve a discussion of building a society in which people can thrive rather than struggle with pressure and anxiety.

At St Mary's we will continue to pray for harmony, generosity of spirit and reconciliation. Whatever your views on the crucial issue we will seek together to find a way to disagree without being disagreeable.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

St Mary's Film Club will be showing
"Interstellar" in the Parish Room at
8.00pm on Wednesday 13th February.
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Gunner 101589 George Thomas Keen

Royal Garrison Artillery, died 9th February 1919

Despite the First World War ending on 11th November 1918, the deaths did not.

Born in 1879, George Keen was a gardener and later a keen chorister and bellringer at St Mary's, Northchurch. He was married there in 1901. In later years, George's work took him to Leasam House in Rye, East Sussex where he worked until he was conscripted in July 1916.

Although expressing a preference to serve in the Army Service Corps, George was assigned to the Royal Garrison Artillery and posted to Newhaven Fort on the Sussex coast. Sadly, towards the wars end, George contracted bronchial tuberculosis and was sent for treatment at N^o2 Eastern General Military Hospital in Brighton. He died there on 9th February 1919, aged 40. His body was returned to Northchurch, and after a funeral service at St Mary's he was buried in the New Road cemetery.

Lance Corporal James CHANDLER

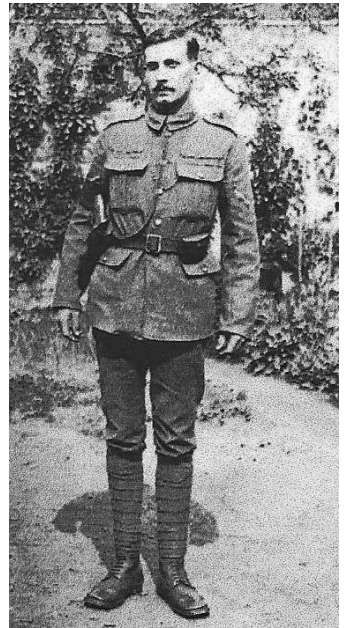
Military Police Corps, died 26th February 1919

James Chandler, known as Jim, was born in 1894 in Alton, Hampshire. The Chandler family later moved to Northchurch where his mother ran a grocery shop. After leaving school, like George Keen, Jim started work as a gardener, but later decided to join the Luton Borough Police Force. Enlisting in 1915, Jim joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and was later posted to Egypt. Unfortunately, soon after his arrival Jim went down with enteric fever and was hospitalised back to the UK. After making a full recovery, Jim was posted to a Field Ambulance near Ypres.

In May 1917, Jim transferred to the Foot Branch of the Corps of Military Police, becoming a 'Redcap', after the coloured cap cover Military Police wore. Initially attached to Second Army, Jim was later appointed Acting Lance Corporal and sent to First Army at Armentières. The Military Police maintained law and order among the troops, arresting deserters, looters, soldiers without passes and those committing offences of any kind. They also controlled traffic, patrolled areas deemed out of bounds to soldiers, and had responsibility for collecting battlefield stragglers together with anyone retreating without orders, which made them extremely unpopular.

In July 1917, Jim was injured during a gas attack near Ypres and returned home for a second time. Whilst recovering, he met, and later married, Elizabeth Baxter who worked at the Mantle Factory in Berkhamsted. Jim returned to France in February 1918 and remained there until the end of the year when he returned home on leave.

Under the terms of the Armistice signed in November 1918, the British sent an army of occupation to the Rhineland and Jim was one of the those sent to Cologne. Sadly, on 26th February, he died there of influenza and bronchopneumonia. Jim is one of nineteen 'Redcaps' buried in the Cologne Southern Cemetery. More than 2,500 British soldiers are also buried there, most of them victims of influenza.



To win at all costs?

Did you watch *Brexit: the Uncivil War*?

The challenge, for both sides in the Brexit campaign, was to identify and convince the few undecided voters. *Vote Leave* won the battle. How they did it was disturbing.

They dreamed up a powerful slogan: *Take back control*. But you cannot have a relationship with someone and be fully in control at the same time.

They also identified two widely shared concerns: the funding of the NHS; and immigration. Neither was under the control of the EU. But they linked them to the EU by plausible-sounding, but false, assertions.

Not only was the £350 million a week false, so was the implied choice. The EU did things with the money we paid to them. Now we will have to do them ourselves. So there is no saving for the NHS.

It was entirely false to imply that up to 76 million Turks could shortly migrate to the UK. Turkey is not about to join the EU and even if they did, their entire population would not up sticks to Britain.

Vote Leave identified a group of undecided voters and saturated them with messages on these issues. Most of them were not in a position to spot the falsehoods. Further, *Vote Leave's* information about these voters may have been obtained illegally and their spending probably exceeded the legal limits.

Yet they won.

So should we just 'do what it takes' to win?

Once one side shows how to win dishonestly, others will follow. Then we will be slaves to lies.

Jesus reminded those who found the truth inconvenient that "The truth will set you free."

Jesus even spoke truth to Pilate. But Pilate was cynical. *What is truth, asked jesting Pilate and would not stay for an answer.*

To lie, it has been said, may seem brave before God. But it is to be a coward towards our fellows. A lie is a breach of faith.

David White

London wasn't a major surprise!

Read on with confidence – what follows is nothing to do with Brexit.

You know that there is often some good ringing to enjoy on the second Monday evening of the month, different and more tuneful than the stop/start of a typical bell practice night. Our visitors on second Mondays are more expert, and use the opportunity to get together and attempt to ring something they can't ring in their own tower without the assistance of friends.

They hope to ring non-stop for a little over 45 minutes. The mathematicians among you will be intrigued that no sequence of 8 numbers is repeated in that time – not counting the 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 when they start and when they finish. Think of ringing a method (= tune) as plaiting threads, not just three but eight! To avoid creating a pattern which repeats along its length, two threads have to be twisted every now and then, and not always the same pair of threads. That is effectively what the bells do to keep changing the sequence of numbers 1260 times in 45 minutes. So that the correct pair of bells swap at the right

intervals, the conductor (the 'master weaver') calls 'bob' or 'single' at the right times, and the ringers know what to do in response.

When all eight bells are 'weaving' the tune, it is called Major. There is a great 'family' of bell methods called Surprise which, when rung on eight bells, is referred to as Surprise Major. One particular member of this 'family' is called London On 14th January, our expert friends came to Northchurch to try and ring London Surprise Major. They succeeded – and sounded really good – for about 20 minutes, coping with whatever the conductor called to make them swap places. Then the ringing became irregular and finally had to stop because the musical threads had become tangled. London is a tricky method, and our friends have made previous attempts to keep going for 45 minutes – and they are determined to have another go. I look forward to being able to write under a different heading: Success in London Surprise Major!

Valerie Clark, Tower Captain

Sowing seeds of love...



There are times when we feel a little under the weather and life is difficult more so on some days than others. Perhaps you are having one of those days today.

As I write this, the weather is pretty good for January and Christmas has left

can't tell whether anything will come to fruition or not, it's just something we do and hope it will work. Similarly, in our lives we invest in love for one another, not knowing if it will give happiness or not, but we do it because we care, because we know that giving is better than receiving and we give because we know that it gives us a warm feeling inside that is reward enough. It doesn't matter who is the receiver, it can be a passer-by or a relative or friend, all can be surprised with a good deed.

It's Epiphany in the church at the moment. Epiphany is a word that means shining a light in the darkness; the darkness of our minds, perhaps? It might open up a thought that will change the way we see certain situations and take away the gloom that overhangs some of us at this time of year.

The light has come – it's getting lighter a little bit every day, a light that will help the plants to grow, light that makes us feel better, and the light has come in the form of Jesus, the new born baby we celebrated just a few weeks ago.

Enjoy your time this February and let's see what is held for each one of us this year!

Peggy Sear

us. I wonder what this year is holding for you?

The garden has started to show signs with bulbs poking their tips through and I'm hoping that all the planting in the autumn of last year will pay us back for the hard work we put in. You can never tell whether or not it will work, but if we don't try, we will never have a place in our back yard that is worth sitting in and enjoying. Also, Blue Tits have been back looking for a home to raise their new families and thankfully we have two homemade bird boxes just waiting for their new owners.

Sowing seeds in our garden is a passion we love, but we

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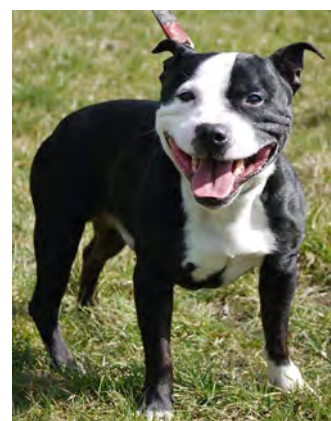
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Sunday Services at St Mary's



3rd February *Fifth Sunday before Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm Evening Prayer

10th February *Fourth Sunday before Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion
10.00am Parish Eucharist

17th February *Third Sunday before Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm Evening Prayer

24th February *Second Sunday before Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist

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Stanier Rise, Careys Croft and Crewe Curve
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Please contact Valerie Clark on 862613 or
email jill.hipson@live.co.uk if you can help.

Electoral Roll for St Mary's Church

This year we have to create a new Electoral Roll for St Mary's. Consequently, all those currently on the Electoral Roll, together with those wishing to be added, must complete an Electoral Roll Form which is available at the back of the church or by contacting us at
office@stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk.

Rosemary North, Electoral Roll Officer

Claire Hodgson, Missionary Worker

Claire Hodgson will be coming home for a short break from her missionary work in the Dominican Republic during February. She will be giving a talk at St Mary's church Northchurch at the 10:00 am service on Sunday February 24th followed by a fundraising roast dinner in the Parish Rooms.

If you would like to come and hear this inspirational speaker and join us for a traditional Sunday roast afterwards please let Evelyn Hodgson know via the church website or put your name on the list at the back of church.

Lent Quiet Morning

At St Mary's Church on Saturday 9th March we will be having a Lent Quiet Morning from 10.00 - 12 noon.

It will be a bit different this year. We have the Sunday Club designing three of the stations and taking part on the day.

The morning is open to the whole family and anyone can come and take part by dipping in when it is convenient for you.

It's open doors from 10.00am and you can stay as long as you want to. Come and join in!



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