

WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



June 2021

Covering Thoughts

*'The river is within us and the sea all around us' wrote T. S. Eliot in the
Dry Salvages.*

*I reflect on this as I pause on a stepping stone in the middle of the little brook
in Warren Copse in Holton. The sound of tumbling water soothes my
thoughts and I dream of standing on a beach with the endless sounds of the
waves. It is a long time since I have stood by the sea and sometimes the
longing to do so is overwhelming.*

*I expect all of us have missed many different things over this last year and
we may have to accept that some things will never be the same. We make
adjustments, find alternatives and hopefully discover that life is ok in the
present. However it is all too easy to become negative, even angry
sometimes, and hard to shift a dark mood.*

*Challenging myself to move out of this downward spiral by completing the
phrase 'It is good that...' proves for me to be helpful and liberating. The
sentences become numerous, firstly serious but then also humorous, and
slowly the dark mood is lifted.*

*Later in the poem Eliot writes of 'The menace and caress of wave that
breaks on water'.*

*The sea also has its moods and my task last week was painting from memory
an experience of a stormy beach. **It is good that** I could lose myself in the
exercise, and **it is good that** the painting was done in the warm and the dry.
Try this yourself and see how it goes for you!*

Christine

~*~

Pastoral Letter

I wonder if you are a fan of *Call the Midwife*? Now in its tenth series, the show has moved beyond the memoirs of Jennifer Worth, whose real-life experiences as a midwife in Poplar, East London, working with an Anglican religious order, formed the basis of the first couple of series, but its episodes are still true-to-life as well as being entertaining (in my opinion!). They give a flavour of the period, with mention of topical events (the excitement of England's 1966 World Cup win in the current series – those were the days!), but also cover more serious issues of the time, which are often also relevant today: attitudes to race, abortion, homosexuality, and Government cover-up have all been tackled and may make us wonder how far our attitudes have moved on.

An important element of the show, I find, is the faith of the religious sisters; this is not overplayed, but forms the foundation and rationale for their presence and work in an underprivileged area of London. In recent stories, elderly Sister Monica Joan has suffered a crisis of faith. She questions the existence of God, of which she has been so certain. Her whole life has been governed by devotion to God: if God does not exist then her life has been wasted, she feels. She is empty and depressed, not attending the devotions of the convent, often keeping apart from the others. In the end, it is the miracle of new life and the birth process which re-engages Sr Monica Joan with her faith: there is an emergency and in advising a trainee midwife and afterwards contemplating the intricacy of the placenta, she sees again the wonder of creation and the God who is the creator.

In these difficult times we may not have had a “crisis of faith” as such, but may have needed prompts, things to hang on to, to remind us of God's love and presence: listening to hymns on Youtube whilst choosing for the services has been helpful to me (there are hundreds in all sorts of versions – type “hymns” into the search to find some); the beauty of gardens and the countryside (despite the rain!); Cara's reflections, the daily Thought for the Day, the noticeboard displays from Christine; our Zoom worship and the various reflections during the Easter season – all have been a blessing in different ways. We give thanks to those who have provided them and to God who has inspired them!

We pray that in the coming months, life will return to normal – or at least to “new normal” as the phrase was earlier in the pandemic. But may we continue to look for inspiration from the natural world, from our worship and prayer, and from one

another as we move into a new chapter of life for each of us and as a church community.

Love and prayers,

Pauline

Rev Pauline Main, Minister

~ ~ ~

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the members in Catherine & Robert Harding's pastoral group; Robert & Wendy Bailey, Charles & Sue Bennett, Annie & Dave Crosby-Williams, Elliot & Sebastian, David Herring, Angela & Rob Holdaway, Martin & Emma Jee, Ellen & Bob Webster

Also remember members of the Communications Team; Phyllis Williams, Christine Bainbridge, Debi Kidd, Moira Watson, Bobbie Stormont

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Two very important celebrations – reminder

Revd Colin Thompson Golden Jubilee Saturday 26 June

Colin celebrates the Golden Jubilee of his ordination on 19th June 1971 and as a church we want to celebrate this with him on Saturday 26th June with afternoon tea and a special service.

Church Anniversary Tea and Worship Service 11 July

Revd Tanya Rasmussen has accepted an invitation to preach at our Anniversary service. She will do so on Zoom from Hollis, New Hampshire on screen as part of a worship service in the church and optionally in your home. Because of the time difference this service will be at 5pm following an afternoon anniversary tea.

These will both be afternoon services. Details are still to be worked out how to accommodate as many as possible of us in the church buildings but with an option to join in by Zoom.

Please save these dates!

Phyllis Williams

'Quiz Walk' around Long Crendon

Have Fun for Falcon School!

'Open' until 15th July!



Still time to drive to the historic village of Long Crendon to follow the Falcon Quiz trail.

As restrictions ease, do offer a lift to others who might enjoy a stroll round the trail.

Help raise funds for a cause Wheatley URC feels moved to support.

It costs \$10 US per month per child in school fees and in this school area, this might be the whole income of a family for a month.

Our support goes towards building and furnishing classrooms and teachers' accommodation, school uniforms, educational materials and to help provide free or subsidised places.



Request your quiz pack from Rob Holdaway, holdawayr4a@gmail.com or phone 01844 202027. It will be sent to you by email or post in return for a **donation to the Falcon School**. Donations by direct bank transfer where possible, to Wheatley URC, reference 'Falcon Quiz'.

If you require further information on making a donation, please contact Chris Shelley, the Wheatley URC Treasurer, 01865-873908.

Let's Walk for Falcon!

Wheatley United Reformed Church

I've been looking at this picture of our church which seeks to show how we all play our part in our church, some in one ministry team and some in another, some in more than one, some more physically actively some contributing prayerfully, but all making valued and valuable contributions.



It has been tough to keep going through this year and it has needed creativity, tenacity, and willingness to embrace new challenges. We've made it through one of the hardest years that I can remember, and we aren't out of it yet. We've done so by encouraging one other, by small acts of kindness, by generosity of time and talents, by looking after each other and by sheer dogged determination. In church-speak we call this 'pastoral care' and 'the ministry of all believers', shown by each and every one of our church community, to other members of the community and also in our wider community.

We have discovered that we can do so much more than we thought we could do, we have been able to reach out across the world in a way that few of us could imagine less than 2 years ago. But all this is because chapel folk were doing those things with the means at their disposal and have passed on to us a phenomenal system to support us in this work.

The framework we use to support each other and encourage each other to reach beyond ourselves is our network of ministry teams with the elders meeting drawing all these different aspects of our lives together into one multi-faceted, multi-coloured multi-talented whole.

This model of working together works best when we have a good, strong, team at the heart making sure we are pulling together and supporting each other.

We need several more people to join the eldership for the next 3 years, members of faith and commitment who care for this community and can bring their own unique God-given gifts to the team.

Can I ask you to ask yourself seriously this month who in our community might have the gifts to serve this community as an elder or whether this might even be you?

Let us all think prayerfully about which members of our community might be

needed at this time to serve as elders and ask if their name might be brought forward to the whole community.

Are you being called to serve as an elder of Wheatley URC?

Phyllis Williams



Discernment process for choosing Elders 2021

As was the case in the earliest days of the church, we choose some of our number to work on our behalf, ensuring worship is held regularly and properly, providing pastoral care to members of the church meeting and friends of the church, and taking care of the resources of the church (money, building and so on). We call these people Elders and believe their role is sufficiently important in the life of the church, to hold them in that esteem recognised as 'ordination'. The process of discerning Elders is important, and the responsibility of the whole church expressed through the Church meeting, the fundamental body by which we in the URC govern ourselves. All members of the church are entitled to attend and vote at Church Meeting. This process is designed to encourage all of us to take part and focuses on discernment and a sense of call.

The whole Church community is challenged to consider whether they themselves, or another has the gifts, talents and skills to enable them to fulfil the role of Elder and everyone is encouraged and given time to take part in the discernment process. If anyone would like to discuss a nomination or find out more about what it means to be an elder, then please speak to an elder or the minister. A leaflet outlining the role and responsibilities to Wheatley URC is available and training can be offered.

Elders are called to serve actively for three years, after which time, whilst they remain an elder, they retire from actively serving for at least a year, after which time they might be called to serve again.

We do not have a fixed number of active elders, but ideally for a church of this size we ought to have about 8 - 10 so we are seeking several returning or new elders. This is a great opportunity for us to refresh our eldership team as well as allow those who have worked so hard for our church for so many years to rest, refresh and reconnect.

This year, there are **two** serving Elders due to complete their current terms in September: **Laurence Devlin** and **Tom Goss**. We are all extremely grateful for all

that they have contributed during their service as elders. Those continuing as elders are: for another year – **Liz Barry**, and for 2 more years – **Elaine Matejtschuk**, in addition to the Church Secretary, **Phyllis Williams** and the Church Treasurer, **Chris Shelley**.

We continue with the same process we used last year so please see the outline below:

JUNE: During the month of June, the congregation are invited to consider prayerfully who they think God may be calling to the role of Elder for the next three years. The only criterion is that ***the person nominated must be a member of Wheatley URC***. Anyone who worships with us as well as church members may suggest a church member either by completing a printed nomination slip (below) and dropping it in the mailbox at 17 Bell Lane or at the church or by emailing secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk or by telephone 01865 876288. The nomination does not need signatures but when nominating please speak to the nominee first and ask them to take time to reflect carefully before responding. The deadline for nominations is **Sunday 27th June**

JULY: At their meeting in July, Elders will prayerfully consider the names of everyone who has been nominated and bring these before the July Church Meeting so that we may all pray for guidance during the summer in discerning those who are being called at this time. In this way the whole church with God's help will share in the prayerful discernment of our Elders.

SEPTEMBER: At the Annual Church Meeting in **September** church members will be invited to consider the names of those whose call to Eldership has been discerned, and, after an opportunity for prayerful reflection, to approve those discerned to be called at this time.

Phyllis Williams

Wheatley URC Elders Nomination 2021 – Please submit before Sunday 27th June to 17 Bell Lane or at the church or by emailing secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk or by phoning 01865 876288.

I would like to nominate _____

to consider serving as an elder of Wheatley URC.

I have mentioned to them that I wish to put their name forward.

Science Corner – Malaria

There has recently been a very rapid development of vaccines for coronavirus, but not so for malaria where vaccine development has been hit and miss for some 37 years! However, there is now good news on the horizon and vaccine field trials are coming to fruition after several years testing in East and West Africa.

This can't come too soon as malaria sickens some 200 million people globally each year, killing at least 400,000 – mainly children. Malaria causes many problems for children such as anaemia, organ failure, jaundice and liver complications.

Since 2019, Kenya, Ghana and Malawi have taken part in a pilot programme which if successful will soon be rolled out to infants across Africa. Further to this, it has just been announced that another vaccine has been developed by Oxford University which is claimed to be 77 percent effective.

It is possible that Kenya will be targeted for vaccine rollout as in the west, near Lake Victoria, malaria prevalence can reach 40 % - one of the highest in the world. The use of chemically treated bed nets for mosquito protection when sleeping has been hit and miss and it is therefore hoped that wide scale vaccination will be a game changer.

Jim Watson

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Deadlines

Wednesday 16th June 2021 is the deadline for the July/August Newsletter. Please send copy to: newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk Paper copy can be given to Bobbie Stormont.

Disclaimer

The Editors welcome letters, articles and announcements from individuals and organisations, but reserve the right to publish or not.

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Falcon School Update

Rev. Wilbert Sayimani gets to Zimbabwe!

By the time you read this (and after a long lockdown wait), Wilbert should be amongst the pupils of Falcon School, arriving just before the delivery of new uniforms and catching up on all the developments since his last visit a year ago. New uniforms were purchased by Lauren in the UK from our latest donation in March and for which Wilbert and the pupils are so grateful.



They are equally grateful for the **two new, big chalkboards** for the new classrooms that Wheatley URC helped to buy, already mounted and 'in use' on the new classroom walls.



The other great news is that the **foundations for new teachers ' accommodation** are already laid out (no holding the Falcon team back!), so when it's finally completed later in the year they will be able to move out of their metal corrugated hut.



Thank you once again for your help and support with our Falcon School partnership. It is so obvious from Wilbert, Lauren and the children's faces that they really, really appreciate it!

Go to page 5 of our newsletter to find out how you can have fun and at the same time raise money for Falcon School.

Care For The World Ministry Team

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# Common Lectionary Readings for June 2021

**Note: leaders may choose to use other readings**

| Date                 | 6 <sup>th</sup> June         | 13 <sup>th</sup> June            | 20 <sup>th</sup> June      | 27 <sup>th</sup> June                                          |
|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>First Reading</b> | Genesis 3:<br>8-15           | Ezekiel 17:<br>22-24             | Job 38:<br>1-11            | Wisdom of<br>Solomon<br>1: 13-15 &<br>Lamentations<br>3: 22-33 |
| <b>Psalm</b>         | Psalm 130                    | Psalm 92:<br>1-4 & 12-15         | Psalm 107:<br>1-3 & 23 -32 | Psalm 30                                                       |
| <b>New Testament</b> | 2 Corinthians<br>4: 13 - 5:1 | 2 Corinthians 5:<br>6-10 & 14-17 | 2 Corinthians<br>6: 10 -13 | 2 Corinthians 8: 7-<br>15                                      |
| <b>Gospel</b>        | Mark 3:20-35                 | Mark 4: 26-34                    | Mark 4: 35-41              | Mark 5: 21-43                                                  |

**June 6<sup>th</sup>:** A rabbi was asked when we know when the night has ended. He replied, “It is when you look on the face of any woman or man and see that she or he is your sister or brother, because if you cannot do this, then, no matter what time it is, it is still night”.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>:** Luther once said, “While I drink my little glass of Wittenberg beer the gospel runs its course”.

**June 20<sup>th</sup>:** “I will have to tear myself away bit by bit and store everything inside me, so that when I have to leave I shall not abandon anything but carry it all with me”. [Etty Hillesum, *The Diaries 1941-43*]

**June 27<sup>th</sup>:** Once after a lecture I experienced something very beautiful. An elderly woman came to me and embraced me saying, "You touched me, and I want to touch you." [Dorothy Soelle, *On Earth as in Heaven*]

**Richard Bainbridge**



# Zoom Service Rotas for June 2021

| Dates          | Worship leaders       | Readers              | Intercessors   |
|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 6              | Rev Cara Heafey       | Marston and          | Summertown     |
| 13             | Richard Bainbridge    | Christine Bainbridge | Malcolm Benson |
| 20             | Laurence Devlin       | Catherine Harding    | Liz Barry      |
| 26<br>Saturday | Rev Colin<br>Thompson | TBC                  | TBC            |
| 27             | Rev Pauline Main      | Marston and          | Summertown     |

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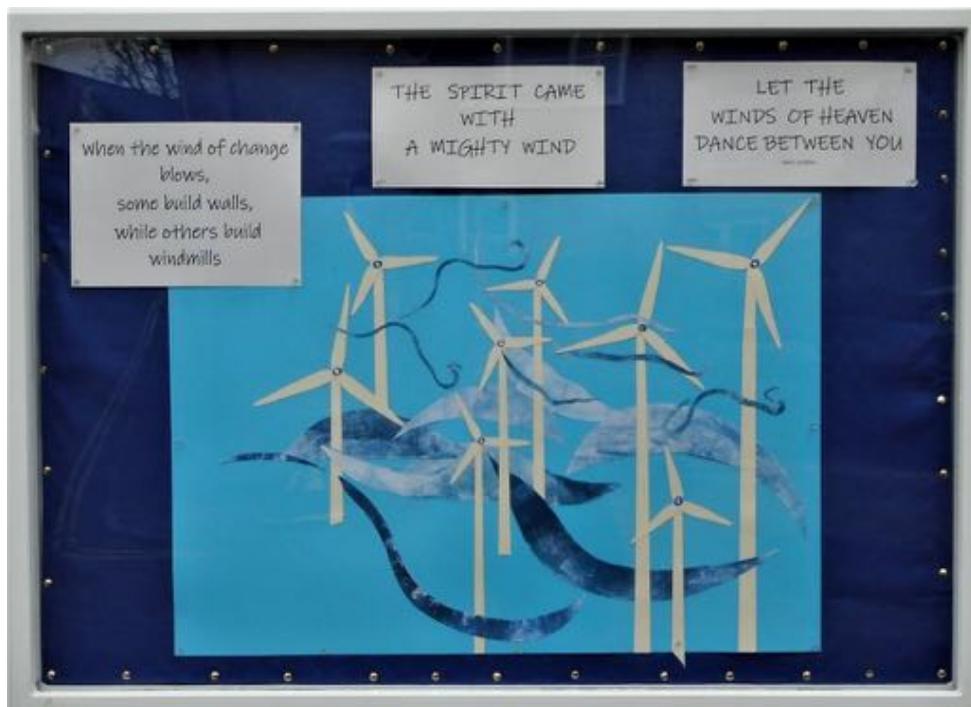
## Our Current Noticeboard

### Wayside Pulpits

**Christian Aid Week:** Thanks to Liz and Tony Barry for creating this colourful and informative display as witness to the important work of Christian Aid and to Wheatley URC's commitment to their work. Thanks too, to all who hosted a tea and cake gathering to raise money for Christian Aid.



**Pentecost:** Thanks to Christine, who, through her contribution, of her own original artwork, we hope to reach out to those passing by with art, poems and inspirational thoughts which often come from members of our community.



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## A 'Happy Place'

Recently my NZ/Canadian sister sent me an email about a recent project by CBC Manitoba and CBC East Coast radio stations. I was reminded of this project as I read Christine's covering thoughts and her 'It is good that....'. I felt an invitation to our community brewing! These radio stations called on Canadians to share and show their 'happy place'. People's experience of finding joy and creating happiness during their very challenging second year of the global COVID-19 pandemic was at the heart of the project.

There were no rules — they wanted people's imaginations to guide them. A happy place could be a person, place, words, art, music, thing etc, and something in the

past, present or future. While some people and communities produced personal audio essays, short films, a comic, illustrations and photos, others simply shared their experience of a happy place e.g. a sidewalk dance party for one; the voices of friends and family; a make-believe island; and a dog named Dexter, crocheting, climbing, roller skating, surfing, dancing, having a sauna, a virtual party, creating an island of memories and make-believe, creating collage, daydreaming, playing the ukelele, sitting in a favourite chair and much more.

So I wondered what has been **my** happy place over this last year and what yours might be?

Here is a photo collage of my 'happy place' called 'Te Koru', koru, from Maori

culture. The koru is a spiral shape based on the appearance of a new unfurling silver fern frond. It is an integral symbol in Māori art, where it symbolises new life, growth, strength and peace. Its shape "conveys the idea of perpetual movement," while the inner coil "suggests returning to the point of origin". So this is my special, happy place and space which connects me to my New Zealand roots, heart, mind and soul. I have spent a lot of time in Te Koru, down at the bottom of the garden, over the last year. It is where I pray, dance,



lead dance chapel on zoom, day dream, cry, laugh, play, create, fall asleep, read, watch the birds, delight in our new wildlife pond and where I feel very close to the Divine – my liminal space. I have received many blessings there.

I would love to hear about your 'happy place' and I am sure others would too. Remember there are no rules about what a happy place might be nor how you share it e.g. words or visually. So do send your 'happy place' experience/es to [newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk). These can then be shared in our July/August newsletter.

**Bobbie Stormont**

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From: May 2021

## The United Reformed Church Finance Committee

To:

All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and  
our Local Ecumenical Partnerships

It would be fair to describe the year-and-a-bit since March 2020 as having been “different”, wouldn’t it? Lots of us have experienced loss of loved ones, loss of income and perhaps jobs. All have experienced periods of lockdown; periods without ‘non-essential’ shops; and continuous and extensive disruption to our ‘normal’ social interactions and relationships. The world we thought we understood and could take for granted has been utterly transformed. How many of us imagined at the start of 2020 that we could go months without a haircut or without people not in our ‘bubble’ entering our homes?

As members of United Reformed Church congregations ourselves, we understand much of what your church community has experienced since March 2020. The absence of what is now regularly labelled “in-person worship” for much (or all) of this time has compelled us to turn to other ways of being church. Buildings in which we used to praise God regularly have been shut, both to regular worshipers and others who might have sought solace within their walls during these desperate and troubling times. It has been hard to maintain close fellowship with people we only meet over Zoom (or the like) – if we are digitally enabled.

Financially, things have been extremely tough too. Plate offerings have collapsed; some regular givers have had to reduce or entirely stop giving to support God’s work; and those churches which hire out their premises have seen income from that source disappear.

At denominational level, we feared that these financial troubles would spell disaster for the URC’s Ministry and Mission (‘M&M’) fund through which the URC has always supported and developed our stipendiary ministers and Church Related Community Workers. It would have been all too easy for congregations to forget that for almost 49 years this fund (under various names) has provided stipends, pension contributions and training for all ministers throughout the three

nations in which the URC operates: so that ministry reaches where synods judge it to be most needed and is paid for according to each congregation's ability to contribute (though the ways of determining that vary from synod to synod). It was all very well to remind ourselves that the M&M fund is meant to be the first call on every congregation's resources if the undertaking to financially support our ministers is to be honoured. We feared that drastically reduced income would make that impossible and that, because the need was less visible than the other calls on your diminished resources, payments to the M&M fund would have stopped first.

We are sorry if we ever doubted you.

It quickly became apparent that, although some congregations had to reduce their pledged giving to the M&M fund, many more of you were continuing to meet the 2020 commitments you had made during better times, despite the struggles that required. At the start of that year we had been expecting churches and synods to contribute around £18.5 million to the fund. By the year end, all but half-a-million pounds of that had been received. Since Church House staff and committees managed to reduce their budgeted expenditure by almost £1 million, your money enabled us to meet the full costs of our Ministries, Education & Learning, Children's and Youth Work and Mission departments in 2020 as well as covering amounts spent on safeguarding, denominational governance and communications.

What is perhaps even more amazing is that, collectively, you have pledged to give £17.3 million during 2021 despite the financial problems caused by the pandemic being fully apparent well before your offers for this year were made.

We are always grateful for the financial support given each year to the M&M fund by all of you; but this past year has been phenomenal.

Thank you to those of you who have been able to maintain or increase financial support for your church congregation through this difficult time. That has enabled those responsible for your congregation's finances to keep more money flowing to the M&M fund than we expected.

Thank you for all your previous financial support to those of you who, after prayerful consideration, have had to reduce or stop giving in response to your changed financial circumstances.

Thank you for the pledges your congregation has made about contributing to the M&M fund during 2021 even though you were by then aware of the impact the pandemic was having on your local congregation's finances.

Thank you in anticipation for what you agree to offer to the M&M fund during 2022 to enable the denomination to deliver ministry, education and learning, children's work and mission activity on God's (and your) behalf.

We are aware that synods have played a significant part in encouraging and supporting many congregations with their contributions to the M&M fund. We have separately written to Synod Treasurers to express our thanks to them and their colleagues too.

Of course, our giving for God's work is in response to the amazing generosity and love of God which we see in Jesus. Nonetheless, it is important for us to thank every one of you for what you do for God, your congregation and its and our denominational finances.

**Thank you!**

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,

**Ian Hardie (Treasurer) and John Piper (Deputy Treasurer)**  
**On behalf of the whole United Reformed Church Finance Committee**

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# Did you know?

Shrove Tuesday is the day Christians think about being 'shriven' – confessing their sins and receiving the cleansing and release of forgiveness. The word 'shrove' drives from an Anglo-Saxon word 'shrift' meaning to hear someone's confession, or 'shrive them'. It was the duty of priests especially to hear the confession and grant forgiveness and spiritual counsel to those who were facing execution and when prison chaplains failed to do this properly, with time care and attention, there was a complaint that people were being 'given short shrift', which is where that phrase comes from.

Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled 'Gentleman Only... Ladies Forbidden'... and thus the word GOLF entered into the English Language.

In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes, the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Hence the phrase.... 'Goodnight, sleep tight'.

It was accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.

In English pubs, ale used to be ordered by pints and quarts. So in old England when customers got unruly the bartender would yell at them, 'Mind your pints and quarts and settle down.'... hence the phrase 'mind your P's and Q's'.

Many years ago in England pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim or handle of their ceramic mugs. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. 'Wet your whistle' is the phrase inspired by this practice.

## **And for something entirely different**

What do bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windscreen wipers and laser printers have in common? All were invented by women.





***High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1UE***

### **CHURCH CONTACTS**

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