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Editor's Note:

We normally publish reports on activities and meetings occurring in the village but these activities have inevitably been cancelled due to Covid-19. Hence, therefore, there is little to report!

We would welcome any articles on local matters from our readers. Please send details on e:mail to:

magazine@welwyn.org.uk or contact St Mary's church office on **01438 840964**

EDITOR'S NOTES

Articles by the 1st of the month preceding publication, see details above.

The Editors reserve the right to shorten or omit articles or refuse advertisements.

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The Rector's Letter



Dear Friends

I am not sure who was the wit who said that *'the worst thing you can do for your health is live, living always ends in death.'* Maybe I just made it up, in which case I bow to my own genius, but I am pretty sure it is a quote.

This of course may be rather an uncomfortable thought, and you may want to skip – or indeed back again – to Jess's cheery column. However, it is one of the effects of COVID-19 that suddenly something we preferred not to talk or indeed perhaps think about very much, is centre stage. Particularly during the early stages of this pandemic people were frightened, and rightly so. Sometimes they would quote to me – the widely varying – estimates of what the death toll might be. To everybody who quoted that statistic I asked a simple question *'do you know how many people die generally in this country every day / month / year?'* No one did, and therefore the obvious question was *'how do you know it's bad?'* For reference, at the time of writing COVID-19 deaths in the UK are around 46,000 – the number of people who die each year in the UK is around 600,000.

Now a long time ago, I was rather a bad mathematician. But some of it has stayed with me, and just enough to understand that what people really struggle with is big numbers. So take a headline like this: *'Giveaway bonanza – UK citizens to share in £180 million windfall!'* What is your reaction to this headline? What are you planning? Paying off the mortgage? A cruise? In fact what that would buy, is everyone one cup of coffee!

Hopefully this is still true by the time I write this, but the severest onslaught of COVID-19 and consequent lockdown has now past (though I agree it could return if we are careless) and we are beginning, with sensible and proportionate restrictions to open up again. I am no expert on what those restrictions should be, but we are at this time going to have to manage risk. And when it comes again to big numbers we are not very good at doing that. The lockdown in China saved far more lives by lessening that country's terrible problems with big city pollution than were at threat by COVID-19. I am afraid that people will continue to die of COVID-19. But they will also die of many other things. And in order to live, to produce necessities, and to crucially pay for our wonderful health service – and who knows maybe even give them a pay rise! – we are going to need to become economically productive again.

Christians have quite often been accused of always thinking about life after death, but as a Christian Aid slogan reminded us: *'Do we believe in life before death?'* In other words what are we going to do to ensure that people can properly live and flourish? As we restart our economy, there may be changes in the way we work, the way we live, and crucially what things we value and reward. Whilst that might take imagination and courage, it might also mean that we believe in the possibility of a full life before death.

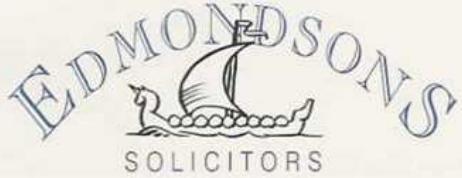
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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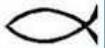
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JESSIE—The Rectory Dog

So you know that thing about goldfish in a bowl? That is it isn't cruel to keep them in a little bowl, because they have a memory of 3 seconds and therefore every trip across the bowl is like discovering a whole new world? So I have one question 'how does anyone know that?' It reminds me of that rather unfair joke against fishermen (and women) – the only sport in which your opposition really can be said to have a brain the size of a pea (...sound of fishermen – and women – cancelling their subscriptions).

So the question is therefore, 'how long is a canine memory?' Ok so I can remember my house, my walks, where I put important stuff like toys and bones, people and dogs I like. But mostly these

are things that are revisited every few days or few weeks.

The question is 'can I remember what life was like in February 2020?'

The time when master and mistress were

always going out; when walks were squeezed in between other stuff; when they went out to do stuff, rather than stare at people on zoom. I am wondering whether a bit of selective amnesia might be in order



Jess



Snippets

Ayot St Peter Church Open Day

Saturday 12th September - 10am to 5pm

Please come and see our beautiful Victorian Arts and Crafts church, which will be traditionally decorated for the harvest festival service the following morning. We'll be selling delicious home-made jam, marmalade and chutney from our award-winning preserves maker, in aid of the church and the Herts Air Ambulance. The church is at AL6 9BG. (See pages 34/36)



'Swing for their Supper' - Spotlight on Africa

Saturday 5th September 2020

9.30 am until 1.00 pm

St Mary's Church Tower, Welwyn

Fancy swinging down the 100ft tower to feed an entire school for a day? (see page 42)





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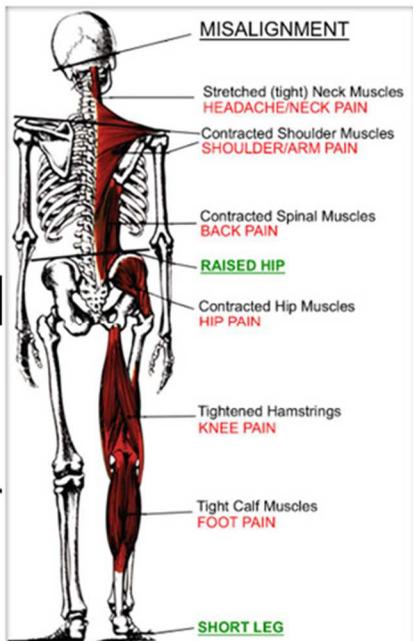
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This year's National Eye Health Week (NEHW) will take place 21/27 September 2020, promoting the importance of good eye health and the need for regular eye tests for all.

- 2 million people in the UK are living with sight loss, that is severe enough to have a significant impact on their daily lives. Half of this sight loss is avoidable.
- A sight test can detect early signs of conditions like glaucoma, which can be treated if found soon enough
- During a sight test, other health conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure may be detected.
- For healthy eyes:
 - **Eat well** - foods recommended for eye health include; leaf greens such as kale and spinach, brightly coloured fruit and veg such as corn, carrots, orange sweet peppers and oranges, oily fish like salmon, tuna and mackerel and eggs.
 - **Don't smoke** - After ageing, smoking is the biggest risk factor for developing macular degeneration. Smoking also increases your risk of developing cataract.
 - **Wear eye protection in bright sunlight**—Your sunglasses should have the CE mark on them which ensures that they are giving you the right level of ultraviolet protection.

It is recommended that most people should get their eyes tested every 2 years. Your ophthalmic practitioner or optometrist may recommend you have an NHS sight test more often than every 2 years if you:

- are a child wearing glasses
- have diabetes
- are aged 40 or over and have a family history of glaucoma
- are aged 70 or over

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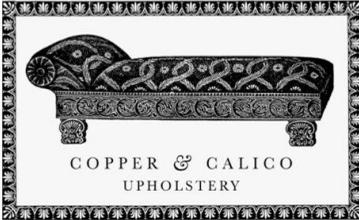
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FAREWELL — The Rev'd Dominic Holroyd-Thomas

As my time comes to an end in the Welwyn Team Ministry, it is strange to be preparing to say goodbye in such unusual circumstances. When I had my interview for the Priest-in-Charge role of the three parishes of Ampthill, Millbrook and Steppingly, back on the 23rd March, no one could have foreseen the changes which came into effect following a speech from the Prime Minister that evening. It feels (and is) a long time ago, and the way the church is ministering has changed considerably.

You may wonder what a 'Priest-in-Charge' is, and why the title is not 'Vicar' or 'Rector'; well, my day-to-day ministry will be no different – the 'Right of Presentation' has been suspended – this purely means that the Patron's right to present a candidate (in this case for the office of Rector) has been suspended. This usually occurs when the diocese may be looking to move the parish boundaries; it is very much a legal technicality, and I look forward to being instituted as the Rector when the right of presentation passes back to the Patron (in this case, the Lord Chancellor).

Perhaps selfishly, my immediate concern upon being offered the role by the Bishop of Bedford, was that I would not be able to have neither a good departure from here, nor a good arrival in the new benefice. But, all being well, on 6th October, I will be licensed by the



Bishop in St Andrew's, Ampthill – what form this service will take appears to be in the hands of our Prime Minister – we may even be able to sing a hymn by then!

The benefice, comprising of the three parishes, is not too dissimilar to the pastoral set-up I have experienced here. There is the larger town church of Ampthill, and two smaller village churches – of Millbrook and Steppingly. Some of you may have been to Centre Parcs Woburn Forest; coincidentally, this sits within one of the parishes – I hope that they would be open to an honorary chaplain! It will be strange to arrive in these unusual times, but I am grateful that we are now able to gather


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FAREWELL — The Rev'd Dominic Holroyd-Thomas *continued*

in church once again for public worship. With current circumstances as they are, I was concerned that I may have had to arrive in the new benefice and have had to commence my new ministry by ministering solely by the telephone.

With the closure of our church buildings back in March, churches across the country faced new financial pressures, and some dioceses sought to take advantage of the Government's furlough scheme. Now, this may not have been a great surprise to the lay administrative staff, but, for some, a surprise that some clergy were also furloughed under the scheme. From what I gather, three dioceses utilised the scheme – Liverpool, Winchester, and St Albans. The Church's lawyers remarked that it was permissible only for curates to be furloughed, given the particular training role curates hold. Thank you Mr Sunak for my mini-sabbatical – I gather the Rector had to wait a long time for his!

Whilst this is an exciting time of new beginnings, and preparing the new Rectory for living, it does, of course, also come with the sadness of moving away from the many wonderful people I have come to know as friends over the last three and a half years. By virtue of there being six churches in the Team, and the diversity of busyness of these, I feel well-prepared to take on this new challenge. On account of living in Woolmer Green, and being a school governor at St Michael's, I feel very much a part of the community here, and will particularly miss this place.

Daniel and I are very grateful for the warm welcome we have received here, and whilst you may be familiar with curates coming and going, do not underestimate the impression you make on the ministry of a new priest; I shall be forever thankful.

*Pax et Bonum
Dominic*

The Rev'd Dominic Holroyd-Thomas

THE WELWYN MAGAZINE—Subscriptions

We are delighted to be able to resume distribution of
The Welwyn Magazine
this month after producing four digital issues due to Covid-19.
We were due to collect your annual subscription of £6 in May 2020,
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We will let you know the plans for collecting subscriptions
in the October 2020 issue.

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MUSICIANS IN CORONAVIRUS TIMES

The restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic have affected everybody in some way. Musicians, along with actors, dancers, circus artistes and others – anyone who earns their income from performing to a live audience – have suffered financially and emotionally. Rachel Podger, one of our leading Baroque violinists said, *'you miss the physical thing but you also miss the emotional thing – responding to the audience.'* I suspect that all members of St Mary's Choir would agree with that; singing together is a wonderful thing in which a group of disparate people, high-voiced and low-voiced, come together to make what Shakespeare called, 'sweet harmony'.

Many professional musicians have attempted music-making via one of the now familiar platforms. Despite some of the results being very good, two significant problems remain:-

1. Successful music-making relies hugely on the interactions – the vibes, if you like! – within a group of performers. Individuals' recordings being stitched together into a whole demonstrates remarkable technology but is not music-making.

2. While giving musicians a reason to prepare some music, the online platform does not generate income (although sometimes donations are encouraged) and musicians, like everybody else, need money to put food on the table and pay the mortgage, etc.

Like many industries which are experiencing these almost catastrophic circumstances, there are many ancillary, associated jobs. In addition to professional singers and instrumentalists finding not that they have less work, but that they have no work, there are concert artist agencies which arrange jobs and secure contracts, there are instrument repairers (such as Hills in Welwyn), and orchestra managers. Even those whose musical skills are used in teaching in institutions such as schools and universities have found their livelihoods stripped away.

Under Oliver Cromwell, music in the public arena suffered. However, musicians found means whereby their skills could both be used and appreciated. Perhaps the resourcefulness of today's musicians will find ways of making music, avenues through which their art (so fundamental to human wellbeing) can find expression. In the meantime, I hope that the joy and excitement of witnessing a live music performance will not be forgotten.

*Linden Innes-Hopkins
St Mary's Musical Director*



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EHAAT relies on the generosity and goodwill of local people and businesses to keep this crucial service functioning. It only receives limited support from Government and must raise the £9 million per year that is needed to keep it operational. The average cost of each mission is £2,200.

In 2020, until the end of July, the crew attended 284 incidents in Hertfordshire alone by helicopter and rapid response vehicle (RRV). During lockdown the



crews assisted with inter-hospital transfers and had to get accustomed to wearing PPE as a matter of routine, which increased their costs significantly. Their Patient Liaison Managers, unable to carry out their normal hospital visits, went to work for a while at the NHS London Nightingale Hospital supporting patients and families (in addition to working shifts on the helicopters and RRVs).

We all hope we will never need to call on **EHAAT**'s services, but are grateful it is there to help those in need.

Jane Carr

ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP

After a keenly-felt absence during Covid-19, the church walking group resumed in August with an enjoyable walk in Panshanger Park, taking in the 'Great Oak' believed to have been planted by Queen Elizabeth I. Owned by the Cowper family from the late 17th to early 20th century, the Panshanger Estate was shaped around the Mimram Valley following advice from Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. With much to see and wide-open spaces, it is a

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VIRTUAL HYMNS

Since the beginning of July 2020, there have been two hymns included in each 9.30 am service at St Mary's. Generally these last for about 2.5 minutes. However, they are considerably longer in the making and, at the risk of undermining the wonderfulness of the enterprise, some might be interested in the process.

The first step is for Linden, our Director of Music, to 'lay down' – using an App called Easy Voice Recorder – the organ accompaniments. She then takes them home and, with headphones in one ear (in order to hear the organ track), records a piano track with herself singing which is as close to perfectly synchronised with the organ track as possible.



The second step is for the piano/voice track to be sent to Stephen Jupp, along with an annotated copy of the two hymns. This details breathing places and other technical matters for the singers, including whether to sing in harmony or in unison. Stephen then sends out the recorded piano/voice track and the music copy to those singers who have expressed a willingness to record themselves, with a deadline – usually midweek. Each individual singer then records their own voice using Easy Voice Recorder; two devices are needed: one to listen to the piano/voice track via a headphone or earbud and one to record their own voice. I know from conversations with some of the singers, that the recording process can take up to two hours!

When the recordings come in, one singer is used as a guide for the multi-track software, so that all the singers' recordings can be 'lined up'. This is no mean feat, interesting and time-consuming! The various 'edits' are batted to and fro between Stephen and Linden until satisfaction is reached. Only then is the final version sent to the Rector for inclusion in the service.

If one totted up the hours spent on each week's hymns by all the participants in all the different phases of production, it would – indubitably – amount to well over 20 hours! And all for five minutes on Sunday morning. But, as the advertisement says, it's 'worth it.'

Linden Innes-Hopkins
St Mary's Musical Director

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NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



Lockdown Update

When we wrote our June article forecasting that crime would reduce during lockdown it is a good job that we did not offer to eat our hats if it didn't! At the time of writing, towards the end of July, figures available for the months of March to May show an increase in all crime of 39% (compared with the same period in 2019) which is really shocking.

The most frequently reported crime category is anti-social behaviour which has increased by 41%. Whatever has been going on? Too many garden parties with non-family members perhaps? With so many of us spending most or even all of our time at home, it is also surprising to find that burglaries have increased by 35% though actual numbers are still below double figures.

Time for some good news. During the same period our membership has increased by 45 which is very pleasing. We have almost as many members in Welwyn receiving **OWL** messages as there are residents in all of Welwyn Hatfield following the police on Twitter. If you have been spreading the word about **OWL** to friends and neighbours - thank you very much. Just over half of our Welwyn households are still not members though so do keep letting people know. Looking at a graph showing

numbers of **OWL** messages issued each month, we could almost be mirroring the shape of the COVID-19 pandemic. From 23 in March, it rose to a peak of 27 in April, followed by 25 in May, and 19 in June. We hope you are still opening them rather than hitting the delete button!

Our PCSO has continued to patrol Welwyn and has responded positively to reports about anti-social behaviour, suspected drug dealing, and disturbing behaviour by a male alarming female walkers in the countryside.

Neighbourhood Watch relies on volunteers and one notable change recently has been the retirement of John Roper from his role organising Danesbury. It was John who prompted the police to adopt **OWL** in 2006 and he subsequently spent many years promoting its use throughout the District. He deserves a huge "thank you".

John's successor for Danesbury is Paul Smith.

John Mitchell and Valerie Richards
www.owl.co.uk/herts

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Welwyn High Street - Covid-19 Social Distancing Measures

During the first nine weeks of lockdown those needing to access essential shops and services in the High Street did so with courtesy, common sense and personal obligation to follow social distancing rules, without needing assistance. It was with some surprise and furore on 27th May that Welwyn woke up to new Covid-19 emergency measures implemented by Hertfordshire County Council. Not only was the High Street turned into one-way traffic travelling south from St Mary's Church to School Lane, but both sides of the street were lined with hideous orange barriers, which did not sit well in this conservation village, and we lost all the High Street parking. As several people said, it looked like a crime scene.

Essentially, the village was cut in half and the northbound bus stops closed in Church Street with passengers instead directed best part of half a mile away to catch a bus. Given the number of turnings and private drives in the High Street which created pinch points for the barriers, it did not work as well as HCC might have expected from a social distancing perspective. In the areas where people were queuing outside shops such as by Simmons and Lloyds Pharmacy, the road layout meant it was impossible to place the barriers. Questions were being asked as to why the barriers were necessary if they were not implemented consistently.

By then the Government's scientific advisory group, SAGE, had written that the risk of catching Covid-19 from passing

someone on a pavement was very small. Meanwhile the non-essential shops had re-opened and in early July restaurants and pubs were allowed to open for customers to dine-in. Our village traders were concerned about their ability to survive under these conditions and a statement signed by 28 of them was sent to the Leader of HCC asking for the two-way traffic and parking to be re-instated, to give them a level playing field to try and kick start their businesses again.

An explanation was given by HCC as to why the one-way traffic was necessary. This was to do with their expectation of Smart Motorway works on the A1M beginning in the autumn at Junction 6, expected to take three years. HCC wanted to avoid the village being used as a rat-run as traffic was displaced from the bypass and motorway. The traders disagreed; they say passing trade is vitally important to their existence. If traffic is encouraged onto the bypass their revenue goes down. Meanwhile Mill Lane, which has no pavements and runs parallel with the High Street, was experiencing an unintended consequence of these measures, as it had become a far more severe rat-run than previously. Residents were worried for their safety and asked for Mill Lane to become one-way in the same direction as the High Street. On an all-too-frequent basis vehicles and cyclists were seen travelling the wrong-way down the High Street. Cars were driving faster as the lack of parked cars and two-way traffic eliminated the natural traffic-calming

Welwyn High Street - Covid-19 Social Distancing Measures



measure. Accidents were happening but luckily no-one was hurt. The horse-riders were asking how they were meant to get from south of the village to north without navigating the bypass. After all, Welwyn High Street was once part of the Great North Road, serving as a staging post between London, York and Edinburgh, so has been synonymous with horses for hundreds of years.

Emails were sent, telephone calls made, and still it seemed HCC was not listening to the traders, or Welwyn residents. A petition was raised online with paper copies in shops. The final tally was 1,960 people asking HCC to return the High Street to two-way traffic, get rid of the barriers and reinstate the parking. Comment on the Welwyn Village News Facebook page was extensive with the overwhelming

majority in favour of the aims of the petition.

After seven weeks of Welwyn's plight seemingly being ignored by HCC a reporter from the Sunday Telegraph became interested in the story. During the following week HCC installed taller, more sturdy orange barriers as the original ones kept blowing over. These were even more dangerous as they obscured small children, particularly those placed close to the Zebra Crossing. Mill Lane residents, increasingly worried for their safety asked for a 20 mph limit with measures to enforce it.

The Sunday Telegraph reporter's enquiry to the HCC Press Office and to the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, four days before publication, triggered an immediate response. Grant Shapps (also Secretary of State for Transport)

Welwyn High Street - Covid-19 Social Distancing Measures

indicated that funds set aside by the Government were intended for towns and cities rather than villages such as Welwyn, and that in the middle of March he had asked for a re-design of the Smart Motorway which was anticipated to take at least four years to be signed off. On this basis he advised HCC that the one-way traffic in Welwyn High Street was unnecessary. HCC Leader, David Williams, said they would discuss again early the following week, engaging with their public health colleagues.

The Sunday Telegraph article was published on Sunday 26th July and there was a subsequent piece on Radio 4. Four days later HCC put out a statement that two-way traffic and all the parking would be reinstated in the High Street. Mill Lane residents at that point asked for their request for one-way traffic to be dropped but still wished to have a 20 mph limit. On 5th August at a virtual meeting of HCC, Borough and Parish

Councillors, together with other village stakeholders, a new plan was presented and accepted, to be implemented without delay. On 19th August the High Street was reinstated together with a 20 mph speed limit extending to Mill Lane, parts of Church Street and Prospect Place.

Barriers placed outside Tesco and both sides of the bridge, designed to slow the traffic, will be replaced with planters as soon as they are available.

And now, a call to arms! Please shop, eat and drink locally in the village where possible. If we are to continue to keep our lovely village thriving, our local traders need our support to get through what has been a difficult period for them. Our cover picture underlines how lucky we are in comparison with many towns and villages that are now living with empty and boarded up high streets.

Jane Carr



WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL



I hope you have all managed to stay safe and well. The last five months have been difficult for everyone but

we appreciate it has been an especially difficult time for some of you including parents helping with home schooling and children not seeing their friends. We hope the return to school goes well for you.

As I write this article at the end of July for the September issue of the Parish Magazine we have been enjoying some good weather but, I and two other WPC councillors agreed to do the very difficult task of judging the allotments at the beginning of July. Unfortunately the sun decided not to shine that day and we got very, very wet. The plot holders who won prizes will at least know that their plots looked lovely, even in the rain. Every year the judging process is difficult as the produce, flowers and plot maintenance are excellent and it is really hard to choose the winners. Well done to all plot holders, you really do a great job.

As I informed you in my last article, Louise, our very able clerk, is moving to Dorset and when you read this article she will have taken up her new role as Clerk to Ferndown Town Council. She will be missed in Welwyn but we wish her every success in her new job and hope that she and her family enjoy living in such a

beautiful part of the country. That is the sad news but we are delighted to have appointed Caroline Williams as our new clerk. Caroline will be known to many of you. As Deputy Clerk she has worked hard for WPC, getting to know and earning the respect of many residents of the Parish. We know she will be just as successful in her new role. In her place as Deputy Clerk we are pleased to welcome Alexandra Bond. Most recently Alexandra has worked as the Property and Grounds Administrator for Alton Town Council. Her experience there will stand in her in good stead for her new role in Welwyn Parish and we look forward to working with her.

Neighbourhood Plan

In recent articles I have mentioned our intention to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. We will need the help of all residents to accomplish this. The first task will be to complete the survey which you will be receiving. This can be done by hand or online. If you have internet facility, please refer to our website www.welwynpc.org.uk to complete the form online. Those of you who prefer to fill in the form by hand will be given instructions on how to return the completed survey. Please complete the form. When we asked residents whether we should develop this Neighbourhood Plan an overwhelming majority said yes. Unless we receive the returned surveys we will not know your views on the future of Welwyn Parish.

Climate Emergency Action Group

In January Welwyn Parish Council

declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency with the pledge that Welwyn parish will be carbon-neutral by 2030, considering both production and consumption emissions. The membership of the Climate Emergency Action Group is made up of Councillors and other volunteers who are enthusiastic and have an interest in reducing the carbon footprint of the Parish and creating the conditions needed for a sustainable low carbon future. I will be writing more on this subject in future articles.

Community Engagement Committee

Members of this committee have been investigating the possibility of a community orchard/nature reserve on the area of land between the lower tennis courts of Welwyn Tennis Club and Whitehill. A representative from **Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust** has looked at the area to help us to move this idea forward. I will keep you informed.

The Christmas lights also come under the remit of this committee. At the moment, although the lights and tree will again be a feature in the village, until we

receive further guidance from the Government we do not know if we will be able to hold our usual Christmas lights event. Watch this space.

Civic Centre

We hope to open the Civic Centre in September together with our other venues. Our staff have been making use of the time the Civic Centre has been closed to have essential maintenance work done, new outside lamps erected and a refurbishment of the foyer. The foyer has been painted and the dark cabinets removed. The quilt will be displayed in a new frame and the now bare walls will be used to display the work of local artists. I hope, when you are able to see the transformation you will be as pleased as we are. Our thanks go to all involved.

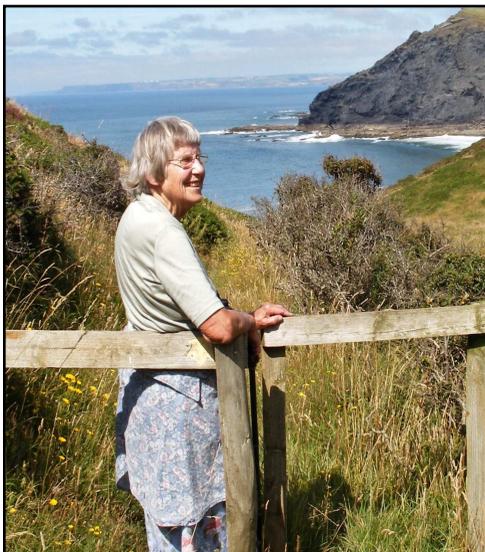
We have tried hard to support the residents during this difficult period and I would like to thank all of you who have, in turn, supported Welwyn Parish Council.

Marj Otty

*2020/21 Chairman
Welwyn Parish Council*

SHEILA EDMONDSON

Sheila, a much loved and respected resident of Welwyn village for over thirty years, died aged 92 on 9th March this year. Because of coronavirus her memorial service planned for 31st March had to be cancelled.



Sheila had a very full and interesting life. She was an ex Headteacher and in middle age married Stan, also an ex Headteacher. In their relatively short time together they travelled widely, shared many interests including gardening, wild life, the local community and young people.

Sheila was a deeply committed Christian, and a huge supporter of St Mary's Church Welwyn. In her later years she moved to a house in Church Street, Welwyn, where she could easily spend a lot of time involved in church activities.

Following are contributions from some

of her many friends, which give an insight into what Sheila meant to so many.

Joyce Davis

'When God made Sheila, He broke the mould. She was unique. She was kind. She was lovable. She was loving. She was caring. She was intelligent. She was always positive. She was fiercely independent. She was indomitable. She was exasperating. She was obstinate. She was argumentative. She was infuriating. She was brave. She was a true and devout Christian. She was secure in her faith. She loved the Lord with all her might, heart, mind and soul. She was one-of-a-kind. She was a legend in her own lifetime. She was SHEILA.

Sheila will be missed so much by everyone who knew her and loved her.

Rest in Peace, dear lady.'

Robin Wiseman

'I was so sad to hear about the death of Sheila. I had managed to see her in the Lister Hospital a week earlier, so not surprised to get the news.

In a way I was pleased for her that having lost all her independence she did not have to put up with 'being the patient' any longer. She wasn't any good at being told what to do!!!!

However, she is a huge loss to me and to my family and also, of course, to all of you and to St Mary's.'

Ruth Morgan

'I recall a Wednesday afternoon a couple of years ago arriving for Pram Service, as it was then called. Children from 2 or 3 months to 4 years came and loved to play with toys and sing and dance. Then the tricky bit them in a circle listen quietly!

SHEILA EDMONDSON *continued from p26*

Sheila took from her bag her pet tortoise and told them how much God loved them. Nowadays, singing 'All things bright and beautiful' I recall this moment. Thank you Sheila.'

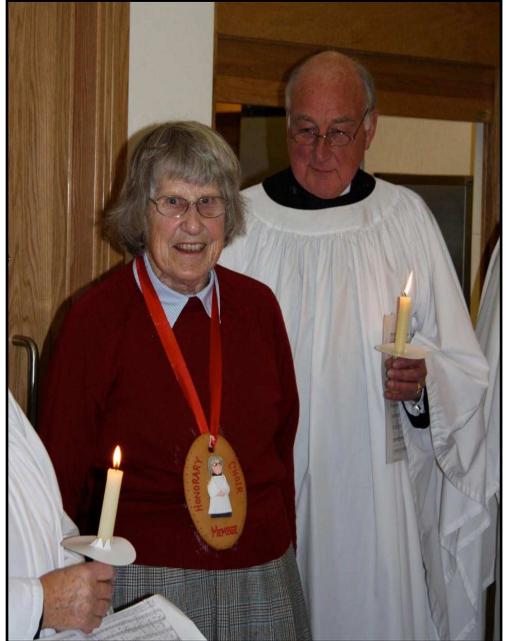
Dorothy Munn

'Sheila was always a great supporter of the choir at St Mary's church. For Choral Evensong every month and also for Special Services, the choir practiced in church for an hour or so and then took a break before the service started. Sheila was always in the kitchen, and for the break there were pots of fresh tea or coffee and a healthy supply of Choco Leibnitz biscuits, generally for 25–40 people depending on the service. Sheila then stayed in the kitchen to clear up before joining the service. In recognition of years and years of support for the choir, she was awarded 'Honorary Choir Member' status and was presented with her medal and ribbon before one of the services. This was specially made by Kirsty from Katies Bakery – out of gingerbread – a unique award for a very unique person! Thank you Sheila and may you rest in peace.'

Eric Pavyer

'Sheila was a founder member of The Women's Church Fellowship, and for a long time she was the leader. She accepted the change to what it is today and she continued to say the opening prayer at each meeting until she became too frail. We will miss her company and her lively mind. She had tremendous faith and contributed so much to Welwyn. She was a big part of St Mary's church.'

Marjorie Lyon



'Here is a little story about Sheila's ability to look on the bright side of life. One day Sheila, Sandra Champion, and I were on a 'Going Places' outing to Chartwell Manor (home of Winston Churchill). As we arrived at the bottom of a long drive the coach broke down and on a somewhat hot day we had to trudge our way up the drive. 'How lucky we are to have got this far before the coach broke down' chirped Sheila. 'No Sheila,' was Sandra's reply 'if we were lucky the coach would not have broken down at all!'

Sue Keach

'When I came to live in Welwyn, Sheila was one of the first people to invite me to tea and to meet a few people in the village. She was forever thinking, asking after and helping others, but never seemed to worry about herself. I remember how she loved an argument, always supported local

SHEILA EDMONDSON *continued from p27*

functions and concerts and how she was always smiling, even laughing in the face of adversity – I wonder what she would have made of the present coronavirus scare?’

Daphne Skinner

‘I have a fond memory of going to Sheila’s old house in Welwyn to visit the three tortoises that she was looking after. Sheila told us about their different personalities and gave me and my brother lettuce leaves that we could feed to them. Sheila was very caring for them and we really enjoyed seeing them walk around her garden and feeding them with her.’

Emma Varco

‘Sheila was a highly enthusiastic and jubilant person to talk to. She was welcoming to me at all times and took an engaging interest in my life, as did I in hers. I will miss her dearly.’

Elena Woodcock

‘Every morning we would tap out a tune on our bedroom wall and wait for Sheila to tap back, then we would run next door and ask her to name the tune!’

Charlie Dixon

‘I loved gardening with Sheila, we planted lots of seeds, made bug hotels, and she let me water the garden with the hose. Then we would share biscuits.’

Emilia Dixon

‘Although Sheila was having great difficulty walking, and was functionally blind, she decided that she would like to come to a rugby match at Twickenham with me, when she heard that I had a spare ticket. She very much enjoyed the atmosphere of the Cardinal Vaughan car

park, where we had our pre-match picnic, and then we all trooped off to the rows of portaloos to “make ourselves comfortable” before entering the stadium. It was at this point that we developed a ‘new game’. It became known as “Posting Sheila in the porta potty”. Sheila could not manage the steep steps up to the cubicle, or the cubicle door by herself, and was in danger of rocking backwards and falling, so one of us stood behind her, supporting her back and pushing slightly, one stood beside her making sure she found the handrail and one opened (and then closed) the cubicle door for her. She was laughing so much throughout this scenario that I think some others in the queue probably thought we had all had a bit too much to drink!

During the match, we were all shouting at the players encouraging them, when Sheila leaned across and said to me “Can you actually tell which player is which? I can see the team colours, but how do you know who has the ball?” I told her I could recognise the players, and those I didn’t know by sight had numbers to identify them, and I could see the ball – she couldn’t see any of that. She was also amazed at the number of times we had to stand up during the match to allow members of the crowd to go out for more beer or to go to the loo.

She was great company that day and said she had really enjoyed a completely new experience, despite the fact that the whole pitch was pretty much a blur to her. We played one more round of our ‘new game’ and then set off home. It was a good day!

Rita McNeil

‘We all know how Sheila could start an exciting debate or discussion (dare I say



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SHEILA EDMONDSON *continued from p28*

argument) on most subjects. I remember vividly an occasion when she definitely poured oil on troubled waters.

It was at one of the Carpenters' excellent Bible studies, about half a dozen or more of us were with Michael. That evening we had welcomed people from some other more evangelical churches to join our Anglican group. Genesis came into the discussion and I ventured to refer to the opening chapters as myths...

Uproar ensued, but before we could start to disagree about 7 days, how many hours, minutes, even seconds that would be against geological time periods, evolution and current discoveries, Sheila spoke up: "None of us know how long a day or a night is to God. His days could each be a thousand years or more. We do not know." A simple yet profound comment that put an end to all disagreement.

Thank you Sheila, we shall miss your wisdom, but I bet you are having some excellent debates with your God.

Vernonne Allan

'In book group, Sheila informed us she had her tonsils taken out on the kitchen table by an Irish doctor with a shaky hand.'

Wendy Lawrence

'Sheila was always positive about children's characters, and the more outgoing they were, the more she laughed at their antics and loved a great character in people. My main memories are overall of her love and enjoyment of helping out with babies, toddlers, children and youth at different points at church.

Full of passion, fun and good laughter at life's happenings, positive, wonderfully encouraging and optimistic with children. Joyful worship and very forthright in her thoughts and views. One would get sensible and insightful advice when needed.'

Sarah-Jane Hingorani

'I first met Sheila in the Charity Shop with Heather in charge on Brian's day off. We shared similar professional backgrounds and were both happy to be without responsibility, sorting the bags in the back. And

laughing - we definitely shared a sense of humour. I knew immediately that she was special but it took me a little longer to realise how much she meant to me. I envied her deep faith but we both quietly accepted our difference with total respect.

One afternoon by chance she called in for a cup of tea as I was waiting for an ambulance. I was in a lot of pain and it must have been for about an hour she just talked to me. After quite a while interspersed



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SHEILA EDMONDSON *continued from p30*

with the chat, I realised she was praying for me. She used no words that were overtly religious but prayers they were.

I know she could be difficult at times and with those who were closest to her, but I never heard her say a harsh word about anyone. 'Sheila IS Sheila' people would say as they recounted another story of her fierce independence followed by words filled only with admiration and love. She had many many friends and I am humble and proud at the same time to have been one of them. I miss her.'

Cindy Andrews

'One stand-out memory of Sheila was of her reading, beautifully, a piece at Janet Broom's funeral. I can't quite recall what the piece was, but she bravely struggled through. The occasion was particularly sad and difficult for her, because, not only was she a good friend of dear Janet, who was in the prime of life when she succumbed to cancer, but her own husband, Stan, at home, I think, was nearing the end of his life. He was, in fact, the next member of St. Mary's to die that fateful month of July 1996. The other two funerals were those of George Mogridge and my own father, "Rollo" Rowland. A memorable month indeed!'

Beryl Cooke

Parish Registers



St Mary's

- 2nd June June Rusch – Cremation Harwood Park
- 23rd July George Warner - Cremation Harwood Park
- Rosemary Smith (died in France)

St Michael's

- 15th June Doris Mary Tyler - Burial
- 22nd July Margaret Harradence - Funeral / Burial

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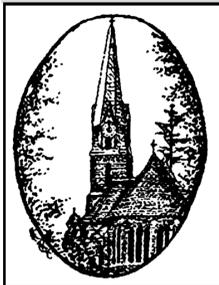
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Office: 01438 358966

email: andycas@ntlworld.com



NEWS FROM AYOT ST PETER



Gradually, the rhythm of the church's year is returning. Clearly, with the uncertainties surrounding the development of the

corona virus pandemic plans can be subject to last minute change, but at the time of writing we expect that St Peter's will once again be taking part in the **Heritage Open Day (HOD)** scheme which, traditionally, coincides with our **Harvest Festival** celebrations.

Every year around 50,000 volunteers give their time and effort to help the **HOD** create the largest cultural grass-roots festival in the country. Last year 5,700 events were organised which welcomed more than 2.4 million visitors. This year some **HOD** venues will require visits to be pre-booked and others will offer virtual tours and digital experiences.

However, with Covid-19 precautions in place, St Peter's will not require advance notification and will be ready to welcome all those who make the journey to see our historic church. One of the charms of our **Open Day** is spontaneity - the decision to take the afternoon off from the garden or shopping and visit that local building you have always wanted to see. Every open day, visitors have told us that they

have dropped in because the church they have walked or driven past so often is open. So we hope that the lack of needing to book or restrictions when people find St Peter's on the **HOD** web-site will attract more visitors than usual www.heritageopendays.co.uk

The **HOD** theme this year is Hidden Nature. Churchyards represent an important habitat for wild-life, recognised by the Wildlife Trust's 'God's Acre' scheme. We maintain St Peter's churchyard with the environment very much in mind, for example limiting mowing to paths giving access to the graves. A recent addition was the planting of daffodil bulbs at the west end of the churchyard.

St Peter's Ayot will be open from 10.00 am to 17.00 pm on Saturday 12th September as part of Heritage Open Day weekend. You are warmly invited to come and see our beautiful Victorian Arts and Crafts church, which will be traditionally decorated for the Harvest Festival service the following morning. We will also be selling delicious home-made jam, marmalade and chutney from our award-winning preserves maker, in aid of the church and the Herts Air Ambulance. It will also be a welcome stop for those taking part in the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust Bike & Hike that day (see page 36).

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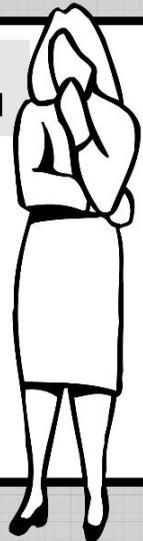
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NEWS FROM AYOT ST PETER *continued from p34*

Another sign of the slow return to normality is our first wedding since lockdown. And, of course, our regular church services returned in July. As a reminder, the services on the first two Sundays of each month continue to follow the Book of Common Prayer with readings from the King James Bible. On the third and fourth Sundays of the month, a modern translation of the Bible is used and services follow the Common Worship liturgy.

At the time of writing, Covid 19 precautions include taking no wine during communion, no singing, social distancing, hand sanitiser at the church's entrance and the requirement to wear a face covering unless you are exempt. But gradually the life of the church is returning and we look forward to welcoming visitors to **Heritage Open Day** and our **Harvest Festival**.

Roger Ford

Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust 'Bike & Hike' Saturday 12th September 2020

The Trust was set-up in 1991 to raise and manage funds to help the restoration and repair of churches and chapels in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, many of whom have little income from elsewhere. The annual **'Bike & Hike'** is a major fund-raiser for the charity, raising over £95,000 in 2019. Due to current Covid-19 circumstances, this year many of the churches will not be open to provide refreshments and bikers and hikers will not need to obtain a signature at each church. There are 411 churches in St Albans Diocese so plenty of scope to choose a route! This year Rev'd David Munchin and Peter Harris have already committed to cycling and we wait to see how many churches each of them plan to visit. Additionally, Geoff Cummings is organising a socially-distanced walk around the Welwyn Team of six churches starting at St Giles Codicote at 9 am, a great way to get some exercise and see some beautiful countryside with no obligation to do all six. To find out more about the walk call 07766 543066. A single fund-raising page has been set-up for all those participating either on foot or by bike which can be found at www.welwyn.org.uk/charities so do please consider supporting this worthwhile enterprise.



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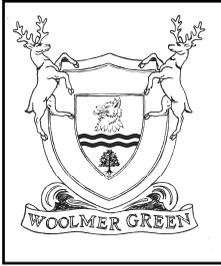
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WOOLMER GREEN PARISH COUNCIL



The Parish Council continues to meet remotely and the Village Hall remains closed to most activities. However, a few regular hirers of the Hall are able to use it for limited allowed activities now. The playgrounds reopened in early July but users are reminded not to use the playgrounds if unwell, to avoid them if it is busy and that the equipment is not cleaned so to ensure that hands are sanitised or washed before and after use.

The Farmers Market reopened at the end of June as an outdoor market on the playing fields outside the Village Hall. Normally the Market has a break in August but this year a date has been added for an outdoor market on Sunday 23rd August from 9.00am-12.30.

Local Plan hearings are taking place in July and August and the Parish Council continues to put its case that developing the Green Belt cannot be justified when previously developed land is available. Once the Hearings are completed we will have to wait until the government planning inspector publishes his report of recommendations.

Woolmer Green Planters and Allotments



Two months ago volunteer, Jenny Hawkins, had just planted the planters and they are now flowering beautifully.

The Woolmer Green allotments are at the height of productivity at this time of year with plentiful beans and courgettes in particular. Many plot holders also grow flowers and there is a constant buzz of insects around the plots. All the plots are let at the moment and we have a short waiting list but, if you are interested in applying for a plot, please email the secretary on wqallotments@gmail.com

Sarah Hall

Woolmer Green Parish Council
[*sarah.hall@woolmergreenpc.org.uk*](mailto:sarah.hall@woolmergreenpc.org.uk)

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As mentioned in last month's article, we scheduled the Grand Re-Opening of our Welwyn shop on **Tuesday 18 August**. As you can imagine, having to make sure that your shopping experience with us is Covid-secure meant a lot of changes both to our processes and to the physical layout of the shop. A Perspex screen is in place at the till, and hand-sanitiser is available for use as you enter the shop, as well as a host of other changes. A copy of the risk assessment that we carried out is available on our website. We hope that you will come and visit us now and help us to support the NHS in Welwyn and beyond.

The shop window has been dressed by Georgia Shaw and her husband, and the photo below shows the imaginative display that was created for the sale of toys that we held on 1st August 2020.

In addition to the physical shop, we are also now running a virtual shop on eBay.

Take a look and see what is on offer and make a bid, visit the shop at:

<https://www.charity.ebay.co.uk/charity/FRIENDS-OF-DANESBURY-AND-QUEEN-VICTORIA-MEMORIAL-HOSPITAL/3150501>

Nothing can prevent us from continuing the work that we do to support the NHS, and over the past few weeks we have provided:

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Church Notice Board

Worship has now resumed in our churches.

*Please continue to follow the social distancing guidelines,
use of hand sanitiser and the wearing of face coverings is mandatory, unless you are exempt.*

Details about Virtual Church, which continues at 9.30 am each Sunday, can be found at:

www.welwyn.org.uk

Sunday Services

	ST MARY'S - Welwyn
8.00 am	Holy Communion
9.30 am	Parish Communion / Junior Church
6.30 pm	Evensong (2nd , 4th & 5th Sundays)



	ST MICHAEL'S - Woolmer Green
11.15 am	Parish Eucharist (1st & 4th Sunday)
	Family Service (2nd Sunday)
	All Age Eucharist (3rd Sunday)
	Morning Prayer (5th Sunday)



Weekday Services

ST MARY'S - Welwyn

Current week's services are on the notice sheet
in church and on the website www.welwyn.org.uk

Tuesday	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (St Mary's)
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer (St Mary's)
Wednesday	9.30 am	Holy Communion (St Mary's)
Saturday	9.00 am	Parish Prayers (St Mary's)

ST GILES - Codicote

Tuesday	8.30 am	Morning Prayer (St Giles)
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Common Worship used at all Communion Services except where stated

Children

ST MARY'S - Welwyn

3.30pm	Craftea (see Diary on back cover for dates)
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Clergy Surgery Hour

Saturday	10.00 am to 11.00 am
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Church Notice Board *continued from p44*

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09.30 Sundays Holy Communion
 18.30 1st Sunday Sacred Space
 11.15 4th Sunday Family Service
 17.00 Thursday Evening Prayer



ST PETER'S TEWIN

09.30 Sundays Holy Communion
 11.15 3rd Sunday Family Service
 18.30 3rd Sunday Holy communion
 17.00 Monday Evening Prayer



AYOT ST PETER

11.15 Sundays
 1st: Matins:
(Book of Common Prayer, King James' Bible)
 2nd: Holy Communion
(Book of Common Prayer, King James' Bible)
 3rd: Family Service
(Common Worship, NRSV Bible)
 4th: Parish Communion
(Common Worship, NRSV Bible)
 5th: Holy Communion *(BCP, King James' Bible)*

ST GILES' CODICOTE

08.45 Sundays Holy Communion
 09.30 1st Sunday Worship 4U at Peace Memorial Hall
 10.30 2nd,4th Sun Informal Worship
 3rd Sunday Informal Worship with Communion

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MEDITATION - A Lockdown Walk in early May

Along the tracks and lanes we go,
mud and stones washed along
by last night's stormy floods.

A scent of wet soil.

Beyond my hearing but I sense it now
the song of joy for all the falling rain -
creation sings it out in gratitude!
Along the blades of grass
beads of crystal lie
celebrating the sunlight.
Dandelions open for business
as customers buzz into view,
no need to queue six insect-feet apart.

Up to the farm, white like a sudden snow
storm
of cow parsley clustered on the verge.
Jack-by-the-hedge, rising from a leafy bed,
stand in serried ranks.
"Do you know the rules" I said
"Six feet apart?"
"We have our own rule," they replied:
"Go forth and multiply!
"And it's *alliaria petiolata* to you!"

And here is the ancient oak
A thousand years old or more, they say,
looking down on the village.
"Before your time the Lord passed by
and blessed the acorn that grew into you."
"He passes every year" the tree replied
"hence all these fresh green leaves
upon my hoary frame."

Along the hedge, the lavish hawthorn
blossom
so thick you couldn't cram another flower
in!
And flowers on the holly too, all stock-piled,
for berries
against a hungry winter

And here is my field of larks!
Fluttering almost out of sight, the bird
pouring his libation from the sky
an offering and a blessing all in one.

Down by the country lane
a graveyard, parted from its ancient church
but not forgotten.
The angels come with armfuls of
snowdrops
and aconites decked out in gold.
They cast them not only on the graves
but everywhere.
And when these flowers pass
the daffodils appear.
Then bluebells come.
No need for pots or wreaths -
the angels see to it.

Arrested by the beauty of the song
we stop to see
a wren perched in among white blossoms
singing fit to burst, his tiny frame
trembling with the effort.

We turn for home, downhill.
The wild apple tree blows confetti petals in
the wind
And as we pass, we're newly-weds again!

Gay Carpenter