

The

Keston Magazine

News of your Parish and Village



February/March 2025

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Front cover: Third Pond © Laurence Pierce

My children, our love should not be just words and talk;
it must be true love, which shows itself in action. *1 John 3:18*

Thought for the month



Love

How do you spell 'love'? Piglet asks his friend, Pooh.

Pooh replies nonchalantly, 'You don't spell it ..., you *feel* it, Piglet.'

I don't know about you, but I cannot remember the number of times I wrote down the word 'love' in the last couple of months. Yes, you've guessed it! I am still one of those dinosaurs that sends Christmas cards, letters and messages off to friends whom I have known for it seems like a hundred years. What do we mean when we sign off a letter or a card, 'with love from...' or 'lots of love...'?

Most of us think we have a pretty good idea about what love is. We can talk about love, we can sing about love, write poetry, read books and watch movies about love. But what does love actually look like? What does it really mean?

Defining love in simple terms is nigh on impossible. The New Testament Greek of the bible helpfully references four different words to outline the nuances of love. 'Eros' which refers to romantic love, 'philia' which describes 'brotherly love', 'agapé' which is

sacrificial love and 'storge' which is an affection between people brought together with a common bond. In the next quarter we will have occasion to mark all of these manifestations of love as we know it in one way or another when we celebrate Valentine's day, Mothering Sunday, Easter and St George's day and other family and community events. So have we mastered love?

In St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 13:4-7), a community in controversy, conflict and disunity we are shown that love is more than words of affection that trip easily off the tongue however eloquently; and actions even if well-meaning and philanthropic do not necessarily equal love. Love fundamentally begins within our own hearts. It absolutely does not originate in others or in what they do to earn our love. It flows from a heart radically transformed to love voluntarily those who hurt us, those who are different to us, those who wrong us. Love is hard because it exists most strikingly in the context of messy relationships.

God doesn't love us because we are good. God loves us because **he** is good, a feeling that flows freely from his heart to ours, that we might be restored to his goodness. We love because God first loved us and perseveres in his love for us with patience and kindness. Love is about offering forgiveness, not once, not twice or ten times but ninety-nine times.

Belinda

Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling

From the Editor

As this is the first edition I've produced this year, I wish readers a Happy New Year. The turn of the year is a time to look back and also look forwards with hope. I do try to fill the magazine with interesting and positive articles – the latter seem to be sadly lacking in the media. You can read about several inspirational people in this issue and no February issue would be complete without some mention of love!

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed, both to this current issue and those from last year. Please do not be shy about contacting me with possible ideas as I am always in need of new material.

Over the years we have had a couple of articles about Forest Lodge in the magazine, and as always with history, some of the facts differ, but I hope you will enjoy the one in this issue. Several of us have been lucky enough to see a kingfisher by this pond (the wildlife pond, pond 3). Well, I say saw it in the loosest of terms, what I actually saw was more like a blue bullet flashing past – but unmistakably iridescent and the size of a small bird. I just don't know how anyone ever manages to take a photo of a kingfisher! Others have then waited and seen it a second time as it moved to a different area of the pond. What a wonderful privilege, and something to lift your spirits.

Sally Churchus



Cover Story

Thank you to Keston resident and photographer Laurence Pierce for allowing us to use another of his great local photos, which was taken a few years ago. You can read the article about Forest Lodge on pages 12 and 13.

Poppy Appeal

We were pleased to be told that our collection for the Royal British Legion in November was the top one in our area of 20-30 churches. We raised an amazing £384.84 – thank you, Keston residents for your generosity.

Toys donated



The collection during the Toy Service on 1st December this year was amazing:

- 16 Books @ approx £4 = £64
 - 17 Cuddly toys @ £5 = £85 (all new)
 - 63 Mixed other toys @ £6 = £378 (many toys were much more than £6)
- Total roughly £527

All were taken to the Bromley branch of The Salvation Army for distribution to needy local children at Christmas. Thank you!

All things Orange



Keston resident, Libby Lee, has turned her hand to fundraising for someone else, after she herself was the recipient of help a few years ago.

You may recall that Libby, who lives with her family at The Greyhound, Commonside, had a life changing operation in the USA in 2010, aged nine, after fundraising reached the £65,000 to pay for the treatment and aftercare. It enabled Libby, who has had cerebral palsy since she was 11 months old, to sit and walk independently with crutches. Keston residents, family and friends enabled this to happen.

One of those was a school friend from Green St Green Primary School, Harry Magee, plus his family. Unfortunately, on New Year's Eve 2023 he fell down the stairs and broke his neck, and as a result is now paralysed. He was in a spinal unit in Salisbury until the autumn but is now back in his flat in Portsmouth with carers, but still visits his parents who live locally. There is no more treatment to be done, but he is in urgent need of equipment such as hoists, wheelchairs, a stair lift as well as help with the medical bills and travel costs.

Libby had the idea of organising a fundraising event to help, although she had not done this before. She said 'it has been a challenge, although I've enjoyed doing it'. 'All things Orange' is taking place on 1st February at The Warren with guests being served a three course dinner followed by a disco, with a raffle and auction taking place during the evening. Those attending must wear or accessorise with something orange as it's Harry's favourite colour. Libby is hoping to be able to raise £10,000. There may be a couple of tickets still left, please contact Libby on libbylee1104@outlook.com if you are interested. Prizes for the raffle or auction would be most welcome. If you would like to donate please visit justgiving.com/crowdfunding/libby-lee-support-harrys-future, thank you.

Libby herself is very modest about her not inconsiderable achievements which include paragliding, skiing, driving and holding down a full time job at a pension investment company in London which entails hybrid working. In her spare time, other than organising 'All Things Orange', like any 23 year old she enjoys socialising with friends. Thankfully when the family move to Orpington after the sale of the license of The Greyhound, she won't be too far away from her friends. Libby said, 'Remember there is always someone who needs help, so if you can, give it'. How true. You are a special lady, Libby, and Keston is proud of you.

Libby Lee, as told to Sally Churchus



Harry Magee

Friends of Keston Common News



Sundew

The Friends of Keston Common hosted an activity day this past summer, when items in the playground were refreshed with a new coat of paint and the area given a good sweep and tidy-up. We plan to have a follow up session this coming spring with further painting and cleaning to help complete the task.

As reported previously we have now installed the two new rustic benches in Padmall Wood, one on the east sided path and one on the west sided path. We will look to see if any further benches across the site are required and install as necessary.

The Friends have ordered a batch of 420 tree whips from the Woodland Trust. These comprise native species and are provided free of charge. The plan is to plant these along the side of the bridleway that runs from Fishponds Road to Lakes Road. In time this will create a low-level hedge to encourage nesting birds and remove the need for maintenance of the decaying post and rail.

Some of you may have noticed that a tree branch fell on the roof of the old

toilet block on the Westerham Road, (now our storeroom), and caused considerable damage. I'm pleased to report that the Council have been able to repair the damage and that our storeroom will once again be available to us. I am most grateful to all involved in making this timely repair.

At the beginning of December you may also have noticed that there was a lot of contract work of holly clearance and removal. There are a number of reasons for this work, not least to allow more light to aid the growth of heather but also to help the population of bats in the area.

In other news, the Council and Adverde have applied for a development grant of £250k from the Water Restoration Fund to develop proposals for improvements to Keston Ponds. This would improve water quality, habitats and flood risk management, as well as celebrating heritage links to Charles Darwin. Some of the ideas being considered are creating naturalised planting to the water's edge, building fixed point fishing stations and converting the conservation/wildlife pond, (third pond), to a wetland area. We await to see if the application for funding has been successful.

Larry Herbert (Chair of the Friends of Keston Common)



If it's true that we are here to help others, what are the others doing here?

Ex Churchwarden gains Freedom of the City of London



The Freedom of the City of London

On Friday 22nd November 2024, I was honoured to receive The Freedom of the City of London. I was recommended for the honour as part of the work I do for International Students House in London, a charity for underprivileged and minority students, not only by the freemen but some of our university partners. I was joined by family, friends, church members and colleagues from work and universities.

The Freedom of the City of London started around 1237 as the status of a ‘free man’ or ‘citizen’, protected by the charter of the City of London and not under the jurisdiction of a feudal lord.

In the Middle Ages, this developed into a freedom or right to trade, becoming closely linked to the medieval guilds, the livery companies. In 1835, eligibility for the freedom of the City was extended to anyone who lived in, worked in or had a strong connection to the City. The freedom that citizens enjoy has long associations with privileges in the governance of the City.

Traditionally, benefits included the right to drive sheep and cattle over London Bridge; to carry a naked sword in public; and that if the City of London police found a freeman drunk and incapable, they would bundle him or her into a taxi and send them home rather than throw them into a cell!

Whilst no longer carrying many substantive rights and largely existing as a tradition, The Freedom of the City of London still continues.

The Ceremony

Freedom ceremonies take place in the Chamberlain’s Court at Guildhall and are usually conducted by the Clerk of the Court or his Assistant.

Freemen, their nominators and guests are escorted to the Court by the Beadle, who wears a top hat and frockcoat. The Clerk of the Court wears a silk gown, and if the Chamberlain performs the ceremony, they wear the traditional ermine-trimmed gown. The prospective Freeman is invited to read the ‘Declaration of a Freeman’ and to sign the Freeman’s Declaration Book.

The Copy of the Freedom – a parchment document with the name of the recipient beautifully inscribed by a calligrapher – is presented by the Clerk, together with a copy of the ‘Rules for the Conduct of Life’ which date from the mid 18th century. The Clerk or Chamberlain extends the right hand of fellowship to the recipient and greets them as ‘a Citizen of London’.

Thank you to those that came, for your support and a wonderful, very memorable day.

Martin Chalker

Clocks go Forward

Don't forget the clocks go forward by one hour at 1am on 30th March. (Clocks 'spring forward' in spring). This marks the beginning of British Summertime which started when the Summer Time Act was passed in 1916 so that people in the northern hemisphere could make more use of the daylight hours. Double Summer Time (Greenwich Mean Time + 2 hours) was used during the Second World War.

Proponents say that changing the clocks is good for:

- Reducing energy consumption for environmental reasons
- Having longer evenings to support leisure and tourism
- Encouraging people to exercise more outdoors
- Reducing road accidents

Opponents say that:

- There are safety concerns about darker mornings

- Farmers are worried about changing routines for livestock
- It's irrelevant nowadays as many people spend most of their time in well-lit homes, shops and offices.

People's opinions vary with geographical location, occupation and lifestyle. Much of Europe and North America change their clocks too.

If you usually have difficulty adjusting, The Sleep Council suggest that a few nights before the clocks are due to go forward, start going to bed a little earlier each night and wake up 10-15 minutes earlier each morning. When Sunday arrives, you will already be adjusted. This is particularly helpful for those with young children.

Sally Churchus



Quotes about Love by St Augustine

- What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. This is what love looks like.
- Love is temporary madness. It erupts like an earthquake and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have become so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion. That is just being in love which any of us can convince ourselves we are. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.
- Because God has made us for himself, our hearts are restless until they rest in Him.

Singing for 60 years



David Cook presenting Jean with a bouquet of flowers as one of her gifts

There was a very moving occasion at the morning service at Keston Parish Church on October 13th when we marked Jean Goldby's retirement from the church choir. Jean had sung alto in the choir since she first moved to Keston in 1964.

A very loyal and hard-working member, she was for a time choir secretary and very helpful to the Choir Master in pointing out the correct pronunciation of Latin words! To mark her 60 years in the choir Jean was presented with a Royal School of Church Music long service medal and certificate, and, as is our custom at Keston, an original Richard Geiger farewell card. We will greatly miss Jean and wish her well in her new life in Edenbridge.

David Cook, Organist and Choirmaster

My Favourite Bible Verse

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand". Isaiah 41:10

I have a few 'favourite' verses but find myself returning to this one, particularly when facing uncertainty or situations of stress. God was speaking to comfort and encourage the Israelites, who were in captivity at the time. Likewise it was meaningful to me when, as a family, we first set out to Nazareth with a five week old baby in my arms and a toddler in tow! At the time I had no idea how I would cope, but God would strengthen and help me, whatever lay ahead. Similarly, over the past decades, in the face of difficult situations I have drawn comfort and encouragement from this verse.



Ruth Nash



"It's worth getting to church an hour early to grab a pew by the electric socket"



In Half Term

10 am - 12 noon
Tuesday 18th February
Keston Parish Church Hall
Church Road BR2 6HT

10 am Welcome drinks and snacks
10.15 am Crafts and activities
for all ages and interests
11.30 am Celebration with music
11.45 am Lunch (provided)

Everyone gets to enjoy doing crafts,
learning about the God who loves us,
and share a meal together

Theme: Love

Church Services



1st Sunday of each month

- 8am Holy Communion using
Book of Common Prayer (1662)
10am Celebrational Worship
(non Communion)

All other Sundays

- 10am Holy Communion

Mondays

- 7.40am Morning Prayer
8.00am Holy Communion (said)

Ash Wednesday 3pm Wednesday 5th March

Holy Communion with ashing

Annunciation of the Lord 3pm Tuesday 25th March

Holy Communion

Confirmation Classes

A preparation course will be starting for those who would like to be Confirmed (if you have already been baptised), or Christened and Confirmed. It will cover the basics of Christianity, over sessions totalling about six hours. If you are interested, please contact Rev'd Belinda on rector@kestonparishchurch.org.uk as soon as possible. Thank you.



A free phoneline of hymns,
reflections and prayers

From the Registers

Baptism

24th November Olivia Vivienne Impey (born 20/7/2020)

Service of Thanksgiving

25th November Frank Edward Netscher (aged 94 years)

Burial of Ashes

19th October Brenda Paulding (aged 86 years)

15th December Trevor Anthony Rowland (aged 72 years)

How I met my husband/wife

We were both Venture Scout leaders, Claire was Leader at the Unit in Tatsfield whose members were mostly boys. I was Leader at Bletchingley whose members were mostly girls. We went camping together, the excitement was 'in tents'.

Martin Becker and Claire



At work in the City, across a crowded office. We would time our trips to the photocopier or to get a coffee. After these little meetings, we eventually got together at the work Christmas party in 1993 and were engaged only three weeks later to marry in 1994. We have now been married for 30 years.

Anna Bailey and Stuart



We met on a school choir tour in Scotland. I was 18 years old (Upper 6th) and Ruth was 16 (5th Form). Ruth was determined to study medicine and influenced me to do the same. We graduated as doctors and worked in the NHS and overseas. We are both now retired, and looking forward to our Golden Wedding anniversary this year!

Steff Nash and Ruth



I was doing an evening job at London Carriers, part of the Philips Group, to raise some extra cash for my fare to Canada. My mum worked there too. I went to see my boss but he wasn't there, however, there was a 'new boy' in his office. My mum had regular parties and would always ask any new people along so they could get to know some of the other staff socially. The 'new boy' was invited and he came along. The rest is history. So I guess my mum introduced me to my future husband.

Tonia Crouch and David



Toni and I first met (unsurprisingly) in a pub – in our case The Black Horse in Locksbottom. We were friends for many years and in all those years I chased her she was oblivious to my intentions. I nearly gave up – women! 32 years later we're still together! Dave Lee (*Proprietor The Greyhound*)

What Dave didn't mention was that he finally trapped me by inviting himself on a skiing holiday. He told my friend that I said it was ok for him to come and me that my friend said it was ok for him to come!

Toni Lee



In 1972 when I was 19 I had a summer job teaching a young Italian boy some English. I stayed with the family in the seaside resort of Porto San Giorgio and we spent a lot of the time on the beach, which is where I met Tiziana. She spoke a few words of English and I very little Italian, but it appeared it didn't matter, as the attraction was clearly there. Although we corresponded after I returned home to University it was three years before we saw each other again. We married in 1978, so our relationship has lasted now for over 50 years.

Larry Herbert (*Chair of the Friends of Keston Common*) and Tiziana

I met Keith when I went to a Young Conservative social evening in Oxford which was held in a room with all the chairs arranged in a large circle. We were sitting opposite each other and he smiled at me. I must have smiled back because he escorted me home later that evening and I discovered that he had a 1929 red MG sports car. What a bonus! We were married two years later in 1961.

Pam Thomas and Keith



I met my husband when I was 15 years old. I was with my mum and dad, who were meeting friends in the Crown Pub (now the Toby). Trevor was working behind the bar, to earn extra cash. I immediately fell in love with him and was determined to get to know him. We spent 52 happy years together.

Chris Rowland and Trevor



We met briefly during an internship while at university. It then happened that we both decided to join the company we'd interned at, and happened to start on the same day. We got talking and the rest is history!

Annika Toomer and Sam



Tony and I met at The Grafton Squash Club, Streatham in March 1978. He was a long-standing member – I had just joined the club. After our respective squash matches, we were in the bar with our squash partners. I asked my partner if she was going to the April Fools Disco. She wasn't going but asked if I had any objections to her giving Tony my phone number. Tony phoned a few days later and our first date was April 1st 1978 – the start of our adventure together.

Eileen Davies and Tony



I fell in love at first sight when I saw Margaret at a Methodist student group. My heart was pounding but unfortunately it wasn't long before I realised that she was already engaged. I had my spies out to let me know what was happening and as soon as they told me that her engagement had broken off I pounced! Over the course of less than a year I asked her no fewer than nine times if she would marry me. Eight times she told me, politely, to get lost. On the ninth occasion, we were at a Youth Conference, sitting in a horse shoe arrangement, listening to a Speaker. I tore a piece from my notepad and wrote 'Please, please, please, please say you'll marry me. Les xxxxx'. I folded it carefully, wrote her name on the outside and passed it along the row. Disappointingly, when it got to her, she didn't even open it. After a while she excused herself and went to the toilet. Upon her return she eventually sent a folded piece of paper back. It was a piece of toilet paper, the shiny slippery kind. When I opened it, there were the magical, romantic, heart-warming words that I'd been waiting for: 'Oh, all right then M'. And I skipped and jumped for joy for the rest of the livelong day.

Leslie Griffiths, British Methodist Minister, politician and life peer, paraphrased from his Autobiography *A View from the Edge*

Thank you to all those who kindly contributed towards this article.

The Ghost of Lady Legge



Forest Lodge and third pond (now Wildlife pond)

Lady Legge was born at Hayes, she was the daughter of the Third Earl of Dartmouth and became for a while Lady in Waiting to the Duchess of Gloucester. In 1843 Lady Georgina Caroline Legge purchased her red-brick house with 12 acres of land from the ageing and widowed John Ward of Holwood. The house comprised drawing room, dining room, study, school room, inner and outer halls, six bedrooms, two bathrooms and a four bedroom servants' wing. Formerly called "Belle Vue", Forest Lodge adjoined the third lowest of the four Keston Ponds, which was later to be included in the Forest Lodge estate. Keston Vestry minutes of June 1856 recorded that permission had been granted to Lady Legge to enclose a rood, (quarter of an acre), of land on the Common close to the 3rd pond, on her covenanting to pay ten shillings every year to the parish on Christmas Eve.

Some time in the 1880s, a poem of 144 lines was published in *The Bromley*

and *West Kent Telegraph* called 'The Ghost of Keston Common, a Legend of 1883', and tells the tale of an old lady's ghost. The paper, founded by Charles Gedney in 1867, was for 30 years "the stormy petrel of Bromley politics". It was critical, pungent and outspoken. "All encroachers upon public rights felt the weight of his organised powers of destruction". The poem, which had a reprint, tells the story of an old lady's ghost. At the time of publication the lady herself was still alive, it is presumed. The poem relates that she had begun to encroach on the Common by enclosing 'a mound and then a birch tree or two'. The rich, it seemed, could steal common land from the parish and



attend church with no feeling of guilt,
but should a poor person steal he would
be sent to prison. After death, however,
it was a different story:

“The common ground o’ the church,
the Landlord of which is the Lord,
The only place where the big folk can’t
stick a trespass board,
The only place where the rich can’t get
the best of the law;
It’s a comf’table place for the poor
Tommy, a comf’table place for the
poor.”

The old lady was no doubt meant to
be Lady Legge. Rumour had it the poem
went on, that the old lady’s ghost was
seen at night in the rushes by the pond:
“She who had stolen the common could
not lie in the churchyard”.

At Lady Legge’s funeral in 1885, it
was reported by *The Record* “She was
much loved by the poor, and many were
present at her interment in the
churchyard”. The wooden reredos in
Keston Parish Church was donated in
her memory and bears the inscription
“To the glory of God and in memory of
Caroline G. Legge daughter of George

3rd Earl of
Dartmouth
K.G.

Born May
14. 1795.
Died Aug
11.1885’.



This tale
may be familiar to people who have
been reading *The Keston Magazine* for
30 years, as most of it appeared in the
October/November 1994 issue. What
may prompt your memory are the two
wonderful sketches done to accompany
it by Richard
Geiger. At
that time, the
magazine was
black and
white only
without any
photos.



Information based on an article by
John Filmer in the *Bromley Local
History* magazine and *A History of
Keston* by Tudor Davies



The Waxcap Mushrooms of Bromley



The Snowy Waxcap (*Cuphophyllus virgineus*) is a very common sight in old lawns



The Blackening Waxcap (*Hygrocybe conica*) starts yellow or red, ageing to almost pure black

Keston and the surrounding villages are fortunate to have a number of sites where the colourful waxcap fungi family can be found in late autumn.

Mushrooms are often thought of as occurring mainly in woodland, but grasslands are an excellent habitat for certain families, such as waxcaps, pink gills and clubs. The recipe for creating the right conditions for these mushrooms is to mow regularly, remove the trimmings and avoid the application of chemicals. Within urban areas, churchyards are often a fruitful hunting ground.

A good place to start is the meadow above the Village Hall on Heathfield Road. Look for the pure white Snowy Waxcap, the variable Blackening Waxcap and the lemon yellow Golden Waxcap. These can appear anytime from early October until the frosts start in late November. In 2024, the peak season was early November.

The meadows at Leaves Green are well worth a visit. Park in Ashmore

Lane and check the grass north and south of here. Up to 12 species are present, with the rare Crimson Waxcap present most years.

However the very best site to find waxcaps is at Down House. The lawns and meadows here have been carefully conserved for almost 150 years since Darwin's death in 1882 and are of national importance for the presence of 22 species of waxcap, one of which is an



Golden Waxcap (*Hygrocybe Chorophana*)



The Pink or Ballerina Waxcap (*Porpolomopsis calyptriiformis*) is one of the most beautiful of all the waxcaps. Usually a rare find but 2024 saw it appear in many places

IUCN Red Data Book species – The Pink or Ballerina Waxcap. English Heritage are now caretaking this heritage, and over the last 40 years, this site has been the subject of continual recording by mycologists. Aberystwyth University carried out a DNA soil sampling test in 2019 and found many species not previously recorded by visual surveys. The main Fungi Lawn at Down House is not usually open to the public but can be viewed from the lawn behind the house. The other lawns have a good range of waxcap fungi too.

The ecology of waxcaps is still not fully understood. Fungi cannot make their sugars as plants do by photosynthesis, so they rely on three main strategies for nutrition:

- Saprotrophic – feeding on dead plants and animals



The Parrot Waxcap (*Gliophorus psittacinus*) is a common species and comes in an array of colours from dark green to yellow and purple

- Mycorrhizal – partnership with plants to exchange nutrients in a mutually beneficial way
- Parasitic – taking nutrients from the host plant or animal and eventually killing the host

Although long considered to feed on dead grasses, it is likely that waxcaps have some kind of symbiotic relationship with mosses and other plants.

Bob Harrop



The Crimson Waxcap (*Hygrocybe punicea*) is an uncommon sight, always favouring ancient unimproved grasslands

Book Review



Archbishop by Michele Guinness

The Church of England is on its knees. Yet one woman is making a difference, and when she is appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, anything could happen. Vicky Burnham-Woods is a master of diplomacy, and deeply committed to bringing the church back into the heart of community and cultural life – but not everyone wants a woman at the top, and behind the scenes dark forces are moving. Can the first ever female Archbishop of Canterbury last long enough to achieve her mission?

Reviews:

I was gripped right from the first page. Being party to the discussions and negotiations surrounding the choosing of the next Archbishop grabbed my attention and made it feel like I'd been allowed to enter a world that so few get to see. The book is immense and covers some huge themes. *Claire Musters in Christian Today* 3/3/2014

It has intrigue, social comment, complex characters, and a plot that builds through the use of flashbacks. It is a brilliant take on what British society could look like in the future. *Christianity Magazine*

A touch of intrigue and Michele's inimitable sense of humour ... a book which is difficult to put down. *Anne Shakeshaft in Woman Alive* 1/10/2014

Michele Guinness was brought up in a practising Jewish family and is a well known speaker and the bestselling author of 14 books. She worked for many years as a broadcast journalist, then in PR for the NHS and married a C of E Vicar.

I enjoyed reading this book when it came out in 2014, (set in 2020), and in view of the current situation in the C of E, am re-reading it!

Sally Churchus

C of E attendance increases

Figures show that the average weekly attendance at Church of England services rose by almost 5% in 2023 – the third year of consecutive growth. Weekly attendance by children was up by almost 5% according to the annual Statistics for Mission findings. While total attendance is still below 2019 levels, the last year before the Covid-19 lockdowns, the analysis suggests in-person attendance is drawing closer to the pre-pandemic trend.

Fed up with bad news?

Try looking at www.positive.news or subscribing to their printed magazine. Whilst most of the news overwhelms people with negative narratives, instead Positive News offers a lens on the world that helps give people a fuller picture of reality, supports their wellbeing and focusses on what is going right. They aim to show the rest of the media that good news matters.

What I Do



Despite commuting for 14 years, the thought of retirement was horrifying – what on earth could I do? Eventually I walked out of my school carrying two little cards, one a Freedom Pass (of course!) and one of membership of the National Union of Students which mercifully did not bear a current photo. I took a degree in Children’s Literature and of many authors studied, Beatrix Potter (1866-1943) quickly became a favourite. I became so interested in her that I did a number of talks about her.

She remains an interesting woman: born into a world heavily dominated by the *mores* of class structure, she didn’t fit into existing upper middle-class society of West London. Her parents, conscious of their privileged position, dismissed the idea of their daughter going to school like their son Bertram, despite several prestigious girls’ schools by then being well established. A shy, demure girl, she was very bright, eventually demanding daily visits to the new, nearby London museums where successive governesses became irritated until she was allowed to visit

unaccompanied! She loved natural history and, encouraged by her private Art Master, spent many hours observing and sketching small creatures, reading avidly of their habits of living as well as observing and recording the seasonal changes in nature. Her family were strong Unitarians, her father was a lawyer while Mrs Potter led the quiet, sedentary life of ladies of her class, planning family calendars and giving orders to the senior domestic staff. Although a limited life, it was of the time and not repressive, despite the opinion of Beatrix’s first biographer. The family spent many pleasurable holidays in Scotland and the Lake District where Beatrix enlarged her knowledge and practice of working as a naturalist; as she got older, becoming friendly with her governesses, particularly Miss Carter.

Mrs Moore, (née Carter), left the Potters’ employ on marriage and corresponded with Beatrix regularly until potential calamity arose when five year old Noel Carter fell gravely ill with meningitis. Beatrix sent him the now famous letter of 1893 which started “My dear Noel, I don’t know what to write to you, so I shall tell you a story about four little rabbits whose names ...”. Many will finish that sentence. The letter itself became the script of her most famous story, forerunner of 23 Tales in the “Peter Rabbit and friends” series alone. Following her fiancé’s death, she stopped writing, left London and became an expert in sheep rearing and a great benefactress to The National Trust – a fascinating woman!

Judy Davies

Richard's Ramblings



For the first time in umpteen years the 'missus, the dog and me' spent Christmas away from home. We'd been invited to spend Christmas in Devon. Peter, our son, had asked us if we'd like to enjoy the celebration with him and his little family. The place – Buckland Brewer. It's about five or six miles from Bideford in north Devon.

His residence was the stable joined to the village pub – later used as a motor car repair workshop. Previously it had been a 'holiday let' and Olly, the landlord of the Coach and Horses, had turned it into 'lolly'!

The Coach and Horses, circa 1200, with its roof of thatch, sits slightly away from the main village street and at an angle, thereby creating a triangular patch with the pub at one side, the stable (house) on another and then the road. The 'dog' loved it as she could spend all her time looking up the village street and barking ferociously at any dog that perchance came into view. 'This is my territory and I'm protecting it!'. I hasten to add that all this took place behind the bars of a high gate. At the gate post, which adjoins the road, is a mounting block dating from an age gone by. When Peter first took residence he enquired whether he could make it moveable to enable him to get things

more easily into his little yard. Oh dear NO! Came the answer – that would never do.

The view, as mentioned, looks directly up the village street to the church which stands on higher ground. The tower is unusually tall and from it one can see the distant coastline. In fact the whole village has quite a high elevation.

A terrace of cottages near the church has a cobbled pavement, as has the path to the church porch. These cobbles appear to be pebbles set on end. One wonders at the work involved in laying them in past years!

Interestingly, close to the church where the main street widens sits a Methodist chapel. The Methodists would hold their services directly outside the established churches, often causing conflict with the parishioners with their more formal style of worship.

'Nothing changes' – as they say. The modern equivalent are the charismatic churches with their less formal services and more vigorous worship songs led by singing groups and stringed instruments.

Amusingly, between the chapel and the church, sits a house which was originally another pub – called, for obvious reasons – The Bell. After all, what was there to do on a winter's evening before we had the 'telly'?!

Richard Geiger



What's On

• Prayer Walks

1st Tues & 3rd Wed 9.30am

The Green opposite Greyhound pub

We usually return about 11am. Well behaved dogs welcome too!

• Men's pub social

3rd Wed 7pm The Greyhound

Join us for chat and drinks, plus a meal for those who want it. More details from Martin Becker on 07484 609102.

• Keston Book Club

1st Wed 7pm The Fox

More information from 07503 268001 or angelahollamby@gmail.com.

• Friends of Keston Common Walk

1st Wed 2pm from Keston Village Sign opposite The Greyhound

Walks last up to 2 hours. Well behaved dogs welcome. Good footwear advised.

• New Keston WI

2nd Wed 1.30pm-3.30pm

Keston Church Hall

Contact Helen Best on 07715 880889.

• Book Reading Fellowship

Mon 10th March 2pm Gravel Road

Come and discuss books with some Christian content that you have read over tea/coffee and cake. Please let Sally Churchus know on 020 8462 8750 or editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk if you would like to come.

• Friends of Keston Common AGM

Wed 19th March 7.30pm

Jubilee Room, Keston Village Hall

Everyone welcome. Steven Lofting, (previously Keston Common's Ranger), who works for Butterfly Conservation will be giving a presentation 'Saving butterflies and moths in SE England'.

• Mental Wellbeing Coffee Morning

Sat 29th March 10am-12 noon

Keston Church Hall

Come for chat over tea/coffee and cake with a mental health professional at hand. We will hear tips about how we can keep ourselves well.

Thanks

Thank you once again to Sam Price, who runs a stall in Bromley, for generously donating over 100 oranges for our Christingle service.

A Puzzle

1. The answer is a word of seven letters
2. It preceded God
3. It is greater than God
4. It is more evil than the devil
5. Many poor people have it
6. Wealthy people need it
7. If you eat it you will die

Answer on p22

Quiz Night

**With Fish & Chip Supper
Saturday 1st March**

6.30pm for 7, Keston Church Hall

Tickets £16 from Chris

Tel: 07988 712873

(Bring your own drinks & glasses)



Magazine Deadline

Please send photos and articles for the April/May issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, before Wednesday 5th March by email to: editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk or contact her to discuss ideas on Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

Laughlines

☺ Creation Conversation

God is talking to one of his angels and says “Do you know what I have just done? I have just created a 24 hour period of alternating light and darkness on Earth. Isn’t that good?” The angel says, “Yes, but what will you do now?” God says “I think I’ll call it a day”.

☺ Those who want to get married

A minister was preparing to marry a local couple within the following few weeks. At the close of the morning service, he saw them both in the congregation, and wanted to ask them to come forward, but he couldn’t think of their names. So he said: “Will those wanting to get married please come to the front?”

Immediately, nine single ladies, six single men, three widows, and four widowers walked up the aisle.

☺ What’s the best flower for a boy to give on Mothering Sunday? A son-flower.

☺ As in previous years, for Lent, I gave up all my New Year’s resolutions.

Puzzle answer: Nothing

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