

REFLECTIONS ON A WELL-KNOWN POEM

The Covid -19 pandemic has given us all a little more time to ponder. For me it has ignited a dormant but not forgotten interest in poetry and the way that this form of communication can speak to us in a different way and at a deeper level. I have been delighted to rediscover remembered poems that in the light of present circumstances have much to offer us in reflection. As Christians we should not be surprised at this, as much of the Bible is written in the form of poetry and much can be interpreted in this way. (E.g. The seven days of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. For a brilliant and fascinating exposition of this have a look at Rob Bell's You Tube video which you can find here https://youtu.be/i2rklwkm_dQ).

I could write pages about different poems but perhaps my first choice of a poem during lockdown would be 'This Lime - Tree Bower, My Prison', written in 1797 by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as a response to his own personal lockdown after he suffered an accident. The accident is made little of in my copy of his collected poems but in reality, it was quite serious, his wife spilling a skillet of boiling milk on his foot which rendered him disabled and in pain for some time.

It is clear from the poem that Coleridge is used to walking in his locality and familiar with the details of the surrounding countryside as he sends his visiting friends out walking and suggests what to look out for. The poem is then his response, as all poems are, to his present predicament, his imprisonment in the lime- tree bower due to his accident, his lamenting of the situation and eventually the realisation of the beauty and joy he can feel by being present here and now in this moment and this place. Paying attention and being present here and now rather than concerning ourselves with the past and what might have been, can, like Coleridge, help us to live with gratitude for what we have rather than concern for what is out of reach.

As I have been reading the poem again in recent days its phrases echo uncannily my thoughts and what I have been saying to others as I have responded to my own imprisonment because of Covid-19. I too have 'lost beauties and feelings, such as would have been most sweet to my

remembrance'. That is to say I had plans, different plans, during these last three months that will now not be completed. There are people who very sadly, 'I never more may meet again' and was not able to be present at their final farewell. As Coleridge urges his friends to press on in their walk, he voices our own longing for freedom and to 'emerge beneath the wide, wide heaven and view again the many steeped tract magnificent of hilly fields and meadows and the sea...'

And then, the realisation of what has been good and positive and even preferable in Lockdown, the opportunity to reflect, to pause and actually see and notice our environment and most of all for me, the pleasure of every day and yet profound glories of the creation that is around us. 'Pale beneath the blaze hung the transparent foliage; and I watched some broad and sunny leaf and loved to see the shadow of the leaf and stem above dappling its sunshine.' These have been the music of life against the background of the dissonance of all that Covid-19 has brought. This is surely the abundance of a life that Jesus promises us against the backdrop of worldly cares, and I have to agree with Coleridge that 'no sound is dissonant that speaks of [that] life.'

With thoughts and prayers

Jeremy

WARMLEY WARBLINGS

We remember in our regular prayers, those of our church family who have been unwell, thinking in particular of Mervyn and Lil Little, Martin Pullin, Margaret Hill, Kath Palmer, Roger and Pauline Newman, we wish them all well.

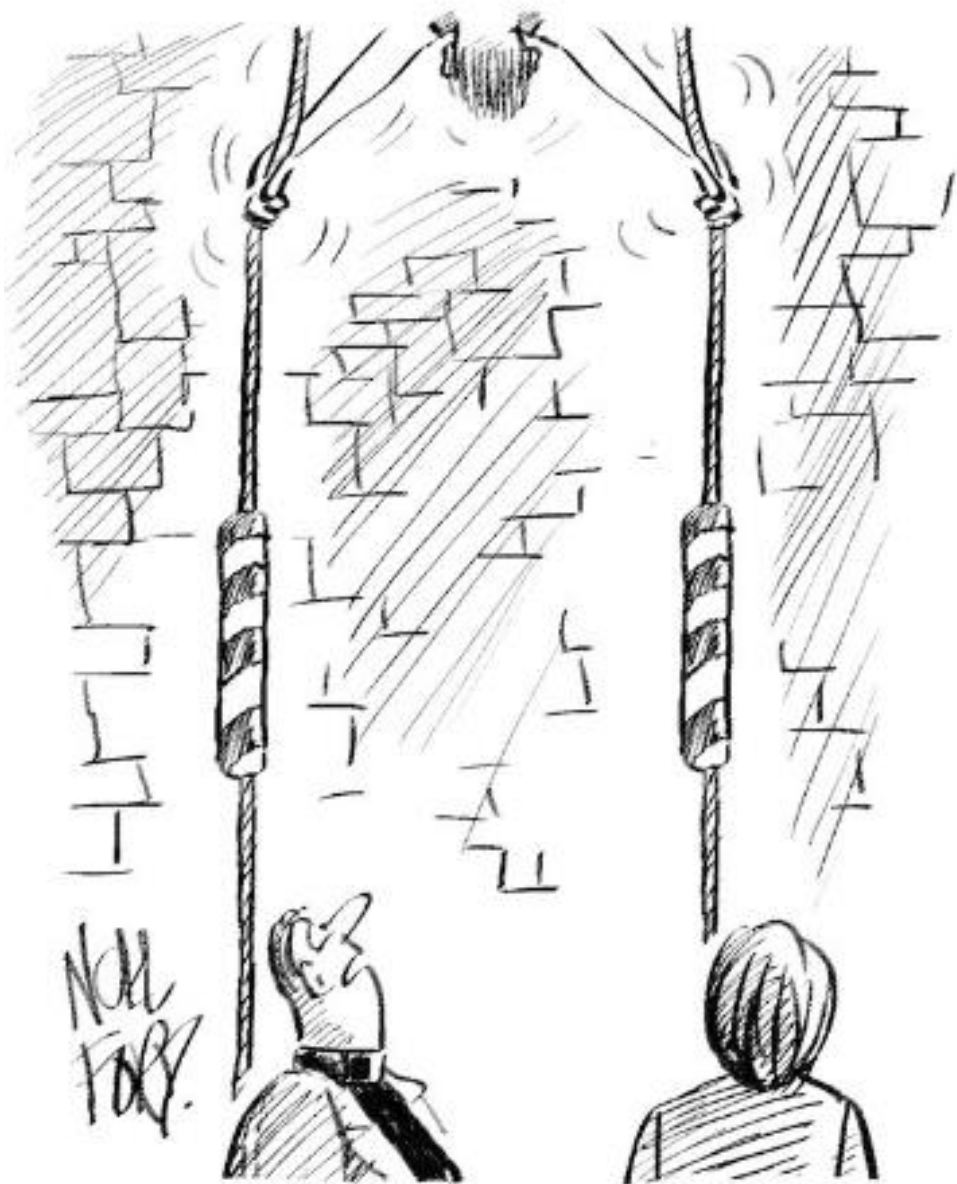
As usual, we remember all of our friends who are in residential or nursing homes at this time, Grace Watson, Eileen Penny, John Short, Marjory Cox and Rita Jones.

We send our love and best wishes to Beryl Holder who unfortunately had a fall and now has her arm in plaster, we hope that she makes a good recovery and is getting all the help she needs.

We are delighted to hear from Amber who is with us for a month as part of her training and especially pleased to see and hear her on our online Sunday service with her reflections on the gospel for that week. With the current situation, it is very unlikely we will have the pleasure of meeting her face to face but we wish her every success in her training and future in the ministry.

One of the few benefits of the lockdown is that it has given us an opportunity to reflect on the life of St. Barnabas and what it offers us all. We are delighted that thanks to the use of technology, many of us are fortunate enough to have been able to share in our Wednesday and Sunday services. However, we must never forget that not everyone is able to join us in this and that it is more important than ever that all of us make the effort to contact all those, especially, those living alone. That phone call, even a visit to someone's garden at a safe distance has taken on a new importance. Only time will tell what after effects the virus will have but let us all make sure that it is not for the want of some effort, compassion and understanding of other people's situation, that we can make matters as bearable as possible. Communication in whatever form we can provide can make all the difference to help people feel and how they cope from day to day.

Brian Draper



Eric took social distancing
while bell ringing very seriously.

3rd JULY – St. THOMAS THE APOSTLE – CONFUSED AND DOUBTING

Thomas, one of Jesus' 12 apostles, was an impulsive, confused, honest sceptic. Jesus could understand and work with such a man. Thomas' impulsiveness was evident when Jesus prepared to visit Lazarus in Bethany. It was a dangerous trip to make, because of the Jews, but Thomas urged his fellow disciples: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." (John 11:16) Instead, Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.

Thomas' confusion is shown in later talks with Jesus. He was not really sure where Jesus was going long-term (John 14:5). But Jesus accepted this confused commitment, and began to untangle it, patiently explaining: "I am going to my Father", and "No one comes unto the Father but by me."

Finally, Thomas' honest scepticism is revealed after the Resurrection, which he flatly refused to believe – unless he could touch the wounds of the risen Jesus. Sure enough, Jesus appears – but instead of scolding him, shows him the wounds. Thomas responds: "My Lord and my God"(John 20.26ff).

Thus Doubting Thomas' honest doubts, turned to honest faith, have become a reassurance for thousands of men and women across the centuries, who also want to follow Jesus, but who require some proof of this amazing event – the Resurrection. In Doubting Thomas' complete affirmation of faith, after meeting the risen, crucified Christ, they can find support for their own faith.

Ancient legends tell how Thomas went on to India as a missionary. There are rumours that Thomas even built a palace for a king's daughter in India, and thus he is the patron saint of architects. It is believed that he was martyred by a spear on 3rd July, 72 AD in Mylapore, near Madras. 46 ancient churches in England were dedicated to him.

THE REASONS FOR GOING TO CHURCH

Strange times we are living through. The future consequences of coronavirus are going to be challenging, to say the least. How will our churches fare when our buildings are allowed to re-open?

One could say that the reasons for churchgoing can be put into three slots, 'Culture', 'Faith' and 'Community'. Many churchgoers would probably recognise in themselves elements of more than one.

Culture is for those who feel comfortable in church. They like the history, the language, the buildings, the liturgy and the music, which have probably been a part of their lives since they were children. All hold comforting memories.

Faith is a link with the meaning of life and its eternal promise, somewhere to seek guidance through worship and sacrament, and on which to lean in times of trouble. A belief in the words of Jesus that they are not on their own, even if sometimes it feels like it in this world.

Community is for those who like coming to church or being associated with it as a flying buttress (a phrase of Winston Churchill, who described himself as someone who supports the church from the outside). They don't have to have a commitment to the faith of the Church but are sympathetic and don't mind being with those who do.

It is likely that the 'old normality' will not be the 'new normality' and this provokes a few thoughts:

* How many people, now out of the habit of regular community worship, will wish to return to it?

* How many people on the periphery of church life, will come back to it, at least in the short term?

* How many of those who have had a regular commitment to the church, for example by serving at the altar or in its refectories, singing in choirs, doing flowers, ringing bells and polishing brasses will feel that this is a good time to make a break and do something different?

As church people, we must consider where we go from here. The Church, everywhere in the infected world, will need to know our answer to its call. To thrive, it needs us back.

FROM AN 'OLD WRINKLY' IN LOCKDOWN

As I write this article it has been over three months having been 'locked-up' with my spouse. We continue to struggle on, like everyone else of course, some days of course, are better than others. The sound of my grandchildren and great grand-children coming through the door would normally be music to my ears as well as the 'dawn chorus'.

Now I have to be satisfied with the sounds of the washing machine, the tumble drier, water heater, other kitchen equipment and the stairlift! I wait with bated breath when I switch them on to hear them working. It has however, made me realise how much we take for granted and how much we rely on those repair technicians should anything go wrong.

I have a few disabilities but, with the help of a zimmer trolley with its seat, I can cook for England! Now that Brian Draper cannot come round and see us for coffee and cake, I ply my family with goodies when they call with our shopping or give some to my husband's carers whether they want it or not! They take it in the knowledge that they may be protecting my husband's sanity!

Thanks to my grandson, I have not experienced issues getting flour. I long to see my friend Gloria coming through the door to cut my hair, I am now looking nearly as bad as Gail Platt on 'Corrie'. We miss our lovely cleaner Sue, soon, we will be able to write in the dust! Thank goodness our chiropodist came this week, adorned with mask and gloves. I pray that I will not need the dentist or that I lose my hearing aids.

I think often of all my friends, those who are on their own, especially those who are unwell. I think also of those like ourselves who are unable to take advantage of all of the technology that is available although I can manage to text after a fashion. It makes you feel isolated from those that can benefit from social media like Facebook and all its gossip. I then remember and realise how lucky we are to have such wonderful family friends and neighbours who chat through our window, back door or text and write to us and who would gladly help us anyway they could.

After sixty-six years of marriage, we have decided that we are not going to strangle each other because we would not be able to hold a wake!

I do not want to seem flippant in this article because obviously, we are all in a serious situation, but I am sure that there are others like me who find it helpful to find some humour when times are so tough. I pray every day for the NHS, managers and staff of care homes, carers and hundreds of key workers often putting their own safety or even their lives at risk to help others.

Stay safe and love and prayers to you all and in true Bristol fashion, 'keep your pecker up' and don't give in, I am sure by now you have guessed who this 'nutcase' is? My husband said, when this is all over can someone come round and teach me how to cook beef!!!

Muriel Allen

FROM THE EDITOR

I hope you enjoyed reading Muriel's reflections on enduring the lockdown?

Now it is your turn!

If you would like to write your reflections on the lockdown, what you have been doing, how it has affected you, how you have coped, what has changed etc., I would love to hear from you and publish your thoughts in our magazine. Articles can be sent to me via email at bwddraper@yahoo.co.uk or in writing to me at:

15 The Keep,
North Common
Warmley
Bristol BS30 8YQ

I would love to hear from you!

Brian Draper

ALL IN THE MONTH OF JULY

It was:

175 years ago, on 4th July 1845 that Thomas Barnardo, Irish humanitarian and philanthropist was born. He founded Barnardo's, a charity which cares for vulnerable children and young people.

Also 175 years ago, on 17th July 1845 that Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, British Prime Minister (1830-34) died. Earl Grey tea was named after him after he was given a gift of tea flavoured with bergamot oil. It was known as the Earl Grey's blend.

150 years ago, on 18th July 1870 that the Vatican issued the declaration of Papal Infallibility. It preserved the Pope from the possibility of error when he defined a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Catholic Church.

100 years ago, on 17th July 1920 that Kenneth Wolstenholme, British football commentator, was born. Best remembered for his famous commentary at the 1966 World Cup Final: "Some people are on the pitch...they think it's all over.... It *is* now!" – as the last goal was scored.

90 years ago, on 7th July 1930 that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, British writer who created the detective Sherlock Holmes, died.

80 years ago, on 7th July 1940 to 31st October 1940: The Battle of Britain took place. British victory.

75 year ago, on 5th July 1945 that WWII leader Winston Churchill lost the British General Election to Clement Attlee's Labour Party.

70 years ago, on 5th July 1950 that Israel's Knesset passed the Law of Return, which granted all Jews the right to immigrate to Israel.

65 years ago, on 9th July 1955 that the song 'Rock Around the Clock' by Bill Haley and His Comets reached #1 on the Billboard chart in the USA. It remained there for eight weeks. Although not the first rock & roll song, it is considered the song that brought rock & roll into the mainstream.

60 years ago, on 6th July 1960 that Aneurin ('Nye') Bevan, Minister of Health (1945-51) who led the establishment of the National Health Service, died.

40 years ago, on 5th July 1980 that Swedish tennis player Bjorn Borg won the Wimbledon singles championship for a record fifth consecutive time.

30 years ago, on 17th July 1990 that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein threatened to use force against Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to stop them driving down oil prices. On 24th July Iraq sent tens of thousands of troops and hundreds of tanks to the border with Kuwait, ahead of an invasion on 2nd August which led to the Gulf War.

25 years ago, on 11th July 1995 that the Srebrenica Massacre took place. The Bosnian Serb Army seized control of Srebrenica and massacred 8,000 men and boys.

Also 25 years ago, on 16th July 1995 that Amazon.com opened its website to the public.

20 years ago, on 25th July 2000 that an Air France Concorde crashed outside Paris shortly after taking off for New York. All 109 people on board were killed, as well as four people on the ground.

15 years ago, on 7th July 2005 that the London Bombings took place. A coordinated series of four suicide bomb attacks on London's transport systems during the morning rush hour killed 56 people, including the four bombers. More than 700 were injured. It was the worst-ever attack on Britain, and the country's first attack by suicide bombers.

Also 15 years ago, on 28th July 2005 that the IRA ended its 30-year armed campaign in Northern Ireland and ordered all units to dump their weapons. Its leadership stated that they would continue their campaign exclusively through peaceful means.

TIME FOR US GIRLS!

I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately, with the virus here
We can't go out the gates.
You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died

They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told.
We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60's-
If you only knew the truth
There was sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts

Then, we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Someone's wife, then nana
Who on earth did we become?
We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like a red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside
For 4 weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!
It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no flaming flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer
At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whiskey. even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal
So let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this awful virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth

We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hope I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

Does anyone resonate with these sentiments?

CORONAVIRUS AND LOCAL CHURCHES

'Going to church' is not what it used to be. With our church buildings closed, many of us now 'go' to services transmitted via YouTube or other social media. They last only about 45 minutes, half the length of a normal Sunday church service.

Some churches also transmit a daily prayer slot, or provide a children's programme on line once or twice a week. All such seem to be popular and attract those who may well not have visited the relevant church for years!

So – what are the positives in all this? For there are some!

Many non-regular church people watching. It would seem that many people in isolation are watching these streamed services at home, many more than usually attend the church in question. Many churches are reporting increases from viewing of 20%, 50% or even 100%.

Advantages of social media viewing. It is easier to 'attend', especially for the elderly or disabled, and you can have a cup of tea alongside you if you wish!

Popularity of format. Some say they like the 'personal' approach with the preacher as he/she seems just a couple of feet away, which means the sermon is more likely to be listened to! It's usually shorter also. It may help bring calm to worried people. Some may be seeking answers from the Christian faith as to why God has sent or allowed this worldwide plague.

What about the negative aspects of online services?

Middle-class and/or resource dominance. Many churchgoing people, particularly the elderly and less well-off, do not have a smart phone, a tablet or computer.

Primacy within the preaching is not known. How far the Gospel is actually being preached is unknown; how many people are coming to faith is unknown.

Long-term impact uncertain. Online services cannot give the connectedness of face-to-face interaction, though they may suggest a wider and simpler framework for the future. They cannot help loneliness to the same extent, nor can the minister get to know people personally.

One probable long-term implication

Helpful service supports faith image. Churches which are now serving their local community, especially with meals, food banks, and other like services, are building an image of love and care. Finance for such is often being donated by the churches, and volunteers are coming forward. Those churches which do the most are likely to emerge the stronger, or at least more respected than they were.

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USE YOUR OLD CLOTHES TO HELP OTHERS IN POVERTY

Lockdown drove many of us to do a spring clear-out of our wardrobes. But what do you do now do with the old clothes you no longer want? Charity shops may be closed for the time being, but there's still a way to donate your old items and support your favourite charities. Just go online and visit [Thrift+](https://www.thrift+.com). It is an online store where you can buy and donate great quality second-hand clothes. And you get to choose which cause to support when you make a donation.

While lockdown measures are in place, they've introduced a doorstep collection service, so you don't need to leave your home to support life-transforming charities.

15th JULY – St. SWITHUN – SAINT FOR A RAINY DAY!

St Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15th July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the 10 years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England.

During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays, and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1000 years. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun. Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.

A LITTLE HUMOUR

The queue

While waiting in a socially distanced queue early one morning for the supermarket to open for us 'seniors', I was surprised to see a young man saunter along and try to cut in at the front of the queue. A furious old lady waved her cane at him, and he quickly backed away.

A moment later, the young man tried again. He managed to dodge the old lady, but then two old men started shouting at him. Again, the young man backed away.

But he wasn't giving up, and soon the young man approached the queue for the third time. By now, all of us pensioners were ready for him, an angry wall of opposition.

The young man stood there for a moment, and then shrugged his shoulders. "If you people won't let me unlock the door, none of you will ever get in to shop."

Pancakes

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, five, and Ryan, three. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the chance for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'"

Quick as a wink, Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

Seagull

A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?"

"He died and went to heaven," the father replied.

The boy thought a moment and then asked: "Why did God throw him back down?"

He fell asleep just before they entered France. When he awoke, he saw the French motorway signs and rubbed his eyes. In a worried tone he whispered, "I think I forgot how to read while I was asleep."

Coronavirus: For the first time in history, we can help save the human race by lying in front of the TV and doing nothing. Let's not mess this one up!

6th JULY – THOMAS MORE, REFORMATION MARTYR

These days, lawyers and politicians are held in the lowest esteem by the public, along with tabloid journalists and estate agents. St Thomas More was both a lawyer and politician, who is today much admired for holding steadfastly to his faith-based principles. He lived in dangerous times, when anyone, even queens, who displeased King Henry VIII could find themselves in a condemned cell in The Tower of London.

Sir Thomas More held the office of Lord High Chancellor and at one time was the king's most trusted adviser. But when King Henry took personal control of the Church in England in order to divorce his first wife, More courageously opposed him.

Thomas More was a social philosopher and the author of 'Utopia'. This book described an imaginary republic governed by an educated elite who employed reason rather than self-interest for the general good of everyone. He was himself one of the pre-eminent scholars of his age. As a Christian theologian he supported orthodox doctrine, vigorously opposed heresy and argued strongly against the new Protestant ideas taking hold in Europe. Although holding the highest political and legal office he was far from being a pragmatic politician and opportunist lawyer. In every matter he was a man who held firmly to what he believed was right in God's eyes.

When Thomas More fell from favour with the king, as a result of his unflinching views, he was falsely accused of taking bribes. When this charge failed, his enemies accused him of supporting a celebrated seer of the times who was strongly critical of the king. This too failed. He was then required to swear to the Oath of Supremacy, acknowledging Henry's position as head of the Church of England. This he could not do in conscience. He was put on trial and condemned to be hung, drawn and quartered for his treason, a punishment later changed to beheading. He died in 1535 and on the scaffold his final words were 'I die the King's good servant, but God's first.' He has been officially declared a martyr saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

BIBLE QUIZ ANSWERS FROM JUNE MAGAZINE

1. Stone
2. Eve
3. Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isaiah 8:1)
4. Miriam
5. 39 or 46 (39 in Protestant versions, 46 in the Catholic Bible).
The 7 extra are known as the Deutorocanonical books.
6. 27
7. 929
8. (3:3)
9. Good news
10. Psalm 117
11. Obadiah
13. Peter (also known as Simon Peter), 2. Andrew (the brother of Simon Peter), 3. James (the son of Zebedee), 4. John (the brother of James), 5. Philip, 6. Bartholomew 7. Thomas, 8. Matthew, 9. James the Less (the son of Alphaeus), 10. Jude Thaddeus (also known as Judas the brother of James), 11. Simon the Zealot, 12. Judas Iscariot (who betrayed Jesus)
14. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
15. John 11:35
16. 31,102 (23,145 in the Old Testament and 7,957 in the New Testament).
17. Revelation
18. Matthew
19. Simon the 'Zealot'
20. Romans 6:23

LAWYERS IN LOCKDOWN

The last few months has proved a busy time for many solicitors. Sadly, the added stress, uncertainty, isolation, and changes to daily life brought on by coronavirus has led to many disputes. People have ended up fighting their business contacts, colleagues, neighbours and even family members,

Strangers may also prove a threat. There are increasing numbers of scam emails, as crooks try to hack into your computer or try to get you to invest in some get-rich-quick scheme. Then there are those advertisements for gambling on television. They are disguised as 'fun', but in reality, they are anything but fun: gambling during lockdown can escalate very quickly.

The lockdown has thrown up some questions: what to do if the post office is prevented from delivering mail to tenants on an estate and whether you still have to pay rent for a student accommodation if the student has gone home. The tenants have a right to receive mail and the answer to the other question is probably 'yes', because student lets are often for a fixed period without an option to end the letting early.

People are spending more time close together, although in isolation. This can lead to domestic violence and anti-social behaviour. Neighbours, tenants and landlords can get on each other's nerves. Anti-social behaviour indoors or outdoors is always taken seriously by the authorities.

Some of us are spending more time in the garden and this can lead to noticing problems about that tree which overhangs your house and the branches that bang on the roof in a high wind or the fence that needs a repair.

Being a good neighbour/colleague/family member is more important now than ever. It is always best to first talk to people – at a safe distance!