

St Mark's Parish Magazine

February 2021

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Your Views & Contributions

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LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, the season of penitence, self-examination and fasting running up to Easter, is on 17th February this year. Although the discipline of fasting isn't popular today, Lent is one of the few times when we might consider abstaining from something so that we might focus on God.



Fasting should play an important part in the Christian life. Jesus began his earthly ministry by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and he taught his disciples to fast. In Matthew's gospel he tells them "when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen." (Matthew 6.17-18). Note he uses the word "when" and not "if". So why should we fast?

Well, first, giving up something in our lives shows that we want to put God first in our lives. Second, fasting shows us how much we depend on things other than God in our lives. How often when we've had a bad day do we reach for that bar of chocolate or our favourite tippie instead of reaching out to God? Third, fasting encourages us to have a deeper hunger and dependency for God in our lives. Fasting gives space for us to humbly focus on God for his strength, provision, and wisdom and results in a more intimate relationship with Christ. It also enables the Holy Spirit to reveal our true spiritual condition, leading to brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life, with a heart more attentive to God.

Fasting traditionally involves missing one or two meals during the day. Not everyone can do this. For example, some people cannot abstain from regular meals for medical reasons. Fasting can also include abstaining or limiting the time we give to things like television, alcohol or social media. But this year some faith groups are suggesting on social media that we shouldn't be asking people to give up something as we have already given up so much over the past year. Instead, they are suggesting that we do something positive.

This has been my practice for a number of years. I see Lent as a time to embrace new spiritual disciplines e.g. joining a study group, giving more time to prayer and Bible study, "random acts of kindness", or keeping a gratitude journal. I particularly like the "random acts of kindness". They can make a huge difference to someone's day. But whatever you do, let's make Lent count this year.

With my best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin".

Love of Beauty and Beauty of Love

So much these days is explained by the world's scientists. But certain things can't be explained by them, and I suspect never will be. Some such things might be included in what I would describe as the "love of beauty" and the "beauty of love."

The love of beauty is not something we learn but is part of what we are born with. It includes such wonders as our appreciation of a lovely sunset, a spider's web covered in dew, a baby's smile and a bird's song, all gifts from God. Then there are man-made things of beauty, such as masterpieces by artists and sculptors, those supreme compositions of music that can charm our ears and transform our moods and there are the poetry and prose that can delight our souls.

How can a scientist explain a sense of humour, or as I mentioned, the beauty of love? One thing that we can wonder at is the universality of these things. Wherever we come from and from whatever backgrounds we can appreciate a lovely painting and a superb passage of music. And even poetry when translated into another language can be magical to the reader. Paul seemed to recognise this in the 13th chapter of his letter to the Corinthians. Although I can't say how beautiful this passage is in its original Greek, as translated into English I find it breathtakingly lovely. It has been described as a "Hymn of Love" and for many it is the most wonderful chapter in the whole New Testament. No wonder it is used so often at weddings, as it was in ours nearly 60 years ago.

So here we can enjoy the love of beauty in Paul's poetry but also appreciate the beauty of love which he puts over so well. One of the most important things he said was "Love never ends". This should be a true comfort to those who have lost a loved one, as I have so recently. From the Song of Solomon we have the lovely words:

"Set me as a seal upon your heart
As a seal upon your arm;
For love is strong as death
Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can floods drown it."

And Shakespeare in a sonnet said:

"Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out to the edge of doom
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved."

The one unconquerable thing in life is love. That is one of the great reasons for believing in immortality. With love we have a relationship which transcends death.

Ian Archer

Fundraising

SMOAT CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2020

2020 was certainly a challenging year. The COVID-19 pandemic has been global in scale and touched the whole of humankind; it has disrupted economies and challenged health and care services across the world. But health challenges do not affect people equally, and the most disadvantaged communities are disproportionately affected and impacted by disease and malnutrition.

At SMOAT, we were sad not to be able to run our usual programme of fund-raising events, but we have worked hard to allocate the generous donations of our amazing regular givers. In order to support more projects, we are even more reliant on our annual Christmas Appeal. This year's Appeal supports two amazing projects which are able to swiftly push ahead in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

Afrinspire – Shallow well project

Afrinspire is a Cambridge-based organisation, established in 1997, which has built trusted relationships with local leaders of grassroots organisations to tackle the root causes of poverty. These dedicated individuals advise Afrinspire on projects to finance and entrepreneurs to support. It benefits huge numbers of people and encourages southern initiatives by building their capacity.



This project will provide basic sanitation systems to a community which has been ravaged by flooding. Lunga district comprises of an archipelago of islands in the Bangweulu Wetlands known as the Lunga Swamps. One of the most rural districts in Zambia, water, sanitation and hygiene coverage on Lunga



Island was poor before the floods decimated the existing facilities: only 30% had access to safe water and less than 47% had access to basic sanitation.

Penelope Machipi is their local contact in Samfya on the mainland on the edge of Lake Bangweulu. Penelope has recently coordinated the building of wells in Samfya and can mobilise this local team on the islands. Unlike deep boreholes, which need drilling rigs and expensive equipment to be brought to site, as well as permission to tap deep groundwater, the shallow well is much cheaper and easier to construct.



Based on the other work on the mainland, the well is expected to cost in the region of £1,200. It could provide clean water for up to 3,500 people. Additional monies raised will help with repairs to existing hand pumps, as well as installations of much needed latrines or further wells.

Chase Africa – Mobile medical clinics

Chase Africa is a Somerset-based organisation that works with local partners in East Africa. The project will fund their mobile outreach health clinics in Kakamega County in the west of Kenya where there is limited access to formal health facilities.

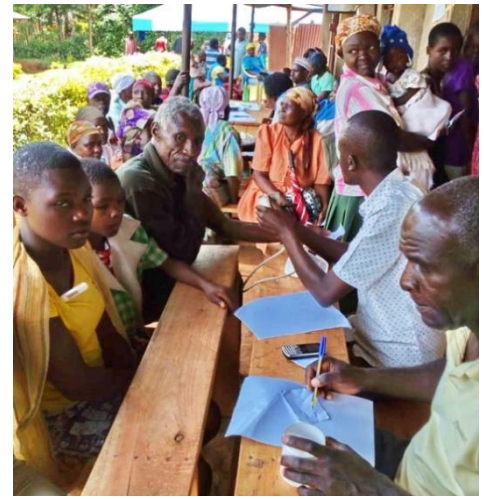
Delivered through Kenyan partner, Community Health Volunteers, the teams identify and engage talented local people from within the community and train them to inform, educate and communicate with their communities about primary healthcare. A big effort is put into letting the community know a mobile clinic will be operating on a certain date.



This includes a public address system mounted on a car which visits the area for two days before the clinic arrives, announcements at church services, posters displayed around the region and encouraging head teachers to inform their pupils to tell their parents.

On the day of the clinic, the local teams work alongside professional doctors from Kenya's health care system who travel from the city hospitals. A range of primary health

services are provided, including: HIV counselling and testing, immunisations, nutrition screening, contraceptive implants, treatment for malaria, diarrhoea, respiratory infections, skin complaints like jiggers, worm treatments, and some cancer screening and referrals.



The community health workers play an important role in helping to break myths and misconceptions about family planning. They also talk about general health issues and recently have been exceptionally busy teaching people how to stay safe from COVID-19. On average, the mobile clinic provides primary health care services and family planning advice to anywhere between approximately 800-2000 people.

These projects are very different but equally as essential. The provision of clean water and access to basic health services should be a basic right for everyone. Unfortunately, they are not and, as a result, many thousands of people in the poorest rural communities in the world suffer unnecessarily.

If you would like to support our Appeal, please visit our website, where you will be able to donate via Virgin Money Giving.

News from the Church of England

Archbishops invite nation to pause, pray and remember the 100,000 who've died from Coronavirus

"100,000 isn't just an abstract figure - each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us."

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York are issuing a call to the nation to pause and reflect to remember the more than 100,000 people across the UK who have died after contracting Covid-19 and all those who know and love them.

In an open letter, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell invite everyone across England – whether they have faith or not – to pause, reflect on the “enormity of this pandemic” and to pray.

Death, they insist, does not have “the last word”, and the Christian faith promises that one day “every tear will be wiped away”. God, they write, knows grief and suffering and “shares in the weight of our sadness”.

Acknowledging the wider impact of the pandemic on the whole of society through loneliness, anxiety and economic hardship, they invite people to “cast their fears on God”. The letter also speaks of the particular impact of the pandemic on poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities.

It acknowledges many who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic and it speaks about those unable to be with loved ones as they died or even at their graveside because of the restrictions.

The archbishops give thanks for NHS and social care staff, who they describe as “a blessing and lifeline for our nation”; for clergy, other frontline workers and “so many good neighbours”. They give thanks for the development of vaccines and reiterate a call to everyone to take the vaccine when it is offered.

They also urge people to support each other both by following the guidelines to limit the spread of the virus and in practical ways, reaching out in care and kindness.

It is expected that the Church of England will hold services of remembrance for those who have died and thanksgiving for all those who have cared for them when it is possible to do so.

Article taken from: <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/coronavirus-archbishops-invite-nation-pause-pray-and-remember>

Environmental News

House Fires

A married couple were in bed about to go to sleep. "Darling," said Leslie, "what is that funny smell?" Tony, sounding uninterested: "It smells a bit like burning." Leslie replied, "I thought so too. In the morning we must try to remember to look into this. We may have to call the fire brigade. Could you shut the door please, it will keep the smell out. I am going to open the window for some fresh air." But she was too late. Tony was asleep. Next would come the snores. She turned on her side and thought about the planned Mediterranean summer holiday. There would be wall to wall azure blue skies over warm gentle seas with a five star hotel, attendant waiters, and delicious fish dinners with medium dry white wine in fragrant evenings. It would be heavenly. I just wonder about that smoke alarm. Then, she too was asleep.

I am very aware that my writings on Climate Change has been a liturgy of bad news. I wish there were something more hopeful to write about. So, this time I thought I would seek out the better news. Yet on this subject, if no other, with all its many implications, we must stay close to the truth.

President Biden has announced that the US will rejoin the Paris Climate Change Agreement. He plans to spend \$2trillion on a green stimulus package. The American Green New Deal (GND) plans to rebalance the economy away from financial services and restore public accountability over rapacious markets. It's good to have the Americans on board though, of course, many of the States have been very active throughout on the climate front. So, that seems like good news. However, Biden's plans are likely to be resisted by Republicans whether Trump remains on the scene or not. So there is, as you might expect, good and bad news.

Recently on TV I caught the news that several more countries, including China, had now accepted the target of nil net use of carbon by 2050. China still burns a lot of coal but it also has a huge number of hydrogen powered cars planned. When China changes direction it is inclined to surprise us one way or the other. This is surely some good news.

There is other good news. Here the government has plans to spend £12bn on climate change. By 2030 there will be a quadruple increase in electricity production from wind power; enough to power every house in the country. £550m will be spent on new nuclear power. A "super highway" of power cables is planned to run from the off shore coasts of Scotland to the South of England, the longest "super highway" of its kind in the world. So long as we stay close to Scotland that is good news. However, of the £12bn spend, only £3bn is new money and other European countries plan to spend much more. For example, France plans to spend £27bn on green investment. PWC forecasts that to achieve the accepted targets by 2050 this country will need to spend £400bn on green projects.

I suppose there will always be contrary actions for short term objectives. Examples are the scrapping of the “zero-carbon houses standard” for new builds presumably in response to the aims of developers and the need to build homes faster. Again, recently permission was given for the opening of a coal mine in Cumberland, surely a reversal of policy. Whilst the future of Gatwick is uncertain, I understand that the third runway at Heathrow is likely to go ahead. Such inconsistencies underline the temptation to follow outmoded short-term priorities. Whether for individuals or governments it is hard to adopt new values necessary for current problems. Serious problems require hard, imaginative thinking. However, like the married couple, mankind is very “set in its ways” and traditional values.

NUCLEAR: Power Stations carry risks and the problem of disposing of waste, but it is light on the use of carbon. Sellafield now has a programme for reprocessing used fuel and ensuring its supply chain is low on the use of carbon. That was good news to me.

CARS: The industry has been led by Toyota in the introduction of hybrid cars some years ago. More expensive makes are now glad to take advantage of developments made by others and catch up to date. The government has reduced the time scale for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars to 2030. EVs and hybrids accounted for 4.4% of car production in 2019 but that is now 12.1%, a good start for a take-off.

There are now 19,487 electric charging points in the UK. There are 68 points per 100,000 people in London but nationally the number is only 29, and for Yorkshire and Humber area, for example, there is only 18. But this is nowhere near enough to support the use of electric cars.

The price of electric cars is very high compared with petrol ones (£30,000 or more) but running costs are much lower. I have heard it said that it would take years to recover the carbon used in their production but this may not be the case when green, wind farm electricity is more widely used in manufacture.

FORESTS: Deforestation is estimated to cause 11% of world greenhouse gasses but that undervalues the reduction of carbon absorption from the lost trees. Also, once cleared, the land is used for cattle and agriculture, giving off gas. Almost as an aside it also destroys many species and biodiversity. The government plans to build “an alliance of countries” to protect global forests by requiring users of carbon to show that their products have not derived from illegal (and perhaps legal also) destruction of forests. We can anticipate that the countries of such forests will try to find ways round such countervailing action. Time will tell whether such action is effective.

Here we now know that wetlands apparently are better at absorbing carbon than trees and worse in emitting it when their gorse and heather cover is burnt for the new shoots favoured by grouse before they are shot for fun. The Royal Household has recognised the problem but the commercial shoots go on as usual.

DEVELOPMENT: The West has in recent years, reduced its carbon footprint apparently significantly. This looks like good news. However, this has been a side effect of buying cheaper products previously made in the West from Far East sources

thereby increasing carbon use there. These are not the kind of reductions which advance the global cause of reducing the use of carbon.

Again, Australia exports much coal and declares that the global effects are the responsibility of consuming nations. Greece is opening large coal mines. When in dire straits, this poor country received little aid from the EU, and feels it is entitled to develop its economy by the use of its new coal resources. In promoting world co-operation such situations need to be dealt with effectively but taking account of the consequences.

At home these days new building takes place more and more in rural areas. This increases the need for transport and the increased burning of carbon. So policies must be revisited to ensure their aims are compatible with the over-riding requirement to meet climate challenges.

TECHNOLOGY: We saw from the article on the British Air Industry (see the March 2020 magazine) that its case for reaching a net nil carbon position by 2050 lent heavily on the creation of new fuels and technical advances which are no better than speculation. Such future technological progress is to be welcomed but plans should not assume it will come to pass. We have to plan progress on the basis of what we can do now. If helpful technology should emerge that may perhaps enable us to recover some of the carbon already in the atmosphere. We also saw that a paper pretending to bring about nil net carbon use not only wanted the government to cover one third of its continued use of carbon but intended to expand business by 70%. It also expects large amounts of state financial aid. This cautions us on allowing those with other interests to formulate plans and makes it quite clear that progress will not be made without regulations and sanctions.

I hope the above examples illustrate that some progress is being made in at least some spheres. We can draw some hope from that but this should not cause us to underestimate the sea change required if targets are to be met.

Currently we are all concerned first with the health effects of the virus and a close second with the need to recover economically. Climate change is for tomorrow, maybe. Looking at TV news I have been struck by the importance of the entertainment industry. This promotes the question: "in the long term which is the most important, entertainment or survival?" That sounds dramatic but if we place any regard on science that is a real consideration. It is not, of course, just a simple choice. One way or another entertainment will go on. Solving climate change effectively is somewhat different.

The point here I think is that in the field of climate change it is not sufficient to make what would normally be termed radical changes, nor that voluntary change can be expected to meet the case. Change has to be sufficient and enforced to meet the actual need. Anything less may be likened to no more than palliative care. This is not an area which can be left to the market or private initiatives. Whilst some private companies have shown foresight in making "green" advances, the necessary change will not occur without central planning supported by sanctions and local involvement.

The UK economy is currently about 10% below its pre pandemic level. The huge hand outs were essential not only to prevent hardship but to keep up effective demand to prevent further losses of output, income and a downward spiral of economic activity. This it is said, cannot go on. The consequent debt and need for repayment cannot be sustained. It is a good job such views were not current during the Second World War. We then incurred debt especially to the US as if there was no tomorrow for the very good reason that without it there would be no tomorrow. It's not so different now both for the pandemic and the cost of countering climate change. For myself, (certainly, as I hear you say, I shall not be here to repay debt) I don't think this debt is such a big issue. For example, if the Treasury borrows from the Bank of England all that is necessary is the opening of an account in the Bank's books to fund the spending by government and then at a later date perhaps, to write it off like a bad debt (shock horror). That would be no more than a book entry. The debt has gone. Certainly there are other considerations such as an inflationary effect but thus far no such inflation has taken place nor need it necessarily do so. Furthermore without deficit financing recoveries take a very long time and tax takes are insufficient to allow repayment anyway.

But what I now say is not dependant on the above suggestion which many may find incredible. If we now generate demand simply by funding projects which return us to the rather unstable economy, so dependent on our own consumption choices that we now have, we shall find it very hard to find the finance to fund a New Green Deal such as Biden has in mind. On the other hand if we infuse real investment into existing and new green actions then recovery can be effected alongside a reordering of the economy. This, as well as addressing our climate commitments, might just be a way of making our way in the world economy instead of relying on income from financial services. It might even make some parts of the national economy sustainable!! New areas will certainly include the increased generation of electricity from off-shore and in-shore wind farms but would also encompass the development of heat from "in the ground sources" especially for new buildings of all kinds. It would cover ways of improving the effectiveness of power through such means as modern insulation and investment in hydrogen power. This is the area where our attention should be centred to rebalance the economy away from the burning of carbon. Without that the rest, though desirable in itself, will be wasted effort.

The pandemic was a world-wide disaster. On combatting climate change we also need to look for a world-wide response. "Your house is on fire!" says Greta Thunberg, thereby denouncing our response attitudes to date like a good Old Testament prophet. Can we, like Leslie, leave the smoke till tomorrow? Or like Tony shall we drop off to sleep rather than grapple with unwelcome news? Mankind has done that for about thirty years.

Shall we just go on as before with our dreams and holiday plans and hope the smoke alarm, whose battery, by the way, has run out, will wake us when action seems really necessary? That's all a bit silly. When your house is on fire you put the fire out now.

Harry Ingram

A Scout's Promise

The eleven year old boy, Dick, his parents and elder sister lived in a large house at the end of a lengthy drive bordered by flower beds. It had six bedrooms, three bathrooms, two receptions, dining and kitchen down stairs.

"Dick, clear up this mess in your room and move as much furniture as possible into the corridor. There is a man coming at the weekend to decorate," said the boy's mother. "But it was decorated only last year!" said Dick. "I don't like the colour. It's too loud and it was a bad choice. Leave room for the home-help to get by to make the beds and Hoover," said the mother. "I quite like it as it is. You're always changing things. I shan't be able to find anything again when it's done." "Well, you have far too much rubbish," said his mother. "It's a golden opportunity to get rid of some".

Dick sighed, knowing this was one battle he could not win. He was due to be away at Whitsun Scout camp for the long weekend. Whatever he said, his room would be painted and his things sorted. All he could do was to hide things he most wanted to keep. His best hope was that his father was due to get a new car at the weekend, though his present one was only two years old. It would be the latest model and his father would enjoy learning to use all the new gimmicks and it would have to be taken for a drive. The family attention would be focussed on the car and they might forget to sort out his possessions.

Meanwhile the girl fitted her key in the Yale lock and entered her terraced house. She could hear her mother singing upstairs probably making the beds. She was always singing. "Put the kettle on and we'll have a cuppa before we get the evening meal ready," she called down. Anita switched on the kettle and put tea in the pot. She always enjoyed these chats with her mother though what they talked about besides school she could rarely remember. Now her other priority was home work and she began to spread her books over the dining room table.

"What have you got this time?" asked her mother, now from the little kitchen. "For the weekend I have an essay to write which should be good, but there is a load of maths which is a nightmare." "I've told you before; ask your dad for help, he's good at maths." "Yes, I know" said Anita, "but he seems so tired at the weekend it seems unfair to ask him." "He won't mind. He enjoys helping you," said her mother.

The lorry had stopped at the gate to the wood and the troop of boy scouts now had to walk some uncertain way to the camp site. Dick had a huge pack he found hard to lift to his shoulders but his companion, Roger, who lived in the same road and was the same age but much slighter, had an even larger one and another bag to carry in his

hand. Dick stayed back with him. It was no surprise that soon they were lagging behind the rest. The Patrol Second, who Dick thought was a bit of a bully, dropped back and shouted to them to keep up or they could get lost. Then he moved quickly back to the head of the troop.

They just had to have a rest and when they restarted Dick took Roger's bag to give him a chance. It seemed full of tinned food, for "emergencies," and Dick wondered whether it would stretch his arms till they were like an ape's. By now the troop was out of sight. Then Brian, their patrol leader or PL, came walking smartly back. "What have you got there, the kitchen sink?" he asked. It was a reasonable question. Roger had all manner of mugs and gismos hanging from his back pack. Brian took the pack on to one shoulder behind his own one, and Roger retrieved his bag from Dick and off they set. Brian chatted to them in a friendly manner.

"You know camping is not about making the camp site like home. Camping is about making do with the least you can manage with and creating things you need from where you are. It's learning to look after yourself and others with the minimum. You have to learn how to keep dry and warm at night, light a fire and cook your food. It seems an adventure now to sleep in a tent but you will learn how to camp without a tent. So next time bring the least you need, which is what was on that list I gave you. And nothing else."

The boys liked Brian. He seemed to know everything and how to do everything. He was sharp when needed and friendly at other times. His patrol was a team but every individual mattered. They hoped they would be like him some day.

"Well, you see it was mother," said Roger. "She seemed to think of everything I might need and put that in. I've even got Welly boots and it hasn't rained for weeks." Brian smiled at them. "My mother used to be like that and it was hard to get her to think differently. But that is what you have to do," he said.

That Friday evening Anita and her father sat head-to-head both frowning. Anita always wished her dad would tell her the answer but he never did. Instead he asked innumerable questions. She knew this would lead to the answer and she might then even be able to answer other questions on her own, but this process required concentration and was very tiring. The following morning she addressed the subject for her essay and found herself wandering off in a day dream. But suddenly it came all together and she knew she could write something both original and interesting. Then her pen raced over the paper even though she really knew that would result in many spelling mistakes. It was fun and satisfying.

Then the three of them were off in the afternoon for a drive and walk in the country. What she liked most about it was that her parents would ask her opinion and sometimes there would be a good argument.

The wood was called Hind Leap Warren which conjured up all sorts of pictures of deer. Through the trees they saw smoke from a fire and that led to a glade with lots of tents roughly in a wide circle. Each tent had a small fire in front of it surrounded by logs to sit on and cooking implements suspended from sticks. Small boys were sliding down a steep rope way from high up in the trees using a wheel and a suspended arm. The boys clearly found this very exciting. Anita wondered whether her girlfriends at school would be brave enough to do this or would want to. She watched and wished she could have a try.

Dick thoroughly enjoyed his weekend under canvass. It was all so different from life at home and school. Leaders showed you how to do things once and then expected you to get on and do them. But it was not all fun. He burnt the patrol's porridge. That morning the patrol did not get its porridge; a serious omission. Brian said he had to eat a plateful and think he was lucky he did not have to eat the lot. Half way through Brian relented and said Dick could leave the rest and need only clean the burnt billy can. That proved not to be a soft option for the now black porridge was baked on the bottom.

One test was axemanship. They were shown how to split wood for kindling. The next day there was a test. It had been raining and the wood was wet. The axe could slip and cut you. You were supposed to hold the wood in one hand and strike with the other. That was to stop the wood flying all over the place which was dangerous for others. Then Dick realised that what he was really afraid of was that he might hit his hand. Most of the lads with similar concerns laid the stick on the ground and took a swing at it, often missing altogether and frequently slicing the stick so that it flew all over the place. When it was his turn Dick had a firm log to chop on, held the stick with his left hand and chopped with the right. It worked. Later the results were given out and Dick was surprised and delighted to come first. The judge was scathing about some of the efforts. Encouragement was only given when it was deserved.

There were activities all the time: the intense excitement of the Flag Race when you crept from bush to bush with the final excitement of a dash to take the flag. After the first night he had no trouble getting to sleep. Dick and everyone else was exhausted. But it was very relaxing and peaceful to wake in the morning before the patrol woke up and perhaps listen to the rain falling quietly on the canvas of the tent. At the camp fire he was lost in the volume of the singing surrounding him so that he felt overwhelmed by a burst of fellowship.

Anita was dressed in a clean uniform and was accompanied by mum and dad to the dreaded "Open Night", when the parents discussed reports with the teachers. Most of her subjects had marks which were middle of the road and she was relieved when the rather stern male teacher, who took her for maths, remarked that she tried hard and was "coming on well". English was a surprise. She had a high mark and her teacher placed emphasis on her imagination. "Actually we don't teach imagination very much," she said. "I guess Anita gets it from her reading. But Anita you must watch your spelling. You are careless because you are concentrated on content. The answer is to

draft and then rewrite the essay into your book. You will even improve on some of your phrases and your hand writing will be clearer. A good result takes time.

Dance was another surprise. After some remarks the teacher asked Anita to wait at the side of the room. Then she told her parents that it was quite evident to her that Anita's inner happiness already came through in her dance. It was a gift they should think carefully about.

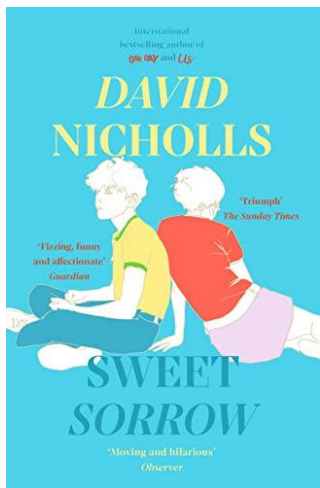
Dick arrived home to be welcomed by his sister with the news that he stank. A bit surprised, he replied, "well it can't be worse than that stuff you spray on yourself when you are going out with Phillip" (her boyfriend). His mother ordered him to the bath and Dick admitted to himself that he enjoyed basking in the hot water very much. But he was sorry it was such a long time to summer camp and he hoped it would not clash with the family holiday in some foreign hotel. That would be a disaster.

That Sunday they all went to church. The one the troop attended once a month was the same as Anita went to with her parents. Flags were handed in, hymns sung and then a somewhat heavy sermon suffered in silence. But some words rang a bell with Dick and Anita. The vicar spoke of life as a journey with ups and downs; for some the pursuit of happiness. He worked up from that to the nature of happiness. It seemed to be his view that most people were striving for perhaps wealth, possessions, ambition, position or travel to find happiness, but often failed to achieve it. Perhaps, he said, happiness depended on one of two things. Some people, he said, were just happy in spite of circumstances. It seemed to come from within. Perhaps it was from the genes or maybe from a conviction, or the nature of their upbringing. Others, without seeking it, encountered happiness perhaps almost as a by-product of endeavour achieved, or through helping others. Perhaps a good turn for someone else brought a feelings of happiness from having done something good and unselfish. Often happiness came unannounced.

Dozing in his pew Dick thought of the scout promise about "helping others at all times," which now made sense after all. He had felt good after helping Roger when he was in need and had gained a loyal friend. He had to admit he felt even better when Brian carried Rogers pack as well as his own. Anita thought about her mum.

Book Review

This month: Sweet Sorrow



This book, written by the best-selling author David Nicholls is about a man named Charlie, who, on the edge of starting married life, is invited to a reunion where he will get to meet his first love once again.

The book looks back to the time in the mid-nineties when Charlie was coming of age. It tells the story of how Charlie met his first love, Fran Fisher and how their time together changed and shaped his future.

When we meet Charlie, he has had a difficult few years with his parents and the author does a great job of really helping you to empathise with the character. Whilst I couldn't identify with his circumstances, I really felt like Charlie was in a difficult situation which has made things hard on him. I really felt his sense of abandonment and despair.

I spent the whole book rooting for Charlie, wishing things would go well for him. Shouting at the book when he made poor decisions and wanting to give him a hug when things were going his way.

It covers the topic of young love beautifully, the awkwardness, the anticipation and you won't be able to help but to reminisce on your own experience. The book also makes references back to the nineties in a way which is enjoyable to remember, mix tapes and good Saturday night TV, as well as other things.

In the book, the young lovers are putting on a play of Romeo and Juliet and the book interweaves Shakespearean quotes throughout to make the comparisons between the current day and the challenges in the play. This isn't a technique I have seen in David Nicholls' books before and I don't feel it adds to the story, but it also doesn't take anything away.

In Summary, this is a really easy read, something to take you away from the troubles of the world today for a few hours.

Reader recipes

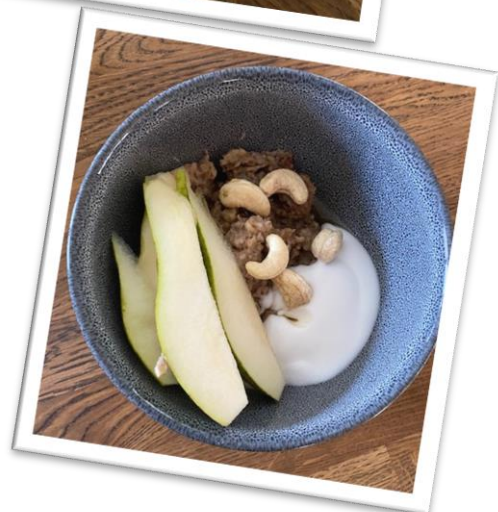
Cashew, Pear and Chocolate Baked Oats

Ingredients:-

- 1 tbsp of ground flax seeds
- 3 tbsp of boiling water
- 200g rolled oats
- 1 tsp of baking powder
- 1 tbsp of cocoa powder
- 2 bananas, peeled
- 3 ripe pears, cored and thinly sliced
- 300ml of cashew milk (or nut milk of preference)
- 4 tbsp of cashews roasted
- 3 Coconut milk yoghurt to serve.

Method:-

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/ 180°C Fan/ 400°F/ gas mark 6. Grease the casserole dish or cake tin.
2. Place the ground flax seed and water in a small bowl and set aside for at least 3 minutes. In another bowl combine oats, baking powder and cocoa powder.
3. Put the bananas, half the pears, milk, flax mixture into a blender and blitz until smooth. Pour into the dry mix and stir to thoroughly combine.
4. Pour half the oat mixture into the dish or tin, layer with half the remaining pear and cover with the rest of the oat mixture. Bake in the oven for 35-40 minutes until just set. Leave to cool in the dish for 10 minutes.
5. To serve, spoon out into bowls and top with the remaining slices of pear, roasted cashew nuts and a dollop of yoghurt. It is also delicious served cold and will keep in the fridge for 2 days.



This recipe has come from Fearne Cotton's Happy Vegan Recipe Book. We would really like to hear from you with your favourite recipes. It really can be anything. Please email them to magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk.

Puzzles

February Sudoku Puzzle

| | | | | | | | | |
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| | 5 | | 9 | | | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 | | 4 | 3 | 8 | | | 1 | |
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| 3 | 8 | 9 | | | 5 | | 4 | |

January Solution

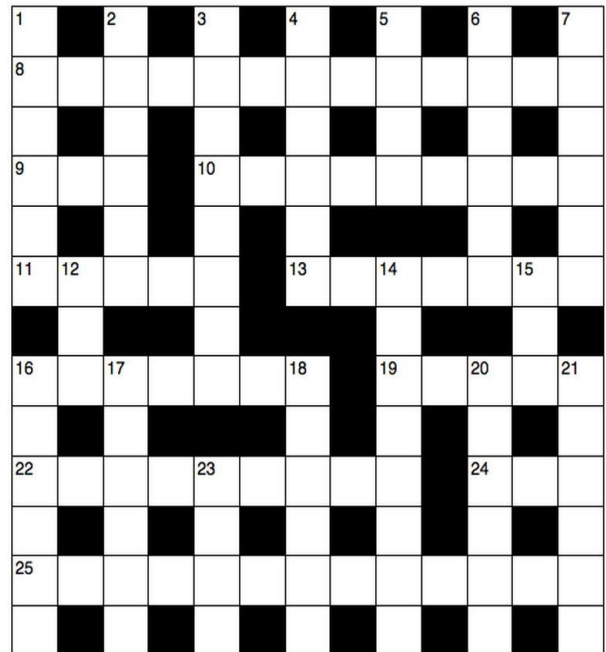
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| 8 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 |
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| 9 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 8 |
| 4 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| 3 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| 7 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 6 |

February Crossword

Biblical references are from the New International Version

Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)
 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)
 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)
 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)
 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)
 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)
 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)
 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)
 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1)
 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)



Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

ANSWERS TO JANUARY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Cock 3 Shackles 8 Play 9 Paradise 11 Faithfully 14 Enmesh 15 Unseen 17 Armageddon 20 Benjamin 21 Beri 22 Capitals 23 USPG

DOWN: 1 Cup of tea 2 Charisma 4 Heap up 5 Challenged 6 Lois 7 Slew 10 The Servant 12 Lewdness 13 Unending 16 Daniel 18 BBFC 19 Snap



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