

**Church of St Margaret of Antioch  
Lime Avenue, Leigh on Sea SS9 3PA**

# Bulletin

**Spring 2020**



**[www.saintmargaretsleigh.org](http://www.saintmargaretsleigh.org)**

# **Church Services**

## **Regular worship at St Margaret's Church**

Sunday      10:00-11:15 Live streamed Mass  
See website for details.

## **St.Margarets Quarterly No.3**

For friends, parishioners and congregants.

Dear Friends ,

Since I last wrote to you in January, our life and the world has been dominated with the Coronavirus pandemic. Many of us may wish we could talk and engage with other things. I suspect that we will in due course. As awful as the situation is, we may start to normalise some of our life changes and do just that. Reading magazines and material from the heart of the Second World War it is interesting how folk did exactly that without belittling the efforts and sacrifices being made. I don't think we are there yet and will not be for some time but I suspect that we will have to get there.

There are some really interesting and poignant articles dealing with the local impacts of the Pandemic on us as a community and congregation and we have also reproduced an article from one of our former curates in New York which has been at the heart of things in the US. We are a schools parish and although Phoebe does not work in one of our parish schools – her article offers profound insight into some of our challenges.

We must offer congratulations to Noah Cockett who has written another of those articles about his life in care homes at the moment. On his second time round he was recommended for training to the priesthood by the Bishops Advisory Panel (BAP) in February. A highlight for him and us – going back to the coalface of care homes is quite a re-grounding. We are very proud of his service and of those in our own parish care homes at this time.

I took some leave in February. It was earlier than normal, because of the expectation of a very full April/May with other responsibilities including VE 75 commemorations. More of that in a moment, but it was I guess serendipitous to be away for 3 Sundays then as the foreseeable future for us all is definitely not straying too far from home. I was aware early on of the virus growth in China as I was heading for British Columbia which given its geography, has a large Chinese population many of whom have happily exchanged the evils of totalitarianism for the freedoms of Canada and make a fantastic contribution to life there – not least to the Christian life of the country. I have permission to officiate in the Diocese of British Columbia and have good friends, my Godson and colleagues there. It was a good to catch up with them and it also offered a different insight for what was to come. I left fearing more for people in the US than Canada – though on both sides of the border it was clear to me many had not caught up with the seriousness of the spreading pandemic from China.

There has been much use of the word unprecedented and for many of us the current crisis is indeed unprecedented. Yet in the history of humanity and indeed the Church this is not so even if our reaction to it is. I am not going to give a potted history of the last two thousand years you will be relieved to know. However, elsewhere I have written that our parish was founded in the aftermath of the Great War and in the teeth of the Spanish Flu epidemic which killed perhaps 50 million lives - even more than the war. Separately, our beautiful church was created in the middle of the great depression of the 1930s. There are lessons to draw regarding the nature of the human spirit in general and for the Church in particular. Though this is not the place to

repeat the Easter sermon, our Resurrection faith and hope is indeed not a glib optimism but a sleeves rolled up engagement with reality and confidence in the power of the God of truth and love to overcome all things even death.

May 8<sup>th</sup> will see the commemoration of VE75. It will not be as planned for us. I am, as I write, exchanging the plans we had for a great service of thanksgiving at the end of Southend Pier for something more “virtual”. It is right that we should mark it. The victory in Europe was a victory over the totalitarianism and evil of Nazi ideology – a virus that had infected a wonderful country with such tragic consequences for the whole world. In January, I had the huge privilege of being involved in several borough services and commemorations for the liberation of Auschwitz and other concentration camps. The haunting and heart rending testimony of the some of the survivors alongside the humour that I shared with the rabbis will last my lifetime. Many constantly compare the current crisis to that battle – it is daunting yes and I don’t think it will be as quick and easy victory as some think. However, victory will come and I hope and pray that some of the good things that have emerged will last. In the widest sense a change in who and what is valued and matters most, of how to both recognise that we are part of a world family, and yet to act in local and sustainable ways that prevent any one part of that family from holding undue sway. Big stuff indeed.

For us locally in our parish - our continuing Christian witness will be tested. The double test is to offer real pastoral support one to another and to our neighbours on the one hand and to have the same sacrificial mind-set as our forebears to underpin with material substance that witness in our offering of time and resources on the other. And so at this stage a big thank you to those of you who have enabled our Christian witness of worship, prayer and pastoral care to continue in the current climate – there is a long way to go.

Now take a cue from our youngest contributor – Courtney, put up some bunting if you have not done so, not just for cheerfulness in current adversity but celebration of victories past that we may take heart and be of good cheer – for nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Bless you all. Fr.David.  
The Feast of St.Mark 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020



**Easter Day Mass 2020**

# **LIVE STREAMING OF SERVICES**

## **By Bob Southward**

Initially I was sceptical of the benefits of watching a Mass in my own living room but this changed immediately on the first weekend of churches being closed for public worship. Barbara and I watched a live stream of a Mass from our daughter's church in Chelmsford and joined in with the responses, exchanged the Peace (ignoring I confess social distancing guidelines) and even sang a chorus of Happy Birthday for a parishioner who celebrated her 90th birthday during the week.

After watching the Mass, Barbara and I felt a sense of having made our Communion and knowing that it was "Sunday" with the service having given us structure to the day and week. Without this structure, Sunday would have been yet another day in a continuum of indistinguishable days. At the same time, Father David asked David Stowe and myself if we could live stream the following Sunday's Mass (29th March) - David Stowe's role was essential to a successful live stream as from his home, he would be talking Fr David through the setting up of the broadcasts via an iPhone whilst I would be updating the website in parallel from my own home.

After many trials and tribulations (and an extraordinary amount of work by David S) we were ready to broadcast the March 29th Mass which we decided to restrict to a small group in case it went tits up. I slept little during the night beforehand worrying about what could and probably would go wrong as we needed all the following to work flawlessly:

- David Stowe's iPhone
- the Vicarage Wi-Fi
- the Vicarage broadband service
- Facebook
- my own broadband service
- the Church's website hosting company

To complement the live streaming, thanks to Peter Maddox , it was possible for the Service Booklet to be made available beforehand via the website; printed and audio copies of Fr David's homily were made available after the service. The decision was taken after the first week's broadcast, that each broadcast would be available until midnight on the day of the broadcast. We wanted to encourage people to make their spiritual Communion on the day and to discourage a "watch-later" culture.

Apart from a few gremlins, the broadcast went well and was most enthusiastically received; we received nothing but thanks and comments that people felt that they were part of the St Margaret's community, had made their Communion and that structure had been given to their week (just like myself the previous week). I cannot stress how much the emails, Facebook comments and phone calls meant to Fr David, David Stowe and myself; it had been a trying week as we were taking a leap into the unknown with our limited technology and experience.

The following week's (Palm Sunday) live stream went well with no gremlins. It was an extraordinary service thanks to Fr David's preparations beforehand in creating an outside altar complete with palms, candles etc. I have watched broadcasts

from a number of differing churches (with the intention of picking up anything that we could copy to improve our own offering) and those that used the same location and backdrop for every broadcast quickly morphed into one - it was a bit like Groundhog Day. We should all be most grateful to Fr David for his tireless efforts and imagination in creating meaningful and memorable services.

Ahead lay the big test - Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and two services on Easter Day. Would it all work, would we get any gremlins and what if Fr David, David Stowe or myself was not available for any reason?

**I wrote the above on the Wednesday of Holy Week - it is now Easter Monday and the Triduum is behind us. So, how did it go?**

Following the relative success of the Palm Sunday broadcast, I was not feeling so nervous for the Maundy Thursday broadcast. WRONG! The gremlins struck with a vengeance and a network problem caused the broadcast to be abandoned. It was one of those many times when we have no idea of what caused the network problem and never will find out.

I slept very little that night and it was with great trepidation that I awaited the Good Friday service. This time we broadcast with the same equipment in the same place using the same network. And blow me if it didn't work well; it was an exceptional service from Father David who had put much thought and effort into bringing us another moving service.

On Easter Day we were scheduled to broadcast both the 5:30am Dawn Vigil and 10:00am Combined Mass. David Stowe and myself (after yet another sleepless night) were "on station" at 4:45am to ensure all was in place and working tickety boo. It was and it did!

Again, we used the same equipment in the same place using the same network. If someone can explain why both services were almost unwatchable due to continual interruptions to the broadcast, I would be most obliged. David Stowe and myself are still at a loss to understand what happened and why. We are both very grateful to all the messages of support we received showing an understanding of the problems; our daughter received some pretty spiteful comments when one of their broadcasts suffered similar gremlins. Everybody just waited until the service had finished and could then watch the recording without 99% of the interruptions.

How many people watched the broadcasts? On Palm Sunday it was 170; Good Friday 200, Dawn Vigil 230, Easter Day Mass 208. The numbers reflect those experienced by other churches across the world; the numbers far exceed the average congregation and people on the Electoral Roll. We cannot release any data from our website due to Data Protection; please do talk to all your friends who may have watched the broadcasts and encourage them to come to St Margaret's once normal services are resumed. There is an obvious need for the Church at all times and not just during these troubled times.

Finally, "thank you" to the following:

- Father David for his extraordinary vision in giving us services that were all different and memorable. I mentioned earlier that other priests merely broadcast from the same location every time (e.g. a dining room table).
- David Stowe who had to resolve the "sharp end" problems remotely - a very difficult task that, in happier times, would have been easier and less time consuming to complete.
- Our Congregation for being so tolerant as we stumbled at times and for sending us their thanks.
- Barbara for making tea in times of failure and moderating the whisky in times of success.

When Fr David asked if we could broadcast services, neither David Stowe or myself had any experience or knowledge of what was involved. Many hours have been put in, to get us to a position where we could enable our congregation to join Fr David in his private services. It was bloody hard work but very worthwhile.



# **Working in a Care Home**

## **Noah Cockett**

Working in care homes has changed a lot even in the short time I've been working in them. I've worked alongside some great people and learnt from them. I'm going to explain about my work as a healthcare assistant.

When I was turned down at my first Bishops Advisory Panel, I was devastated. I sought work which has given me some real life experiences. These three years haven't been easy but I have become a much better, more rounded, version of myself than I was.

The work of a healthcare assistant is not easy. It's listening to residents with equal attention and interest the first time you hear something, as well as the twenty fifth. But looking after people at their most vulnerable time is an honour that all carers should be valued highly. Being a carer in a carehome is about respecting a community of people that has done so much for us. The wider community as a whole now needs to do more for them.

The care homes I have worked in specialise in Dementia Care, a cause close to my heart. My grandfather, Derek, who many of you knew, was living with dementia when he died. Caring is an emotionally and physically demanding job, running all over the floors of the home to get things done, as well as keeping things together whilst people you are trying to look after may shout or try to hit you. Over this Eastertide, I have been reflecting on everything that I do. I was recommended for training just before the outbreak and secured a college place the week before the lockdown. I've worked more Sundays in the last two months than usual. Short staffing and staff illness have plagued care homes countrywide.

As Covid 19 has spread and we journeyed through Lent, I began to think about servanthood. and we journeyed through Lent, I began to think about servanthood.

One Sunday, Graham Kendrick's 'Servant King' was loudly playing through the care home, via fifty TV sets all tuned to "Songs of Praise". Servanthood was something very close to the heart of Jesus. God asks us to love our neighbour as urself. As he washed His disciples' feet on Maundy Thursday (also John 13) Jesus carried out this gentle action of humility and service with love. Jesus assumed the role of servitude to His disciples. In my own way I have taken this to heart, aspiring with new vigour to live my life like Christ. To have the humility to be a good servant to the people I care for. Looking forward I recognise these are all qualities I can develop and I work towards ordained Ministry.

Over the last two months, caring has changed dramatically. These days when I turn up for work I am "shot" with a thermometer gun, to check if I have a fever. I cycle to work every day, and after all that exercise sometimes I have to convince work that I'm not actually ill because I am hot after riding. Up until today (Monday 20th April) the residents in my home were relaxing in the lounges with one another and enjoying their normal lives. A few weeks ago Personal Protective Equipment began to flood in to protect against Covid 19 and a small army of sewing enthusiasts provided us with fabric face masks. The generosity and love we carers have experienced in the last month has been a wonderful reminder of how important our job is. I believe that God has provided everything we have needed, and will continue to do so; working through people whose talents only He knows. My residents have now gone into self isolation. They are staying in their rooms to protect each other and themselves, to ensure that they do not catch Covid 19.

There are now added pressures, as more people are resting in bed which means we must do more to prevent bed sores and things like this. As the pressure rises, our senior carers still expect everything done in the same amount of time. This is nothing new, and that kind of additional work load happens in all workplaces. But the thing I am now holding on to, the thing that keeps me caring, is trying to emulate Jesus in everything I do and trusting in God's provision. For I am sure that there is no mountain that cannot be conquered with the aid of our all loving God.



**Palm Sunday**



**Good Friday**



**Dawn Vigil**

## Where are they now?

### Phoebe Hull

#### Life as a teacher during the Covid-19 pandemic

*I am a teacher in the local area and have been a member of St. Margaret's congregation all of my life.*



As a teacher I play many roles: educator, listener, discipliner and comforter, to name but a few. Over the last month or so the importance of each of the roles has changed greatly and, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic new ones have developed. For the first few weeks my students called me 'the chief advisor for Covid-19' because, as their biology teacher, I kept explaining that there are many different types of coronaviruses.

As the weeks went by, the cases increased and so did the fear amongst the students, making my most important role at this point comforter and listener. No matter how I felt, I had to make sure that the students felt safe and there was normalcy at school. I offered students information and support whilst simultaneously protecting them from certain parts of the news. I also became the hygiene police; this pandemic has highlighted that some pupils needed to learn how to wash their hands! Every cough and sneeze in my lab resulted in the students washing their hands.

As well as fear, there was also excitement from the students – and maybe some of the staff – that the school might shut. It felt a little bit like waiting for lots of snow.

However, with about a third of my class missing and many staff self-isolating, it soon became clear that this situation was nothing like a snow day. Everyday there was something new to deal with, covering classes, cancelled assemblies and entire year groups not coming into school. Then came the news that GCSEs and A-levels were to be cancelled which resulted in mass panic. Neither year 11 nor year 13 knew what it would mean for them or if they would return to school.

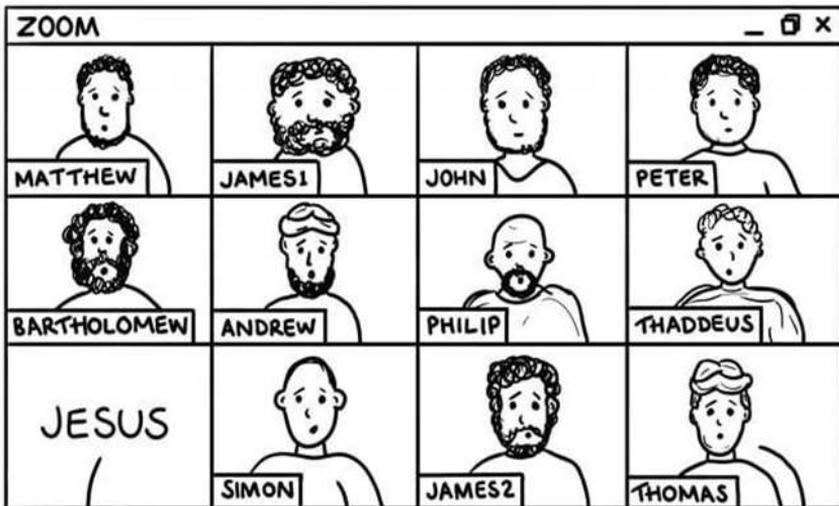
Next came the biggest challenge of all, the school closure. I was to continue teaching but in a completely novel way. During the first two weeks many new ways of teaching were tried, some worked, some did not. The students struggled to complete the work without a physical teacher and, staff struggled with how best to support their students. It was hard to find a balance between setting too much work and not providing enough work. I had to become creative about how to assess their work and support them. However, at this time, the biggest challenge was ensuring that the students were safe, well and coping with these new and very unusual educational circumstances

I am currently using the Easter holidays to reassess how best to fulfil my many roles and, most importantly, support my students. Additionally, I must be ready to go into school, if required, to look after the children of our much-needed frontline key-workers, to whom I am incredibly grateful.

Nobody knows when this will all be over or when we will be able to return to normality. However, if you were to speak to my students they would tell you I am not normal, so I guess I will not be returning to normality! But, until we can return to normal, I will continue to educate my students to the best of my ability and, on a personal level, I will continue to pray, give thanks to our incredible NHS workers and, hope for something positive to come from these difficult times. God bless and stay safe.

---

Below is the cartoon Fr David referred to in his Sermon on 2nd Sunday of Easter.



HEY.

HOW ON EARTH IS HE IN THE MEETING?

UNLESS HE TURNS ON HIS CAMERA, I WILL NOT BELIEVE IT

Tim Wakeling

## What the Mothers' Union Members at St Margaret's have done in 2019

For a small MU Branch it is amazing how much members achieve individually and together, in St Margaret's church and community. Between us all we have:-

- Helped two Brownie packs prepare Christingles and led a Christingle service. Prepared refreshments for all (children, helpers and parents)
- Helped with the Edward Bear Club
- Served as Sidesmen
- Served on the Parochial Church Council
- Served on the Abbeyfields' Committee and visited residents
- Served as Lay Minister
- Led the Monday night Stations of the Cross in church during Holy Week;
- Bunched daffodils as a gift for mothers in church on Mothering Sunday, taking a collection at the end of the Mothering Sunday 10.00 service for the MU initiative *Make a Mother's Day*;
- Participated actively in the MU Wave of Prayer.
- Under Southend Council's initiative **Sparkle**; members picked up litter in the church grounds and surrounding area
- Attended regular corporate communion services



- Undertaken in Church a prayer vigil service during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence;
- Provided and served refreshments for the Bishop of Chelmsford, Belfairs' school children and others on the last day of the Bishop's Walk around the Diocese;
- Organised a day coach trip to Ely Cathedral for the parish;
- Created a major historical parish display for the Church centennial exhibition;
- Organised monthly Communita parties for members of the parish
- Held weekly One-Stop Coffee Shops during term time and continued to support those attending throughout the year
- Organised church flower arranging
- Visited the housebound and unwell
- Actively participated in worship (reading, intercessions, singing)
- Cleaned the altar silver and communion vessels
- Provided refreshments for U3A church tours and other visitors
- Led the church tours for U3A members and others
- Sent out Baptism cards and follow up birthday cards for five years to those baptized in St Margaret's
- Helped as required at the Centenary celebrations and on other occasions



**The Revd Canon Carl Turner celebrating  
without a congregation in St Thomas's Fifth Avenue New York**

A NEW YORK priest has described the transformation of the “City that never sleeps” into a ghost town, its streets largely empty except for people who are homeless.

Canon Carl Turner is Rector of St Thomas’s, in the centre of Manhattan, two blocks from Central Park and close to Times Square — where, he reports, “the lights are still on, but there is no one to see them.”

New York is the state worst-hit by the coronavirus in what is now the worst-hit country in the world, with more than 140,000 confirmed cases, though the death toll is lower than Italy and Spain. Of the national total of 2493 deaths from Covid -19 by the start of Monday, more than 1000 have been in New York.

Unlike in the UK, churches in the United States have not been told to close, but they must not hold gatherings of more than 50 people. The overall congregation of St Thomas’s is much larger.

It shut for public worship two weeks ago, and closed the church doors for private prayer last week, after it became apparent staff were having to travel in and open up for just a handful of people.

Since then, as in the rest of the state, the clergy have focused on online services. Sunday's service had an audience of 6000, and daily intercessions online are attracting congregations of more than one hundred.

Canon Turner, a former Canon of Exeter Cathedral, reported at the weekend: "Prayer and intercessions are still seen as an essential, and many churches also run large social programmes that people rely on. The Holy Apostles' soup kitchen serves a thousand lunches a day, and it is still open. Very few people may be venturing out, but there are still homeless people on the streets, and there is a real concern for them."

Staff and clergy from St Thomas's have been on the streets distributing hand sanitisers and other essentials to the homeless

Thousands of children in New York are also without a permanent home, and schools, though closed, are providing three take-away meals a day for children, to try and keep them fed during the lockdown .

The fact that the church is unable to take donations or offerings for candles was beginning to bite, Canon Turner said, though the diocese of New York has announced a reduction in parish share of 25 per cent for this year.

President Trump, who initially insisted that the US would be open for business again by Easter, has now extended social distancing measures until the end of April, saying such measures were “the way you win”. He none the less predicted that the US “will be well on our way to recovery” by June. People have been told to avoid non-essential travel and going out to restaurants or bars, and gatherings are limited to fewer than ten people. In the worst-hit states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, residents are banned from travelling anywhere for 14 days.

There are reports, however, of churches that are refusing to stop public worship or obey social-distancing guidelines. Pastor Rodney Howard-Browne from River Tampa Bay Church in Florida said in a video: “I’ve got news for you, this church will never close. The only time the church is closed is when the Rapture is taking place. This Bible school is open because we’re raising up revivalists, not pansies.”

Another church leader is rumoured to have boasted that he could tell his congregation “to lick the church clean with their tongues” without harm, and they’d do it, so great was their faith

And in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Pastor Tony Spell of Life Tabernacle Church defied the ban on gatherings by holding a service for more than 1000 people. He told a local radio station: “The virus, we believe, is politically motivated. We hold our religious rights dear, and we are going to assemble, no matter what someone says.”

From the Church Times 3/4/2020

## We're all going on a Bear Hunt

A mass teddy bear hunt is under way around the world to help distract the millions of children locked down because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Stuffed toys are being placed in windows to give children a fun and safe activity while walking around their neighbourhood with parents.

The hunt is inspired by the children's book '*We're Going on a Bear Hunt*,' written by UK author Michael Rosen.

Teddies have been spotted around the world, including in the UK and US.



New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has also joined in, putting 2 bears in the window of her residence.

Have you joined in?

This is our Paddington Bear gazing out at a deserted street.



This is a 'Fr David Bear' in a window somewhere in the parish.

Can you find him?

# Shining in the Dark

**By Courtney Davy Bulmore Aged 10** (at time of writing)

Life is full of twists and turns, ups and downs, wrongs and rights. Some days will shine brighter than others although some feels as if someone has ripped out a big hole deep into your sole. Sometimes people get pulled into a big black spacious holes are unable to escape. This is what I felt like on one mysterious day of my life.

In the early hours of a cold Monday morning, I sat in my bedroom unaware about the events of this day that would change my life forever. As the aroma of my opulent breakfast wafted up my nose, I looked out of the window and my stomach rumbled, I efficiently pulled on my new uniform and went cautiously down stairs trying not to wake my siblings up. I felt so nervous, as scared as a scarecrow. What if everyone said horrible things to me or ganged up against me? What if I made no friends? What if no-one liked me?

As I arrived outside West Leigh Infant School, my heart started to pound faster and faster; looking up I saw the bulging green gates. Gently the wind lifted me of my feet and quickly nudged me towards them. We walked into the school office and the first thing I saw was the lovely big welcome mat that had extremely nice comments on it, and I soon felt more welcome with the two smiley faced caring head teachers.

Two children (prefects) came into the room and introduced themselves as Eliza and Bertie I remember how they wore the same neat and tidy uniform as me. They were very thoughtful and they talked to me about some things we do in school. We went past many different classes with about 20 - 30 children in (younger and older) we went past halls and libraries and more classes. But we finally arrived at mine.

I can still remember how I touched the door handle and took a huge deep breath in. I remember how my dad put his warm hand on my shoulder and it slightly comforted me. I concentrated hard and said to myself that it was going to be ok, but I doubted it once I looked at that big sturdy brown oak door. I slowly opened the door and slightly peered through the reduced gap that would lead me to the rest of my life. I can still remember how I was introduced to the class and this girl she was just smiling at me from a distance. This girl is now (4 years later) my best friend and is right now smiling across the room from me. I can't believe how many people have helped to carry it on. I sat down next to this girl but then I suddenly bounced up and flung my arms around my parents.

Life will always be full of twists and turns, ups and downs, wrongs and rights. Some days do shine brighter than others, but mine shone brightly in the darkness. Many people have their life stories and this life story is mine.



# WOMEN AT WAR!

Lucia Curthoys

As we commemorate the end of WWII ....some personal memories from remarkable women from the past, from that 'special war time generation' to whom we owe so much and I had the privilege of talking to.

**RUTH BOURNE**, 77, was a Wren stationed at Bletchley Park, home of WW II's 'Station X', Britain's crack code breaking centre. She worked on an early type of computer known as the 'Bombe,' a huge machine with noisy revolving drums that speeded up the process of unravelling the Enigma code, thought by the Germans to be unbreakable. Bletchley played a vital role in the success of D-Day and ending the War early, but Ruth didn't discover this secret until much later.

"I had just turned 17 and decided I wanted to join the Wrens. We lived in Birmingham. I set off for one of the recruiting offices. I was anxious to join up and do my bit before it was all over, so I put my age up to 18 – it couldn't be checked because all my documents had been destroyed when our house was blitz.

A landmine had landed opposite and blew our front door completely through to the back of our house and ripped all the linings from the curtains. I can still remember seeing them hanging all limp and my mother standing surrounded by glass from the shattered window panes.

I was accepted into the Wrens and put on 'Special Duties' and found myself at Bletchley Park in Hut 11 working on 'The Bombe'. The Germans changed the Enigma keys at midnight so the 'Bombes' were on the go 24 hours a day.

They were big, lumbering machines which required a lot of attention. Setting them up was intricate work, it required total concentration. The 'Bombe' bays were hot and noisy. We worked non-stop for eight hours except for a half an hour break for meals.

I suffered stomach upsets from the shift work and burn out, like a lot of the girls, but it was worth it because you knew what you did was really important, but you didn't know until much later how important. Secrecy was vital. You didn't even speak to anyone in any of the other huts. All communication was done via the phones.

We had to sign the Official Secrets Act. You would never dream of discussing your work with anyone, not even your own mother. Mine used to say, 'but you can tell me, I'm your mother! But I never did. You knew careless talk really could cost thousands of lives.

It wasn't until long afterwards that I realised the part Bletchley Park played in the success of D-Day – that it was their decoding that told General Eisenhower where 60 out of 62 of the German divisions were. And, of course, ultimately cut two years off the war saving thousands of lives.

The best bit of D-Day for all of us, even if we didn't really know what was going on, was that we were at last on the move. We knew the air raids would not stop, the bombs would still fall, food would still be rationed, and people would be killed, but we were no longer sitting isolated on our little island. We were in Europe, pushing the Germans

back. And as I twiddle those code wheels and plugged in those wires, I had this great feeling of doing something special, of playing my part in what followed the success of D-Day. And being Jewish made it all the more satisfying.

**DIANA BARNATO WALKER MBE** was a deb and daughter of millionaire racing driver, Woolf Barnato, and grand daughter of Barney Barnato who co-founded the De Beers mining company. But when war came she left her privileged life behind to 'do her bit.' Already an experienced flier she joined the ATA (Air Transport Auxiliary) and become a ferry pilot, delivering desperately needed aircraft from the factories to depots and squadrons. By the time she was 22 she had delivered over 260 Spitfires alone. She had a bird's eye view of the D-Day preparations.

"I learned to fly because I'd had enough of nannies, governesses and chaperones and knew the air was the one place they couldn't follow me! By 1944 I was flying all the fighters. It was wonderful flying these wonderful new machines straight from the factories. I loved it because every time you delivered an aircraft you felt it was one in the eye for Hitler. I was doing my bit, it was only a little bit, but everyone in Britain was pulling together to win the war.

"For several months before D-Day I was flying aircraft down from the north of the country to airfields in the south. The whole of the south of England was like a huge aircraft carrier. We filled up every aerodrome we could.

On D-Day itself my only job on this most exciting and historic of days was to doddle along the south coast with a little Auster spotter plane to replace one that had been blown over and damaged during the storm on the 5<sup>th</sup> June which had delayed the Invasion. But from my birds eye vantage point I saw amazing sights I shall never forget.

I looked down on hundreds of tanks, trucks, Bren-gun carriers, jeeps and equipment as well as thousands of soldiers who had been parked and billeted in the woods. I could see ships that seemed to stretch as far as the eye could see across the Channel. I also made out the huge 'Pluto' (Pipeline under the Ocean) 'cotton-reels' holding up the oil pipeline, like a sea serpent, bobbing about in the rough seas. I also saw some of the Mulberry pre-fabricated harbour being floated out towards France. It was pretty impressive.

This was it. The Invasion. Yet I didn't feel any high elation. You knew it was important, but you didn't know the overall plan. You also realised many of your friends would not be returning.

"I don't think you realised the implications of D-Day at the time. You were too busy doing your own little thing. When you are delivering an aircraft, one of 138 different types you had to fly, you can only concentrate on that particular aircraft and that particular flight and where you were going and how you were going to get back. You had no wireless

no navigational aids, and there were the barrage balloons to avoid! The work went on. I had planes to deliver.

“After D-Day I flew them into France and was the first woman pilot to fly into Belgium. Their war was over, the lights of Brussels were on and they had food and chocolates and leather shoes. But we were still fighting and from the sky I could see V.1 rockets -‘doodle-bugs’- being fired at us from their launch sites across the Channel and then watched as our boys in their Typhoons waited to shoot them down.

I didn’t really celebrate until Japan fell and it was really all over. I had been a very small cog in a giant wheel, but it had been lovely flying these wonderful planes. My favourite was a Spitfire, I flew one only a few months ago. I considered myself very lucky to be able to fly one of these magical planes at 86 year old!”

**IRIS BOWER**, 89, was a nurse with the Princess Mary’s Royal Air Force Nursing Service. When she heard about the proposed D-Day invasion, she volunteered to go to France with a Mobile Field Hospital. For her work, often carried out under shellfire, she was awarded the MBE and ARRC (Association of the Royal Red Cross)

My memory is shocking these days, but I can still vividly remember feeling the sand beneath my feet when I landed on Juno Beach in 1944. I was the first woman to land. And I shall never forget the look on the Tommies’ faces either!

“When I knew about the forthcoming Invasion I volunteered to go to Normandy with the mobile hospital. I had lost my husband, he was a squadron leader and had been shot down eighteen months after we were married. It was terrible to lose him, I wanted to do this for him, and, for myself. I was only a little girl from the valleys of Wales but I wanted to do my bit too.

“I joined No 50 Mobile Field Hospital. We had spent months in preparation for this moment, we knew we could put up an entire hospital under canvas in less than three hours!

Crossing the Channel was an incredible experience. There was a never ending convoy of ships and escorting naval vessels. Someone counted over 200 ships.

As we approached the Normandy Coast we could feel the atmosphere. Fighters protected us overhead, we could see the flash of enemy gunfire ashore. We stood on deck silently gazing awestruck at the scene. Suddenly we were told to go. In full battledress with tin hat and a red cross armband I scrambled down the ramp and the next thing I remember was feeling sand under my feet. . I had landed on Juno/Red Beach near Courseulles-sur-Mer in the pitch darkness.

It was dark and noisy. There were troops and vehicles moving about and the sound of gunfire. The front line was still close to the coast.

The shellfire was deafening, and we found out how invaluable the 'slit trench' was when it came to diving for cover! We quickly 'set up' our hospital under canvas, and despite the conditions all the tents stood in well regimented lines! We immediately set about receiving our patients.

They were just so grateful to see us. It was wonderful when they recovered, some were airlifted back to England, but many died. We worked under almost constant shellfire, sometimes it seemed so close. I'd worked in a hospital which had received a direct hit, and experienced the Blitz, so I'd had my baptism of fire. We were young and well trained and just got on with the job and that took away the fear. Even though you were dealing with some horrific wounds you were just so glad to be there, helping.

"The casualties were dreadful, but you never once thought, is it all worth it? Because we all knew we just had to win this war. The consequences if we hadn't was too dreadful to think of.

"After attending to the D-Day casualties we picked up our tents and moved with the battle. And we did this all the way from Normandy to the Baltic and I was there. We knew D-Day had been a turning point and I felt so grateful to have been given the opportunity to do 'my bit.' "

**VERA LYNN**, created a Dame of the British Empire in 1975, as ‘the Forces Sweetheart’ she worked tirelessly throughout the Second World War to help cheer both servicemen and civilians. Often visiting British troops only a few miles from the front line. She symbolised ‘home’ and became a British Institution. She vividly remembered the moment she heard about D-Day.

“I was in a tent in the desert in Djerba! I had been away for four months visiting the ‘Forgotten Army’ in Burma, that’s what the boys called themselves. They really did believe they were forgotten back home. At one point of my tour I was only six miles away from the Japanese line! I went weeks without a bath, my shower was to turn a bucket of water upside down over myself! And, of course, there were no proper loos, flies in the soup and bush rats! But I didn’t care. I was bringing a little bit of home to these boys. As I stood in that little tent that night I wondered if they knew about this important news.

We had an army officer with us who had an old radio and there we were, a small group of us in the desert, miles from anywhere, twiddling the knobs of this radio. Then between the crackling we made out something had ‘begun.’ We didn’t quite know what, but we all knew it was a momentous moment.

“There had been so many rumours in the past and they had come to nothing, but somehow this time we knew it was for real. I can remember we raised our glasses – I don’t know what we had in our glasses or how it got there – but we toasted our troops and to the success of whatever was happening.

“We realised it wasn’t the end of the war, but I think we all felt that night in the desert that it was the beginning of the end. As we gathered round that little radio that night I do remember a great feeling of optimism. When I arrived home everyone was talking about the Second Front and saying, it won’t be long now.

The British had been very dogged, we had just taken each day as it had come and got on with our jobs. I was so proud of my sex. They had held the country together. I had seen them on my travels doing all kinds of jobs from manning the anti-aircraft batteries to putting out fires during the Blitz, driving buses and ambulances. They also drove tractors and fed us.

When we heard we had landed in France we felt well, at least, the Germans won’t be landing here now! We didn’t know the details, but we knew it was ‘something big’ and we just hoped it would finish the war.

I remember how I enjoyed my first bath in months. I heard a V1 rocket go over and then got back on the road again. The war wasn’t over yet, but may be the end was finally in sight.”

**ROSAMOND BRIDEWELL**, was an independent spirited girl and there fore became a FANY who enjoyed such diverse occupations as ambulance drivers, nursing, intelligence officers and couriers. Rosamond found herself regularly at Wormwood Scrubs!

I would arrive at the prison in the evening, it was really spooky. I would climb this iron staircase and then be left sitting in a cell on my own until around 11pm. Then I would be led to a large heavy door, the top half would open and a

large, very heavy sack wearing a padlock at the neck, would be thrust into my arms.

“I would arrive at the prison in the evening, it was really spooky. I would climb this iron staircase and then be left sitting in a cell on my own until around 11pm. Then I would be led to a large heavy door, the top half would open and a large, very heavy sack wearing a padlock at the neck, would be thrust into my arms. Along the floor I knew there were girls operating teleprinters, so presumed my sack contained secret information. But I never found out because during the War you never asked.

“I had to drive through London and deliver my sack to the offices of Cable & Wireless. I had to memorise the route because the blackout was on and there were no signposts up.

“I drove ambulances through the Blitz and transported German POWs, my only defence a starting handle!

I moved to the south coast and was responsible for ‘communications’. I had girls under my command who plotted the German planes as they came in. I remember lying on my bed looking out across the Channel and seeing the flash of gunfire from the German guns aimed at us. And you thought this can’t go on for ever. And then just before June 6<sup>th</sup> I was passed on the road by convoys of lorries full of soldiers and equipment and you thought something big is happening at last.

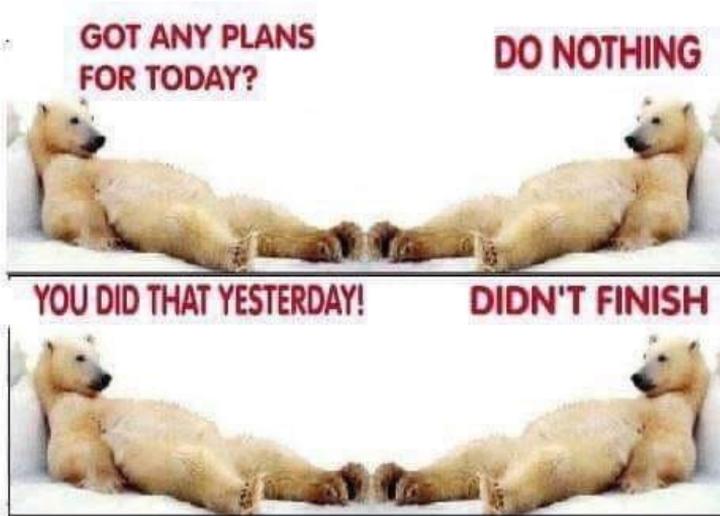
But it was some days later that I learned what had happened. It wasn’t like today when you have live war coverage. Then you never really knew what was happening, you never got the full picture. I don’t think anyone ever really gave up in their determination to beat Hitler. My mother put great trust in Mr Churchill and found his speeches inspiring

People volunteered for the most dangerous jobs because they wanted to 'do their bit'. There was this great feeling of patriotism. A very close friend of mine volunteered to fly spotter planes because he felt he wasn't doing enough. He got killed over North Africa. Nearly everyone lost somebody or knew somebody who had lost a boyfriend, husband or brother. I had one man friend I was very close to and he got killed and you don't ever get over that.

When D-Day sank in you realised something big had started. Of course you were worried about the huge casualties, but you knew now that perhaps the tide was beginning to turn in our favour.

I was just one of thousands, doing their 'bit', a small bit in one big effort to win the war."

~~~~~



## Why are people putting Rainbows in their Windows?



The coronavirus pandemic has confined most of the British population indoors, with excursions acceptable on just two occasions.

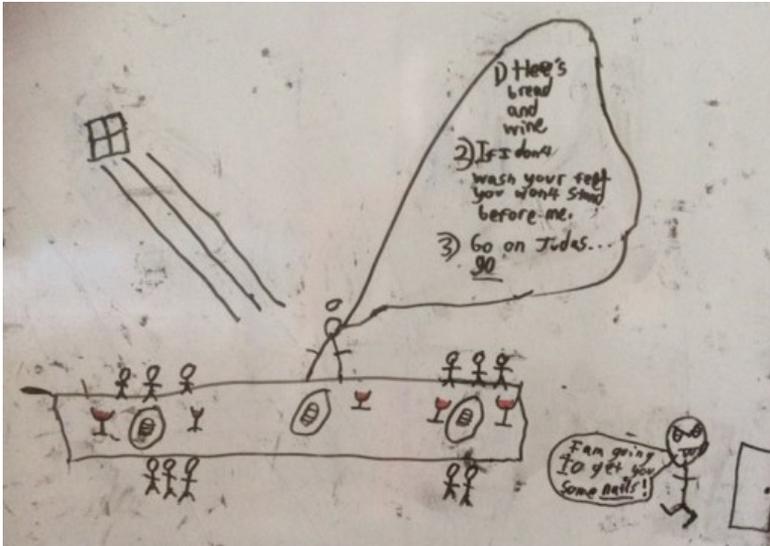
We can leave home twice a day; once for exercise, and another time for shopping.

Some people have put pictures of rainbows in their windows to cheer up those suffering through the coronavirus isolation. Children have been responsible for drawing most of the rainbows, which symbolise the sun emerging amid a rainy backdrop.

They ultimately serve as a reminder to stay positive, with several groups set up around the country to keep the movement alive.

## Paddy's Picture

This picture, of the Last Supper, was drawn by a pupil at Belfair's School and sent to Fr David at Easter.



A special prayer this Easter season for all those who suffer because of the consequences of this pandemic in any way.

*"God of love and mercy, look with compassion on the afflicted, grant eternal rest to the dead, comfort to mourners, healing to the sick, peace to the dying, strength to health care workers, wisdom to our leaders and the courage to us all to reach out all in need, so that in loving you and loving neighbour as self we may give glory to your holy name." Amen*

## Church Squirrel Problem

Because a band of squirrels had become quite a problem:

- The Presbyterian church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.
- At the Baptist church, the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water-slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.
- The Lutheran church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide.
- The Episcopalians tried a much more unique path by setting out pans of whisky around their church in an effort to kill the squirrels with alcohol. They sadly learned how much damage a band of drunken squirrels can do
- But the Catholic church came up with a very creative strategy! They baptized all the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.
- And not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.

# Who's Who at St Margaret's

## **Parish Priest:**

The Rev'd Fr. David Wylie RN 07768 687 605

vicar@saintmargaretsleigh.org

## **Churchwarden:**

churchwarden@saintmargaretsleigh.org

## **Hall enquires:**

Mrs Julia Fenton 07980 909 244

hallbookings@saintmargaretsleigh.org

## **Organist & Director of Music: & Church bookings:**

Mr David Stowe 07876 496757

music@saintmargaretsleigh.org

churchbookings@saintmargaretsleigh.org

## **Webmaster:**

Bob Southward 07876 685 210

webmaster@saintmargaretsleigh.org

## **Editor for contributions to Bulletin:**

bulletin@saintmargaretsleigh.org