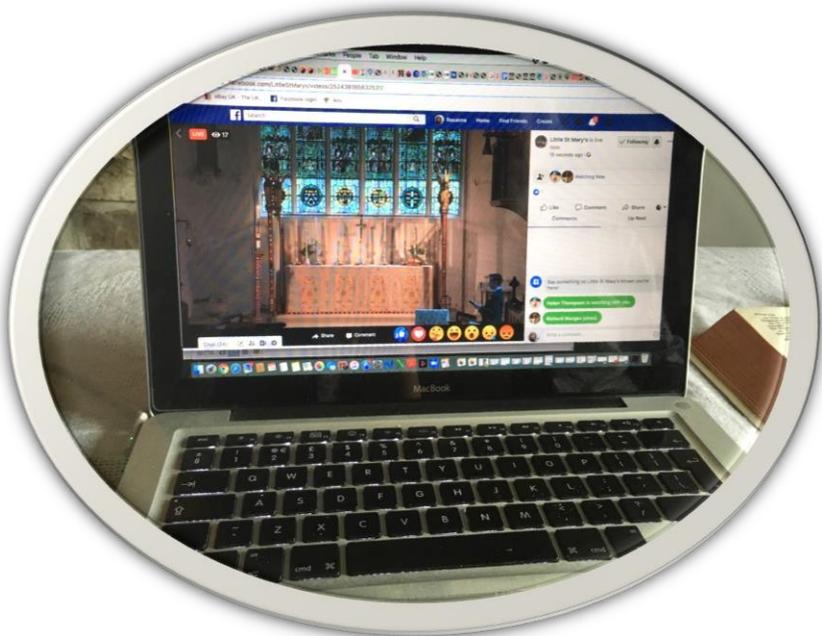


LITTLE S. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE

June 2020: No. 539

NEWSLETTER



This newsletter contains: Further thoughts on the Lord's Prayer; A-Z: G is for Grace; The works of Barbara Pym; Internal repairs & redecoration of the Church; Whit Monday at Walsingham, 1968; Cambridge Churches Homeless Project report; Meet the historic designers; Dorothy Day - finding faith in a pandemic; Garden news plus the usual Vicar's letter, daily intentions for prayer and more.

From the Vicar

Ascensiontide 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Everything has changed and everything stays the same. Typing a newsletter article at my desk on a Wednesday afternoon as I am doing now is exactly what I do every month. The shops I use in Newnham remain open and well stocked and the weather continues glorious. Time ticks on and cars drive by and in so many ways, as I look out the window, nothing has changed at all from how it is normally. Yet of course much of the nation remains confined to their homes, millions are furloughed and 2,000 people every day are contracting Coronavirus. We have to carry on with these two simultaneous experiences, which makes for an odd feeling.

The life of our parish therefore also both continues as normal and is on hold. You can't come into the church building and you cannot receive Holy Communion or share physically in person in the liturgy and I cannot visit the sick (or anyone else!) Yet you will have received the booklet from our Social and Global Responsibility Group giving you updated information on the projects and mission work we support, especially as Covid-19 has affected them. We have released £10,000 of parish reserves to our various charities as a sign of our love and solidarity; our work of prayer with and for them continues as well. Morning and Evening Prayer, and the Eucharist, continue to be offered daily, albeit in private rather than public. Members of the congregation are contacting one another and there is a weekly news-sheet and several of you meet virtually on Zoom. In all this we seek to continue to be faithful to our identity as the Body of Christ.

We must continue to hope (there is good news as deaths and new infections decline) and look to the future and plan and so I want now to turn to three things that give us hope and encouragement:

The first is outlined in further detail by our Treasurer Richard Martin later in this newsletter. June will see the builders and scaffolders in church to begin fifteen weeks of redecoration, cleaning and restoration of the interior of the church. The wooden floor will be cleaned and shined; the walls will be repaired, cleaned and limewashed; the windows repaired and cleaned; the memorials cleaned and conserved; the ceiling inspected, repaired (if necessary) and cleaned; wiring tidied away or replaced if redundant; ledges placed over radiators to prevent future

staining of the walls; and a whole host of little repairs and improvements effected I'm excited to see the result and think it will be a fitting thing to celebrate our return to the church building in due course.

Which brings me to my next point: returning to church. I have no idea as yet when this will happen; it will certainly happen in phases. At the moment the government suggests that churches will open for personal prayer from the beginning of July. This may also be when they open for baptisms, weddings and funerals on a small and socially-distanced basis. Thereafter, presumably small groups will be able to meet and so we will need to ask people to divide themselves between the daily Masses across the week, for example. In a sense this is just as well because the building works will result in the disappearance of half the pews due to scaffolding! For a wee while to come, therefore, LSM will not look normal.

Finally, I want to update you about cameras and live-streaming. Our Standing Committee has authorised paying AboutSound (who installed our sound system) to install a camera with the hard- and software to livestream to social media platforms. At the time of writing it is proving tricky to get Facebook to play ball and we will probably move to YouTube in due course. We have spent a serious amount of money (over £3,000) for two reasons: we are committed to having a good quality relay of worship from church to aid our prayers and help us feel connected, but also because so many people have contacted me to say how much they value the streaming service from the vicarage, people who are housebound or for whatever reason unable to get to church during normal times. The capacity to continue streaming services in the long term as part of our mission and witness seemed, therefore, a worthwhile thing for the parish to invest in. By the time you read this I hope you will see this bearing fruit.

In the meant time, thank you for your prayers and encouragement, and know that, as I long for us all to be together again, I remain,

ever yours in Jesus Christ,

Fr Robert.

Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer . . .

by "Peregrine" - Continuing a series:

AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US

Do we? I remember an Evensong when I, a small choirboy no worse behaved than most, was enduring yet another sermon. The preacher was one of the men in the choir, who (I think) later became a Lay Reader. I was not paying much attention. But suddenly I was transfixed, so to speak, by something he said. 'If we pray without forgiving those who have hurt us or offended us, we are in effect praying for our own damnation'. And I ask myself whether in all honesty I can say – attempt – my daily prayers in love and charity with my neighbours, and find that though I can answer yes, too often old resentments and more dangerously old hurts will surface later, like an old scar suddenly twingeing. Resentments can be recognised for what they are more easily than the animus that may lie hidden in a hurt. And the past cannot be undone, and its consequences have to be lived with. So what does 'forgive' on this human level mean? I have come to think it has to mean that each time the old hurt and anger surfaces not just to brush it away and pretend it is not there, but to confront it, recognise that what the person did who hurt you was part of their story, and actively to pray for them. It is hard. But there is no escape: Jesus' story of the unjust creditor is uncompromising.

And my ending might be despair. But I think that what I cannot do emotionally, I can do intellectually. I can *decide* to forgive. I can ask God to accept that decision, like a legal quittance, and leave it to His good time for the emotional scar to go quiet. Perhaps we worry too much about our intentions and not enough about our decisions. And to forgive someone, to pray for them, surely does not mean you have to like them.

I wonder if Purgatory – a doctrine I think as necessary as asking your host to let you have a wash and brush-up before sitting down to dinner - is a going round all the people you have hurt, damaged or destroyed, and saying sorry to them. And their/our purgatory is learning to accept those

apologies. Either case leaves us with the need for humility, and knowing as we are known.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

What I used to think: please don't show me chocolate boxes, or beautiful women, or have people suggest to me 'You, dear boy, could become a member of our very exclusive and very powerful club.' Oscar Wilde said, no more memorably than usual, 'I can resist anything except temptation'.

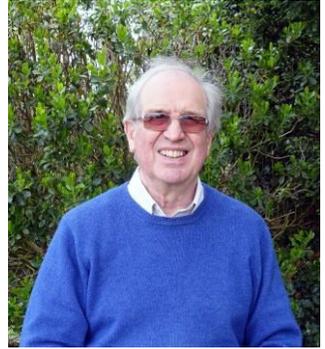
But I don't think that the clause really means just that sort of temptation. After all, why should God want deliberately and designedly to put us in situations where we might let Him and ourselves down, with incalculable consequences? God desireth not the death of a sinner, and Jesus came that we should have life and have it more abundantly.

Tenter in French means 'to test' and 'to try' as well as to tempt. That is clearly the sense of 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Attempts to release the clause's deeper meanings led in the 1960s to 'Bring us not to the time of trial', which is not very euphonious but has got a useful idea in it: trial. Sharpen it: 'don't put us on trial'. And now we see how it links with the sentence before Evensong, which the Vicar always read out as the vestry door opened and we in the choir prepared to process round the church for the beginning of the service: 'Enter not into judgment with Thy servant O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.' I am sure this is one important level of meaning, a request that we be not judged as we deserve. 'God be merciful to me, a sinner', said the tax collector. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man,' said Peter, as they filled the boats with that undeserved gift of fish. We cannot stand trial: we are not fit to.

To be continued, after all, next month owing to pressure of contributions for this month.

Internal Repairs and Redecoration of the Church **by Richard Martin**

When the Black Death came to Cambridge in 1348-9, our present church building was probably under construction. In that pandemic, it is now widely thought that between a third and half of Europe's population died. That our church was completed to the extent that it could be dedicated in 1352 bears eloquent witness to our forebears' faith, not only that life would go on, but that the worship of God would be an inseparable part of that life.



We are about to embark on a major project to clean, conserve, repair and redecorate the interior fabric of the church. We owe this not only to those from whom we received such a “goodly heritage” (yes, the stones that have echoed their praises *are* holy) but to future generations of pilgrims and strangers seeking the City of God in the faith at LSM.

We have obtained three tenders for the work, the lowest of which is priced at £125,490 excluding VAT. We expect to reclaim VAT under the government's Listed Places of Worship grant scheme. The easternmost three bays of the church form the chancel, as can be seen from the roof decoration. Peterhouse, for this purpose referred to as our Chancel Rector, would be responsible for the cost of work in this area. Taking into account work to the north and south porches, and minor work elsewhere, we will need to find around £75,000 from our own resources.



The lowest tender is based on a contract period of 15 weeks. Since the work will require extensive scaffolding, major disruption to services and other activities in church would normally be expected. The current suspension of public worship, however, provides us with (what we hope is) a unique

opportunity to get the work done while avoiding much of that inconvenience.

Since there may never be a better time to carry out this work, it is our intention to initiate the work at the earliest opportunity. We believe that the project will transform the present rather down-at-heel appearance of the church interior. Its completion might also be regarded as an act of thanksgiving, God willing, for deliverance from our present plague, uniting us in spirit with our much more sorely afflicted ancestors in 1352.

Richard studied civil engineering at Loughborough where he met Susan through bell ringing. Following research in hydrology he worked on water-related projects, resource planning and industry regulation both in the UK and overseas. On retirement in 2006, Richard and Susan moved to Wimpole, and shortly after came to LSM where Susan, who is pursuing research in architectural history, was quickly recruited as Electoral Roll Officer by Fr Andrew. Richard took up the role of treasurer in 2010. They have two children and their two grandsons, Arthur (5) and Theodore (2) make occasional appearances at LSM. Richard continues to ring regularly - in normal times - at Orwell.

Cambridge Churches Homeless Project 2019-20

On 2 December 2019 the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project opened its doors for a seventh winter season. For the first time the project wound up at the end of March 2020 with all our guests placed in temporary accommodation by Cambridge City Council as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Thank you for helping me . I cannot believe all these people volunteer to do this. Everyone is friendly, and the food is amazing!” – CCHP Guest, Winter 2019-20

The number of homeless people in Cambridge has been steadily rising since 2010. It is harder for our guests to find affordable/suitable housing opportunities while they are with us to move on to. This affects our turnover as our guests stay with us for longer periods. This winter three women and 33 men were accommodated by CCHP.

People often say they don't know what to do when they see a homeless person in the street. Should they give money, or is this colluding and counter-productive? They would like to be helpful, but they don't know where to begin: the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project offers a way anyone with a little time and kindness can be part of that practical help. Eleven churches and a synagogue take it in turns to offer their facilities and/or provide teams of people to offer hospitality to 15-17 homeless people every evening for four months. It is a joy to bring not only Christians of different traditions together for this work, but also to be sharing the project with our Jewish friends at Beth Shalom Synagogue: a special witness to the value of all God's people united in providing practical support and showing love to our neighbour.

We were thrilled to be joined by St Barnabas church for this first time this winter. In addition to Beth Shalom, our rota of host churches now includes St John the Evangelist, Wesley Methodist Church, Christ Church, Little St Mary's, Castle Street Methodist Church, Great St Mary's, the Church of Our Lady & The English Martyrs, St Philip's, St Giles, and St Paul's. St Bene't's and Trumpington Parish Church each provide a team of people each week, and of course there are dozens of other churches represented from the pool of 400+ volunteers. As a charity we work with people of all faiths and none; there are volunteers who are not attached to any church whose contribution is hugely valued.

CCHP harnesses the generosity and skill of volunteers from all walks of life including nurses, research fellows, bus drivers, GPs, artists, retired teachers, local authority councillors and psychiatric nurses as well as university undergraduates etc. Without this resource of committed and dedicated volunteers there simply would not be a project.

The project needs 8-10 volunteers to run safely and efficiently each night. This includes setting up, preparing and cooking the evening meal, cleaning duties and having a team present in the church overnight. A trained 'team leader' is on duty overnight to oversee the safety and wellbeing of all guests and volunteers. CCHP runs training evenings for all volunteers and specific training for team leaders, cooks and venue co-ordinators. On some evenings we have visitors from related services to provide specialist

support such as mental health support and translators for guests who speak little English.

There are many reasons why someone becomes homeless. Many of our guests face difficulties that include addiction, poor mental and physical health, debt problems and exposure to risky behaviour including domestic violence. For some of our guests English is not their first language, and some have to recourse to public funds so have fewer housing options available to them.

“I was on 2 or 3 bottles of vodka a day and was drinking during the night because I’d get the shakes. I don’t know what I would have done without the Churches. I probably wouldn’t be here. I’m going into rehab. There are so many kind people who listened to me rambling on who talk to me as another human being. Please could you thank everyone from the Churches for everything?” - CCHP Guest, Winter 2019-20

On the face of it, the CCHP offer is simple – a hot cooked meal and a clean, warm bed in a safe and welcoming environment is provided to our rough sleepers. Together our guests and volunteers create the relaxed and friendly atmosphere each evening. Occasionally we experience the odd incident, but typically evenings are calm and enjoyable.

CCHP provides a listening ear where volunteers and guests alike can each be a blessing to the other. Conversations can challenge assumptions and stereotypes. Guests and volunteers talk over a meal sharing as much or as little as they want without expectation or agenda. These conversations – often banter, sometimes touching or profound – can be a catalyst for change.

CCHP is clear about the role it plays within the homeless sector and does not offer counselling or therapy. Rather we signpost guests to appropriate services, such as Wintercomfort, CGL Drug & Alcohol Service or to their GP, without pressurising people. All volunteers undertake safeguarding training and CCHP works within Ely Diocese's safeguarding guidelines. There are always ways to improve the project. CCHP is in the process of gaining the Housing Justice quality mark accreditation, and in November

2019 we launched our new website. CCHP seeks to complement work done by the agencies from the homeless sector. Prior to the shelter opening, CCHP meets with a multi-agency team to consider the list of those people who are known to be sleeping rough. This enables CCHP to be advised on the initial cohort of 17 guests for the shelter in terms of risk and need. Working with so many volunteers and cooks (who prepare 3,000 hot meals each winter) means that the project is required to comply with Food Hygiene regulations, Health & Safety policies and good practice guidelines around working with vulnerable adults. CCHP is registered charity (a charitable incorporated organisation) employing one full-time project worker, Jemma Strachan, who works alongside many of the services including Wintercomfort. With the consent of our guests, CCHP provides vital information for other services, contributes to the 'Inform' database used by the city's homeless sector and provides anonymous data for the national winter night shelter network and the MHCLG.

During March the project implemented contingency plans in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some CCHP volunteers were forced to self-isolate under the restrictions and expressed feelings about letting the project down (which of course they were not). The final fortnight of the project ran from St Paul's Church as it offered the largest (separate) spaces for eating and sleeping for guests. Several measures were introduced to reduce the risk of infection including running with a smaller team of volunteers and cooks who worked multiple shifts. Just before the shelter closed, Wintercomfort was forced to close its doors temporarily, so hot cooked breakfasts were provided for our guests in the final week of the shelter.

For the past three years CCHP has employed a specialist worker to undertake transitions work to meet with every guest to devise a plan to prevent them from being returned to the streets at the end of March. Finding suitable accommodation for our guests is challenging work, and CCHP would like to thank Kevin Appleby and Wintercomfort for their support.

"If only CCHP were no longer needed . . . " - CCHP Volunteer, Winter 2019-20

At the end of March, central government put out a statement declaring that all rough sleepers must be accommodated so that they might self-isolate along with the rest of society. At the time of writing there are over 110 rough sleepers staying in hotels and guest houses in Cambridge. No cases of the virus were reported by either our guests or volunteers when the project finally closed at the end of March. A special thank you to all volunteers who stepped in at very short notice as we revised all our volunteer rotas during the final few weeks.

Jemma and other CCHP volunteers continued to work to support our guests and other homeless people well into April. Volunteers from CCHP, It Takes a City, Caring for Cambridgeshire's Homeless, Street Pastors and the Salvation Army worked together with Cambridge City Council, the Cambridge Street Outreach Team, Wintercomfort and Jimmy's to offer practical help as rough sleepers were placed into temporary accommodation. It is not known what will happen to our homeless brothers and sisters currently in temporary accommodation once the restrictions are lifted. We can only hope and pray that they are not returned to the streets *en masse* in the coming months. On 19 February 2020 our oldest guest, Wilfred De'Ath sadly died, aged 82 in Addenbrooke's Hospital. Wilfred's articles in *The Oldie* regularly featured his reflections on homelessness, with CCHP often the subject of his writing.

Thank you to all who contribute to the work of CCHP. As in previous years, we finish each winter with mixed feelings. With thankfulness to God for another safe winter, for the gifts of time, money and expertise that so many give to CCHP to enable the project to run safely . . . and a list of things we know need to improve for next winter! Finally, thank you to our guests, many of whom have contributed hugely to the smooth running of the project this year, where we have seen former guests returning as volunteers, which tells its own story.

*The Rev'd Jon Canessa,
Chair of the CCHP May 2020*



Calendar and Intentions

for

June 2020

The list of Thanksgivings and Intercessions offers a focus for our daily prayer, both at the Offices and Mass, and in our personal times of prayer.

The Vicar would be glad of suggestions or additions to the list of daily intentions.

Calendar for June

MON	1st	Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth
TUE	2 nd	
WED	3 rd	<i>The martyrs of Uganda</i>
THU	4 th	<i>Petroc, abbot</i>
FRI	5 th	S. Boniface, bishop & martyr
SAT	6 th	<i>Ini Kopuria, religious</i>
SUN	7th	TRINITY SUNDAY
MON	8 th	Thomas Ken, bishop
TUE	9 th	S. Columba, abbot
WED	10 th	
THU	11th	CORPUS CHRISTI
FRI	12th	S. Barnabas, apostle
SAT	13 th	of Requiem
SUN	14th	1st SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
MON	15 th	<i>Evelyn Underhill, spiritual writer</i>
TUE	16 th	S. Richard of Chichester, bishop
WED	17 th	
THU	18 th	<i>Bernard Mizeki, martyr & missionary</i>
FRI	19th	SACRED HEART OF JESUS
SAT	20 th	
SUN	21st	2nd SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
MON	22 nd	S. Alban, protomartyr of Britain
TUE	23 rd	S. Etheldreda, abbess & patron of the Diocese of Ely
WED	24th	Birth of S. John the Baptist, Ember Day
THU	25 th	
FRI	26 th	Ember Day
SAT	27 th	<i>S. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop & doctor, Ember Day</i>
SUN	28th	3rd SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
MON	29 th	Ss PETER & PAUL, apostles
TUE	30 th	

Daily Intentions & Anniversaries of death

Pregnant women & couples trying to conceive	<i>Robert Loinsworth</i> 1 st
Calcutta Cathedral Relief Service	<i>Elizabeth Roskill</i> 2 nd
Perseverance in the Faith	3 rd
The Diocese of Truro	4 th
The Church in Germany	5 th
Vocations to the Religious Life	<i>John Coales, Martyn Price-Thomas</i> 6 th

Our Parish & People	<i>Molly Wiles</i> 7 th
Catholic Tradition in the Church of England	8 th
The Church where she is dying or discouraged	<i>Beryl Stone</i> 9 th
The sick	<i>Stephen Branch, Johan Procopé</i> 10 th
Thanksgiving for the Eucharist	11 th
For consolation & encouragement	<i>Geoffrey Styler, pr.</i> 12 th
The faithful departed	<i>Dorothy Otley</i> 13 th

Our Parish & People	<i>Ann Lamb</i> 14 th
Shops & businesses	<i>Elsie Watchorn, Maurice Latey</i> 15 th
Diocese of Chichester	<i>Cynthia Clayton</i> 16 th
Friends of Fulbourn Hospital	17 th
Whitworth Trust	18 th
Trust in the compassion of Jesus	19 th
Spiritual Directors & renewal in prayer	20 th

Our Parish & People	<i>Phillip Betts, James Duffy, pr.</i> 21 st
Conversion of England	<i>Hilda Rayner</i> 22 nd
Diocese of Ely	23 rd
That our lives may point to Jesus	24 th
Schools & Colleges	<i>Caroline Latham</i> 25 th
Those preparing to be Ordained	<i>Leonard Bones, Bernard Challis</i> 26 th
Theologians	<i>Margaret Shaw, Rumina Djelebova</i> 27 th

Our Parish & People	28 th
Christian Unity	<i>Edward Roberts, bp., John Hughes, pr.</i> 29 th
Cambridge & Anglia Ruskin Universities	<i>Theresa Taylor, Elizabeth Wylie</i> 30 th



“Shall we have tea now?” – a personal view of the works of Barbara Pym by Shirley Dex

You might wonder at this title, but having read all of Barbara Pym’s novels within a short time I’ve found that there is no story in which the preparation and/or eating of meals – at home or in cafés/restaurants – is not important. I encountered Barbara Pym in the 1950s and 1960s, i.e. before she was “rediscovered” by David Cecil and Philip Larkin in 1977, when they both, independently, chose her, in an article in the *Times Literary Supplement* on ‘the most underrated novelists in the century’. From this, interest in her work was rekindled, the novel *An Unsuitable Attachment* – which had been rejected by her regular publisher on the grounds that in 1963 it wasn’t the sort of thing that people wanted to read any more – was published and her earlier novels republished. These were seized on with delight by readers old and new, together with those published after her death, in 1980, some of which had actually been written much earlier. Thus I began my present reading not with the more famous *Some Tame Gazelle* (1950), but with *Civil to Strangers*, written in 1936 but the last to be published. I enjoyed it, cared about its characters (the mark of a good novel, I think) and situations, but felt that it was **too** much “happily ever after”: very much a work of its time. The volume also includes some short stories (new to me) which whilst not her favourite medium are fascinating, both as good reads in themselves and as the seeds for subsequent full-length novels.

Some readers like to compare Barbara Pym with Jane Austen, but not this one. Yes, there is the memorable turn of phrase and wry observation, but whereas one wants – or needs – to read an Austen novel twice, once for the story and again for the writing, with Barbara Pym the delights are occasional – a sudden flower rather than a whole bouquet: her writing has been described by Claire Tomalin as “essential trivia”.

As I was invited to write on “Barbara Pym and me”, I’ll talk about the books in two groups – those I particularly enjoyed, and those not quite so much, though I wouldn’t like to have missed any of them!

In my contrary way I begin with those in the second group, starting with, sadly, *Quartet in Autumn*, which is the first one Barbara Pym wrote after her ‘rediscovery’. It’s been described as “a masterpiece”, but if so it’s an all too realistic depiction of rather depressing lives. Only one of the four characters seems reasonably happy – and he is the MC at a (very) Anglo-Catholic church! We’re often told that Barbara Pym moved away from churchiness in her later novels, but he is just the sort of person we’re used to! Not a jolly read, though, and I didn’t really enjoy it.

The others in this category are *No Fond Return of Love* (1961), which I felt had an unsatisfactory ending – leaving one with too many “what ifs”, and *The Sweet Dove Died* (1978), which I felt tried too hard to be modern, with rude words, a gay liaison, and sex, not the usual tea, in the afternoon, **but** it has the memorable, and very typical, observation “there’s no reason to be polite at a jumble sale”. Then we come to *An Unsuitable Attachment*, written in 1963, declined by her publisher, and then published, with some revisions, in 1982. Yes, the attachment is **very** unsuitable: my note says “ending OK, I s’pose”, which is rather faint praise!

Still, in all these, even where I didn’t much enjoy them, or found the characters irritating, there’s always a good story.

Why does Barbara Pym appeal to me? Being a churchy lady (and a clergy daughter) it’s not surprising that on first coming across them I particularly enjoyed the earlier novels, and was delighted to find a writer so congenial, whose church scenes were both interesting and accurate – all too, sometimes

Turning now to the other group, we come to *Crampton Hodnet* (1940/1985), which has one of the funniest scenes in all the novels. It was reviewed somewhat disparagingly in the broadsheets, but – perhaps significantly – more warmly in the *Church Times*. Much afternoon tea is taken, and if this is your first Barbara Pym novel you will be eager for

more. This was followed by *Some Tame Gazelle* (1950/1978), which also has formidable women, a curate and several meals – one involving a caterpillar – and *Excellent Women* (1952/1977), one of the two most famous (the other is *A Glass of Blessings*), with all the elements one expects – and a surprise! (well ...)

Then came *Jane and Prudence* (1953/1979) – a more rural setting this time, and a crucial afternoon tea, and *Less than Angels* (1955/1978), with again many meals and a gripping story: one of my favourites. Next comes *A Glass of Blessings* (1958/1977), which I'll leave to Edmund, but as before it has everything that one associates with Barbara Pym.

Although *A Few Green Leaves* was published in 1980, it's on my 'enjoyed' list, with my note saying "an easier read than the previous two (*Quartet* and *Love*) – back to normal?" – a good story, with characters one cares about. Lastly we come to *An Academic Question*, written in 1972 and published in 1986, again after several rejections. There's a conscious effort not to be 'cosy' and Barbara Pym has chosen an unfamiliar background – one of the new 1960s universities – which isn't altogether successful. However, it's again a gripping story – even without clergy or afternoon tea! – and for me a favourite, up with *Less than Angels*, despite the difference. You'll notice that I often mention 'story', which to me is always an important element in a novel. I deliberately – not just because of space – haven't given synopses: why not read the novels as you find them, rather than assuming that you would/wouldn't like them? Read them!

Barbara Pym lived for a time in a house on the corner of Warwick Square, SW1. Once when visiting in the square I emulated Beatles fans in Liverpool, who cut bits off John Lennon's hedge, by helping myself to a sprig of 'her' privet, to press in *A Few Green Leaves*. Whom was I visiting? Why, a curate, of course!

I was born in Burnley, Lancs and graduated in Music and Latin from St Aidan's College, Durham. After working for the Joint Matriculation Board in Manchester, I moved in 1966 to run Newnham College's admissions, intending to stay in the east no more than five years. But one Sunday in October that year, I came into High Mass at LSM to shelter from the rain,

and have been there ever since, joining the choir in Lent 1967. The best laid plans... I was a member of the General Synod, and apart from church work, I have been much involved with music (mainly church music) and railways (I'm not a steam buff but I did five years on the DfT Rail Passenger Committee) and am a member of Barbara Pym Society, Betjeman Society, Railfuture, Lancastrians Association, and too many others to mention!

A Review of Barbara Pym's *A Glass of Blessings* by Edmund Racher

After fixing on Evelyn Waugh for a review, the editor directed me to Barbara Pym, though the name wasn't even familiar to me. So this is in fact a true review. The edition I had picked up thankfully had an introduction, allowing me to place this in time, space and popular regard.

A Glass of Blessings was published in 1958, and depicts a world of that time. The shadow of the War no longer hangs over Britain: holidays to Portugal and new coffee bars emerge. This said, however well-off they may be, Pym's characters inhabit a well-worn world.

The feeling of wear is one that weighs on Wilmet Forsyth, our narrator. Married to the civil servant Rodney and without children, her life in London revolves around the Church of St Luke's. Her family circles, Anglo-Catholic parish and friends offer a release for her: to find the proper place for the aimless or the lost.

This never quite becomes a longing to interfere, but to nudge. Wilmet does not become a meddler. The plot follows likewise; characters do not undergo great transformations, but rather they shift – they might retire or marry but it is never a revolution as such, though we only really see these events through Wilmet's eyes. No character is really larger than life and, like so many of us, must enjoy regular meals. It is not a book of new things, or of epiphanies, or conflict. But in its observation and charity, you may find entertainment and a chance for reflection.

An A-Z of Interesting Things ...

I am inviting suggestions for the next few letters in the alphabet – I have some ideas but could always do with more! – Ed.

G is for Grace

In Western Christian theology, **grace** is the gift of love and mercy given to people by God freely and generously.

The gift of grace does not have to be deserved – but rather represents an offering to share in God’s divine life and love.

The sacraments are seen as “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us” (1928 Book of Common Prayer).

The Grace Prayer– “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen” – is based on Paul’s prayer at the end of 2 Corinthians 13.

A Grace – is a short prayer of thanks said before or after eating.

Whit Monday at Walsingham written by Daphne Foreman in 1968

Once again people travelled, some through the night, from every part of England, to worship and make holiday together in the real sense of the word, in this tiny medieval village in the heart of the Norfolk countryside. At first, to turn aside from the busy main roads and enter the deep leafy lanes which, while they remain, will seem the very heart of England. Then, as the Shrine was reached, to experience the fresh stillness of a June

morning with the carillon ringing out familiar hymn tunes and, within the Shrine church, the soft murmur of private devotions as the pilgrims began to arrive and give thanksgiving for safe journey.

Then, as one o'clock approached, the rising sense of excitement as the 4,000 people gathered round the garden altar until, in the distance faintly at first, sounded the voices of the clergy procession, winding their way from the sacristy to the altar under the red and white chestnut trees. At last appeared the Guardians, bearing the image, followed by the Bishops and clergy, vested in all the splendour of festive regalia and here, in this English garden, prayer was offered for the peace of the world and the pilgrims worshipped with heart and mind and voice.

For a space it seemed that the spirit of the old-time Anglo-Catholic Congresses was recaptured, especially when the 4,000 voices sang during communion "Sweet Sacrament Divine". Meanwhile, through the Mass, the figure of Our Lady standing high on its trestles, its robes whickering gently in the breeze, seemed to symbolise a humble acceptance of the honour again granted on this day, and it was a strangely moving moment when the Guardians again lifted the little figure onto their shoulders to commence the procession. One felt proud to be among those making reparation for the centuries of neglect.

The Mass ended and clergy and pilgrims formed the great triumphal procession of witness. Church groups from the north and other parts of the country with their banners and vested choirs, newly-confirmed little girls in their white dresses and veils, Religious and, this year, a party of children who had walked through the night to raise funds for Christian Aid; all laughing and singing, giving the lie to the idea that religion must be dull and gloomy and that English people never show joy in their faith. Out through the great gates the procession passed into the village street, singing the triumphal processional hymn and witnessing to the glory of God in His incarnation and the honour due to His Mother for her part in it. How I longed for everyone to share our joy!

And then, as the procession entered the village street, there on the right, a party of Kensitites were pitched, not to join in the worship and festivity, but

to harangue and oppose. Oh, the pity of it! Ironically, they were using one of the hymns known and loved by all Christians as the weapon of their opposition. “All Hail the Power ...” they sang and shouted, attempting to drown the words of the pilgrims’ processional hymn. What a terrible mockery was this of Christian love and brotherhood. It was the only shadow of dissension and lack of love experienced on that day. I longed to slip out from the procession and say to the leader, “Rejoice with us. This is one of our hymns too. Join in our hymn with us and let us sing together: All Hail the Power ...” It seemed so very sad that in these days of tolerance and seeking after unity a group of people should go to the childish length of actually trying to spoil someone else’s festivity and using the very words and act of worship to do so. It seemed indeed a case of “Though I speak ... and have not charity ...”

I was reminded of Chesterton’s words:

“And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room,
And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a new face of doom,
And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee, ...”

Some young lads laughingly turned toward the party and sang their *Ave* with all that their lungs could muster, and the general feeling of goodwill prevailed. On our return I noticed that the haranguers were silent; whether someone had approached them and reasoned with them I do not know, or whether they were defeated by sheer weight of numbers on the part of the pilgrims.

Apart from this one shadow, in this atmosphere and with this common heart and aim, there were no barriers. Stranger spoke to stranger, discussing everything from the never-failing weather to Series II (!) and sharing anything from a sausage roll from the picnic luncheon to a manual of devotions. On this day all seem caught up in the pervading sense of triumphant joy, with the jolly policemen holding back the crowd, pilgrims, shopkeepers, residents at their cottage doors, all for one brief glorious hour caught up in the atmosphere of goodwill.

So back to the Shrine, and those who could streamed into the building, the rest packing the courtyard and the road outside until the ringing of the bell

announced the beautiful and moving service of Benediction. Again the unison of 4,000 voices and, for a space, the traffic halted and the world stood still. After that, tea in the grounds, with friends greeting friends, suddenly people dashing to and fro now that the great corporate act of witness was completed, hurrying to fit in all their personal endeavours and commitments before the cars and coaches started their exodus from the village. Quickly now the crowds within the precincts thinned and the pilgrims started straggling back up the road, and soon the first coach lumbered its way out of the coach park bearing its load of waving and smiling pilgrims, tired but triumphant, once again renewed from the day spent on the mountain-top to take their place in the morning back on the plain.

Once again, a great experience and, in the modern idiom, a day “out of this world”.



Little St Mary's - meet the historic designers (I) by Jeremy Musson

Sir Ninian Comper (1864-1960)

LSM's high altar, with its painted and carved riddel posts, was inspired by the Use of Sarum (the variant of the pre-Tridentine Roman rite customary in most dioceses of medieval England). It was designed in 1913, during the incumbency of Andrew Campbell Allen, by the renowned church architect and furnisher Ninian Comper (who also designed the lower register of the east window). Such 'English altars' were indeed Comper's specialism; he first reintroduced one in 1894, at St Wilfrid's, Cantley, Yorkshire, basing his designs on the study of medieval altars as depicted in illuminated manuscripts.

Comper was undoubtedly a highly talented and versatile artist and had high ideals about the beauty of holiness. Indeed, Comper (knighted in 1950 after a campaign by John Betjeman) has been regarded as one of the last of the great Gothic Revival architects to carry on working into the twentieth century. He famously spoke of his design approach, in his work after 1900, as ‘unity by inclusion’ as he looked at late Gothic and the classical tradition, and he travelled widely in Europe in the early 1900s. In 1907 the Dean of Westminster asked Comper to design a series of eight stained glass windows for the north side of the nave of the Abbey, depicting figures of kings associated with the Abbey and an abbot of Westminster. Born in Aberdeen on 10 June 1864, Comper was the son of the Reverend John Comper and his wife Ellen (née Taylor). His father was an Anglo-Catholic who was ordained in the Episcopal Church in Scotland; his godfather was the hymnologist John Mason Neale. Comper worked as assistant to C.E. Kempe, the stained glass painter, and studied drawing in London before working under G.F. Bodley, after seeing Bodley and Garner’s great church at St Michael’s, Camden Town.(1876–81). Comper then went into partnership with William Bucknall.



In 1890 Comper married Bucknall’s sister Grace – ‘at an elaborate medievalist ceremony’ at St Barnabas, Pimlico. They had four sons and two daughters. In fact, it was the preparation for his marriage ceremony, for which Comper had closely studied medieval manuscripts in the British Museum, that demonstrated to him that nineteenth-century Gothic revival altars and reredoses, were, as his biographer Anthony Symondson says: ‘foreign to the essential simplicity of the medieval originals’. From this time, Comper’s design work was ever more closely informed by liturgical

principles in which the altar became the determining feature and focus of church planning.

Ninian Comper became friendly in old age with John Betjeman who campaigned for a knighthood which he received in 1950. Pevsner the architectural historian who had strong views about progress in art history, wrote despairingly of Comper in his *Buildings of England: London, Volume II* in 1952, of his work of St Cyprian's Marylebone, that it was done 'with joy and care... [but] there is no reason for the excesses of praise lavished on Comper's furnishings by those who confound aesthetic with religious emotions'. Betjeman was livid.

To my mind the simple elegance of the High Altar at Little St Mary's speaks of the adaptability of both aesthetic and liturgical tradition in the service of living Catholic worship

Further reading: *Sir Ninian Comper* by Anthony Symondson and Stephen Bucknall, 2006, and the entry by Anthony Symondson in the [*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 2004](#)

Jeremy Musson LLB, MPhil, FSA is an architectural historian specialising in the history of the British country house. He is an author and an independent specialist architectural consultant, and has been Architectural Editor of Country Life, and presenter of the BBC Two series The Curious House Guest.

Dorothy Day: Finding Faith in a Pandemic **by Emma Bourne**

It was during the 1918 influenza pandemic that Dorothy Day first discovered the Holy Mass. Dorothy was working as a nurse at the Kings County Hospital at the time, and, out of curiosity, accompanied a fellow young nurse, Miss Adams, to Mass every Sunday morning before their shift. This had been happening for some time when:

“One day, I told myself as I knelt there, I would have to stop to think, to question my own position: ‘What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, O

Lord?’ What are we here for, what were we doing, what was the meaning of our lives?

“One thing I was sure of, and that was that these fellow workers and I were performing an act of worship. I felt that it was necessary for man to worship, that he was most truly himself when engaged in that act.” -*The Long Loneliness* (1952), p.93

Moments of crisis frequently have the effect of awakening the innate human yearning for the transcendent; but perhaps that happens even more intensely when the crisis we are dealing with cuts to the heart of what it means to dwell within human flesh: the flesh which, as we remembered on Ascension Day, has been divinised but which, for us and for Our Lord, is still marked with scars. People tend to remark cynically that there are ‘no atheists in intensive care’, as if to turn to God in moments of life-threatening crisis is some kind of weakness; an understandable weakness brought on by mental strain, but a weakness nonetheless. And even we Christians may tend to feel guilty if we find ourselves talking to God more during times of crisis than at other times, or asking Him loud and angry questions.

Of course, living a life disciplined by prayer which keeps going in and out of season is a good thing. But there is something about the nature of prayer in a crisis which strips us back to the basic questions – those questions Dorothy found herself asking in chapel – in such a way that we are prevented from feeling we are in any way spiritually superior to our neighbours. It is a good antidote to pride. There’s a super video that was doing the rounds on social media a few weeks ago, of Russell Brand discussing the recent phenomenon of people Googling ‘prayer’ and ‘how to pray’ during the Covid-19 crisis. These are questions from which we never ‘move on’ whether we’ve been a Christian for five minutes or fifty years. If you read the rest of *The Long Loneliness* (and I recommend it!), a mark of Dorothy’s holiness is that she does not stop asking those first questions which are the primordial stirrings of the human soul finding itself in the sight of God. I think there’s enough in this small portion of her autobiography to regard her as a patron saint for the questioners in the midst of a pandemic, Christian and non-Christian alike.



Garden News

Anyone who has walked past the church garden will have seen how pretty it looks with the cow parsley growing taller than ever to compete with the alkanet - which does add to the garden's beauty but we know it can be as invasive as ground elder. We are

looking forward to being able to walk round the garden once again, meeting for coffee and cake and doing something about invasive plants. All will be most welcome to join us.

Christine Tipple cstipple@gmail.com

ON-LINE SERVICES AT LITTLE ST MARY'S

Sunday: 10.30am Low Mass 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Weekdays	Low Mass	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
Monday	<i>Said privately</i>	<i>Said privately</i>	6pm
Tuesday	<i>Said privately</i>	<i>Said privately</i>	6pm
Wednesday	10am	<i>Said privately</i>	6pm
Thursday	<i>Said privately</i>	<i>Said privately</i>	6pm
Friday	<i>Said privately</i>	<i>Said privately</i>	<i>Said privately</i>
Saturday	<i>Said privately</i>	<i>Said privately</i>	6pm