



The Kingswood Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon, Wallington, and Weston



Welcome to In Touch!

Spring is here at long last and, between the rain showers, the sun is gaining gradually in warmth and strength despite the wind whipping the daffodils to and fro. This weekend sees the spring equinox when days and nights are of equal length – a sure sign of warmer days to come. Another week or two and, with some luck, we will be able to go out without so many layers and on meet a friend for a chat or talk outside. That wonderful opportunity to just sit and talk without worrying if the technology will hold up!

Technology was not something that bothered St Cuthbert – he loved to be alone with his own thoughts on Inner Farne or to be with his fellow monks on Lindisfarne- quiet and gentle conversation a winning mix. We are getting our churches moving again with regular services and at Wallington recently John Inman got left holding the baby, he is getting very adept at it. Having just completed four PCC meetings in the last two weeks and thinking they had been around forever, I found that they have only been around for about 100years – so do read the article to find out more. Stay well and keep smiling – better days are coming. **With blessings Fiona**



HOLY DAYS

Cuthbert, beloved monk and bishop of Lindisfarne

20th March: Saint of the week

Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (c 634-87) has long been northern England's favourite saint. It is easy to see why: Cuthbert was holy, humble, peaceable, prayerful, faithful in friendship, winsome, and really kind.

Cuthbert was born into a fairly well-off Anglo-Saxon family, and he became a monk at Melrose in 651. He and another monk, Eata, were sent to start a monastery at Ripon, but Alcfrith, who owned the land, insisted that they adopt the Roman customs, which Cuthbert's Celtic church did not allow. So, Cuthbert and Eata quietly returned to Melrose, where Cuthbert became prior in about 661. Then came the Synod of Whitby in 663/4, and the Celtic Church formally decided to adopt the Roman customs. After this, Cuthbert was sent on to Lindisfarne as prior, where he sensitively introduced the new ways, and won over the monks there.

Cuthbert was very much loved at Lindisfarne. His zeal was evident in his constant preaching, teaching, and visiting of the people. He was also said to have gifts of prophecy and healing. Occasionally, Cuthbert reached 'people overload'. Then he would retreat to a tiny islet called Inner Farne, where he could pray in total seclusion. When, to his horror, he was told he had been made Bishop of Hexham, he immediately 'swapped' sees with Eata, and stayed on at Lindisfarne as Bishop. Sadly, Cuthbert died on little Inner Farne, only two years later, on 20 March, 687.

Cuthbert was buried at Lindisfarne, but that is not the end of his story. For it was only now that his travels began. After the Vikings destroyed Lindisfarne in 875, several monks dug him up and set out to find Cuthbert a final, and safe, resting place. For the next 120 years Cuthbert was deposited in various monasteries around the north of England and southwest Scotland. Finally, in 999, Cuthbert was allowed to rest in Durham, where a Saxon church was built over his shrine.

All that travel must have done him good; when his body was exhumed to be put into the 'new' Norman Cathedral in Durham in 1104, it was said to be still in perfect tact, and 'incurrupt'.

If you would like to donate to any of our churches in the current crisis - details are below. We would be very grateful in your help to keep our churches going.

Thank you.

PCC OF RUSHDEN

LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845350

SANDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
BARCLAYS BANK: 20-73-26 A/C 53610802

PCC ST MARYS CHURCH WALLINGTON
LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845466

WESTON PCC
BARCLAYS BANK: 20-41-12 A/C 40946850

PCC OF CLOTHALL
LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845245

THE GOLDFINCH

*A flash of yellow, gold, and red
Dancing in our flower bed
Flocked together, bringing charm
Their joyful song restoring calm.
Through centuries since times of old
We've always loved their plumage bold;
As they gathered round to feed
Seeking grubs, and thistle seed.
So, go ahead, and plant some thistles
You will see, among the bristles.
Golden birds who dance and dart
Bringing joy to warm your heart.*

By Nigel Beeton





Paolo Veronese: The Feast in the House of Levi (1573)

The trouble started when they asked him to replace the dog at the front of the painting with an image of Mary Magdalen. But he didn't think the figure would fit so he hadn't done it. Now he'd been summoned to explain himself. What was the meaning of the man with the bleeding nose and the men armed like Germans? Why the drunkards? Why the jester

with the parrot? Was this painting not mocking the teachings of the church and leading people astray at a time when moral and doctrinal instruction was more important than ever?

It was Saturday July 18th 1573 and Paolo Veronese was having a bad day. His 43 feet wide painting of the Last Supper for a convent refectory had startled the Inquisition and he now stood before its tribunal. Did he know why he was there? He said he didn't but he guessed it was something to do with that dog, and perhaps other things. He hadn't meant to cause offence but he'd been taught that the owner of the house with the upper room was a rich man, so he'd depicted a magnificent banquet with a

multitude of servants. As for the buffoons and Germans, well it was a big canvas – 'if in the painting there is an empty space, I decorate it with figures.' And if no dog was recorded at the Last Supper, then neither was Mary Magdalen was she?

This extravagant feast set amongst colossal architecture is a colour-struck carnival of Venetian humanity. Waiters manoeuvre dishes and drinks around the table. The Master of Ceremonies cajoles and exhorts; the owner of the house watches over all. With effort eleven disciples can be discerned on the far side of the table with a youthful St. John alongside Christ. On the near side Judas, separated, turns in his place, grimacing at the cup of wine offered to him.

Veronese excelled in richly coloured magnificence and theatrical spectacle. He hadn't much time for the authorities' insistence that he should paint without freedom of imagination, leadenly depicting essential beliefs. But he has a message, for this Last Supper is a lively party from which no-one is excluded. The mad and the bad, gluttons and drinkers, clowns and wise, servants and slaves all have a place here - as do even we. It's an inspiring painting into which we may walk and joyfully take our place. But an artist in peril has to do something. Veronese simply renamed the painting 'Feast in the House of Levi' and the Inquisition left him alone. And so his gangly dog remained, entirely unconcerned with all the fuss surrounding him.

The history of the PCC

When you next attend a PCC meeting, which is probably more likely to be by zoom than in person, you could say "Happy 100th Birthday!" to your colleagues. It is a hundred years since The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1921 which was an important stage in the birth of PCCs.

During the First World War army chaplains found that many men who thought of themselves as church goers were ignorant of the basics of religion. This led to a new interest in mission for the church. There were national days of prayer during the war and in 1915 there was a National Mission of Repentance and Hope. The public were more in the mood for victory than repentance. After the Armistice there was a desire for change in the national church and this led to a discussion about the links with the state.

There was a concern that Parliament was often slow to enact laws for the church and many people felt the national church should have more authority to govern itself. The setting up of Parochial Church Councils was part of that process. In the past a lot of local secular administration had been the responsibility of churchwardens in the vestry meetings. Gradually their functions were passed to local councils. Most of their remaining powers were transferred to PCCs by The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1921.

The purpose behind these new councils was to give the laity a more prominent role in parish life to go alongside the diaconry, diocesan and national councils which became the synods and have an important role in church life. Some conservative clerics were concerned at this reform and felt that congregations would pick and choose clergy or object to a new incumbent chosen by a patron. The process of starting PCCs to share in decision making in parishes was widely accepted but a few

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. **Romans 8:28***

older incumbents and those in more rural areas, failed to do either out of reluctance or ignorance.

A leading churchman in the reform movement was William Temple who became leader of the 'Life and Liberty movement' which hugely influenced the move towards democratic government in the Church of England. He was Bishop of Manchester in the 1920s, Archbishop of York from 1929 to 1942 and Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-4).



He had been a secretary of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope in 1916 and became chairman and joint leader with H. R. (Dick) Sheppard of the Life and Liberty movement. 'We demand liberty for the Church of England' he declared at a meeting in July 1917. One difficult issue was what level of commitment to church life enabled a person to be eligible to serve on a church council. It was decided that anyone on the electoral roll whether they attended services or communion regularly could participate. The then Bishop of Oxford resigned over the issue because he thought that councils must only be made up of committed regular communicants.

The next Bishop of Oxford in his monthly diocesan magazine endorsed the principle of democracy and reassured people that it was a not negative step or would limit the powers of clergy or wardens. He encouraged the congregations to consider how to use each other's gifts. In Aylesbury the idea of the new PCCs had been discussed as early as 1918. It was felt that they would support the clergy particularly with financial issues.

It is strange to think that the proposal for clergy and congregation to work together for the benefit of the church could be controversial. The birth of PCCs was a major step in the life of the church. I wonder what the next one hundred years will bring?