

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

8 November 2020

Third Sunday before Advent

Welcome to the Remembrance Sunday edition of the Viral Bulletin.

Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.

For links to information and worship during the coronavirus restrictions
please visit: www.northburychurches.org.uk



Fornham All Saints on Remembrance Sunday

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Remembrance

We have at home, amongst a folder of memorabilia, a copy of two postcards, sent to my grandmother in July 1915 (shortly after my father was born) by her only and younger brother Stanley Goodchild. The postcards show young men in the uniform of the Suffolk Yeomanry in a formal group pose, perhaps as they completed their training. I presume Stanley is one of them.

There's no knowing how many of those young men came back - how many of them survived the First World War. But Stanley didn't. He was shot through the head and killed instantly by a sniper in the Dardanelles on 29 November that same year, at his post, just before midnight. His friend, stretcher bearer Tom Kent, went for a bag of earth to put down where he had fallen, and was himself shot through the heart. Stanley and Tom didn't come back.

They were buried together. No medals. No particular gallantry. Just a sense of duty, of pity and of waste - with hindsight, a sense of futility and human folly. And a sense that, in war, any war, war then, war now, everyone loses something in some way. And everyone's moral high ground has blood on it.

So where is God in that? And how do we respond now? I'm not sure it's possible for me to answer those questions.

But I want to think a little bit about two people I happened to know who did come back from war, and whose lives may begin to suggest the shape of an answer. Two very different people - one from the First and one from the Second World War. I can only say a little bit about their experience because, like so many who returned, they only said a very little themselves.

Herbert Hooper was for many years a member of the congregation at St John's in Bury St Edmunds and lived into his nineties. When I knew him, in his later years, he lived at first in Peckham Street and later at Northgate Lodge.

He lied - successfully - about his age to volunteer in 1914 or 1915. For his pains I think we can assume he went to hell and back. Because by 1916 he was at the Somme, thigh deep in mud, where his commanding officer and a colleague cooked up a scheme to reduce the total number of casualties. Their companies were meant to alternate periods at the front with, extremely and inevitably, high losses each time. But they decided to toss for it, so that one group would do two stints and the other none at all. Herbert's officer lost.

In spite of that, and in spite (or perhaps because) of being injured twice, Herbert survived. He ended the war as a driver, which pointed him towards his later career. But Herbert did not live the easy life he surely deserved. Both his children died well before he did - one in infancy and one in middle age - and in his later years he lived through the distressing final decline of his beloved wife Eva.

For quite a time I was Herbert's visitor for St John's. He didn't have a particularly high profile at Church - he wasn't on the PCC or anything like that. He was simply a person - loyally, regularly - in the pew. Easy to take for granted, you might say, but, quietly and unobtrusively, he was a sign amongst us of God's grace and what human response to that grace can be. Whatever he had been through, or was going through, he was unfailingly kind, cheerful, welcoming, pleased to see you, courteous, thankful, uncomplaining ... just a gracious example of a life well lived.

Peter Fahy - the second person I want to think about - was my colleague when I worked for the Anglican Stewardship Association. He also lived into his nineties. During the 1930s, when he was in his teens, he considered himself to be a pacifist.

Nevertheless, in World War Two, when he was old enough, he joined the RAF. He flew Spitfires, but not in the Battle of Britain, he was just a bit too young for that. Instead, Peter did photographic reconnaissance. They installed cameras and took the guns out of his aeroplane, filling the space with high octane fuel so that it could fly him to Berlin and back to take photographs. Unarmed for hours at high altitude over Nazi-occupied Europe, he admitted that it was frightening to know that "there were people out there trying to kill me."



Peter would self-deprecatingly deflect talk about all this into humour, simply remarking that long journeys in an ice-cold cockpit necessitated a switch from drinking beer to gin-and-tonic. Peter had a distinguished career in the RAF after the war, rising to the rank of Wing Commander while still in his thirties. But in the late nineteen-fifties his life went through a considerable change. Without in any way disowning his past (he always remained a staunch RAF person) in the late 1950s he bought his way out and sought a different way of life.

This change was perhaps his equivalent of the Galilean shore, and it had a number of ingredients which were very specific and personal to him. One was a growing awareness of the responsibilities of fatherhood. Another was the spiritual reading he set about undertaking. The fresh New Testament translations of J B Phillips

were very important to him, along with the same author's 'Your God is too Small' and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 'Cost of Discipleship'. You couldn't be with Peter for very long before he told you: "There's no such thing as cheap grace."

Peter took hold of old-style parish stewardship work, gave it a sharply violent shake (which did not make him very popular in some circles) and injected some theology with bite into it. It was Peter's profound conviction and insight that proper Christian giving must in the end be based on thanksgiving to God and not upon the needs of the institutional church.

And more than once I heard Peter remark that it could be more frightening to talk to a typical Church of England parish about generous, thankful Christian giving, than to sit cold and alone in his unarmed Spitfire traversing Nazi German skies for hours on end. He was not entirely joking.

So we return hesitatingly to our questions. Where is God in this? And how do we respond now?

God is where we know Jesus has been before us - in passion, in death, in resurrection. God is in the yearning for lost loved ones, in the courage of calls answered, duty done, comfort offered, succour given, sacrifices made, cries for help heeded. God is in the love still lavished on the lost.

And God is in the grace of life fulfilled beyond war, life where new calls can be answered, and the foundation of such calls acknowledged ...
... in thankfulness, humility, generosity and love.

Adrian Mann

REMEMBRANCE

'We Will Remember Them' We hear the cry
Beneath the cold November sky
Around memorials in the land
People in village, town, and city stand
Remembering those who died in war
While children wonder what it's for
As grim faced men wearing medals bright
Explain to them the sound and sight
Of battles past and how men fought
To give them life, and how they ought
To remember all names written there
And also those who still need our care

Beryl Dykes

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES

We are sorry - under the terms of the current coronavirus lockdown public worship cannot take place in our churches. *Please see below for details of our Zoom gathering, worship being live-streamed on Facebook and uploaded on to our website, and churches open for private prayer.*

***CHURCH ZOOM GATHERING**

Everyone is welcome to join our Church Zoom Gathering at 11am* on Sundays.

To do so, please email Claire for the link at clairerose1953@gmail.com

***LIVE-STREAMED WORSHIP**

The Parish Eucharist from St John's is now being live-streamed every Sunday at 11am* on Facebook @StJohnsBSE

The service is then posted onto the website

www.northburychurches.org.uk

OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

St John the Evangelist, Bury St Edmunds 11am-3pm daily
Collection point available for donations to the Gatehouse foodbank

St Mary, West Stow 9-10.30am on Wednesdays
and 10-11am on 1st and 3rd Sundays.

For access at other times please contact

Ian Hobley (01284 728745) or Paul Luke (01284 729654)

Fornham All Saints open every Sunday

St Andrew, Timworth contact Alison Pettitt (01284 728379)

St Lawrence, Lackford contact Harry Lidster (01284 728876)

Fornham St Martin contact Beryl Dykes (01284 704109)

or David Yates (01284 705157)

St George, Bury St Edmunds contact the Revd Val Gagen (01284 361963)

St Mary, Culford & St Catherine, Flempton

contact numbers are in the porch

*** beginning at 10.55am on Remembrance Sunday**



All Souls' Service November 2020

All Saints' Bury St Edmunds

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

*Thanks to **Steve Gray** who draws our attention to these last two paragraphs of an address by Stephen Cottrell, the new Archbishop of York. Steve suggests that the last paragraph offers words which could well provide a sign for our church doorways.*

The problems of the world, be it racism, poverty or environmental catastrophe begin in the human heart which so easily turns in on itself – what we call sin – pulling up the drawbridge on the rest of humanity. It is fuelled by the unjust and oppressive structures of self-serving systems. But it can be changed. And this change comes when we behold the beauty and peace of Jesus Christ and are drawn into this strange, motley, and yes muddled, but determined to love each other and love the world, Church of Jesus Christ.

Let's put this sign up outside our churches. Let's wear it on our sleeves and declare it to the world: Everyone is welcome. Here is a place and here is a people where you will be safe, where you will be loved, where you will be accepted. This is where you will find hope for the world and a new vision for a new humanity. Enter here and be changed. Not into somebody else, but into the beautiful person you are meant to be. Then join with us in changing the world.

KitKat NEWS *from the FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION*

Back in June the Fairtrade Foundation shared the deeply disappointing news that KitKat bars would cease to use Fairtrade ingredients. Since then you may have seen, or even been part of, the huge public reaction against this decision. Over a quarter of a million people signed a petition started by Joanna Pollard, a Fairtrade campaigner in Yorkshire, asking Nestlé to think again. MPs have spoken out too, with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Fairtrade condemning this decision strongly, after grilling Nestlé representatives in Parliament.



Despite this public response, Nestlé have not changed their decision and KitKat ceased to be Fairtrade in October. Nevertheless, we have been heartened to see so many people standing with the farmers affected by this decision.

There's been some progress, too.

Nestlé's recent engagement with the Ivorian Fair Trade Network (RICE), a representative group for farmers in Côte d'Ivoire, has given farmers a stronger voice as the changes are implemented.

And we believe the mass public pressure has helped bring about greater transparency over how the new arrangements will work for farmers, including a greater degree of financial security for cocoa farmers under the new arrangements.

Although we're pleased to see some of the greater commitment to cocoa farmers, we remain concerned that the new deal will still not match the same level of financial security for farmers and their organisations, and will reduce the level of control they have to invest in their communities and businesses into the future.

This is first and foremost a worrying time for those farmers affected by Nestlé's decision on KitKat, which serves as a stark reminder of how important are the power and financial security Fairtrade offers.

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches Google Group

Why not join us to keep in touch at this difficult time?

We would like to include as many people as possible in our Google Group, so that more people can be kept in touch and hear about what we are doing at a time when most other forms of communication aren't possible.

People in the group receive e-mails, but only those sent by others in the group. The group is managed by Claire Rose of All Saints', Bury St Edmunds.

If you would like to add your e-mail to the group, please send your request to clairerose1953@gmail.com

and Claire will send you an invitation to join.

Your e-mail address will not be added until you click the button in the invitation to say that you have accepted, so you can change your mind and not click. You have one week after receiving the invitation to join to click the Accept button. After that it will time out.

If at any time you want to leave the group you can Unsubscribe using the button on the bottom (or sometimes top) of incoming emails.

If you say that you wish to subscribe and do not get an invitation please check in your Spam as some computers will block the invitation. It might help if you put the group e-mail address, nbtnews@googlegroups.com into your contacts, then it should be recognised as a safe place from which to receive e-mails. If you have any questions please ask Claire, either by e-mail or ring 01284 724497.

It would be very good if everyone with an e-mail address could join the group and be kept informed and up-to-date on what's happening amongst our Lark Valley and North Bury Churches at this time.

DO YOU HAVE any photos of your church and people which you can submit (with permission) as an email attachment?

Items for the VIRAL BULLETIN are very welcome and can include photographs and illustrations. Please send them to Adrian Mann: adrian.mann@btinternet.com