

St Mary Magdalene Langridge

Langridge Parish Newsletter June - August 2021

Letter from Revd Mark Searle

Rector of All Saints. Weston

May 2021



Chancel Arch

Christ centred, courageous community

What an extraordinary year we have had. Unprecedented may be a better word. Covid has locked us down and kept us isolated from each other. We have experienced highs and lows, joy and grief. We have also heard, and misunderstood, more statistics in the last year than most of us have heard in our lives. It has been a rollercoaster!

But during this year communities have also come together. The Christian community here at Langridge has continued to meet, albeit in a very different form. We found new ways to meet online. Facilitated by Tony we've had telephone services and zoom services as well as the occasional in-person service. The Christian community has continued, but more than that it's grown.

As we begin to step out of lockdown and rediscover what it means to be together in person, we have to learn new skills. To interpret smiling faces hidden behind masks. Discovering new ways of worshipping, both in person, on Zoom, and on YouTube. This freshly discovered digital world is not going away. But with all the screens and all the noise we need to keep our eyes fixed firmly in one place, on Jesus Christ.

Throughout the highs and the lows of life, many things are uncertain. But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the beginning and the end, the author and the master of our faith. To travel through this next season well, we need to fix our eyes upon Him.

Lastly we need to be courageous. The temptation will be just to go back to how things were. But there are good things that we've discovered along the way, and we need to embrace them. Reaching out beyond our walls, to our neighbours, caring for people with a digital reach. These are good things that need to continue. They will be a continued source of life and growth in every part of our lives as well as being a resource for the Christian community.

This Sunday will be Pentecost Sunday, when the church remembers the Holy Spirit poured out on all people for the first time. But this is not just a memory, it is a present reality. As we keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus and we step out courageously he will fill each one, and the whole community with his Holy Spirit. It's his power at work within us that helps us to be his witnesses in the world. In the context of Covid let's be a Christ centred courageous community.

Mark Searle

Rector of All Saints Weston, Bath, with Langridge and North Stoke

https://www.allsaintsweston.org.uk/Groups/304706/Sundays_Church_Live.aspx

RECENT EVENTS

Our Lent course (by Zoom) was a great success – possibly more successful in lockdown than it previously has been face-to-face. We had about 12 people attending each of the four evenings, with North Stoke and Langridge folk equally represented, both as leaders and participants. We adopted course materials prepared by the London District of the Methodist Church.

On April 25th, Victoria and Jeremy Humphries (clockwise) and Tony Davies (anticlockwise) walked the 20 mile Circuit of Bath for Julian House. While Jeremy walked, Victoria walked half and ran half!

On the 18 May we held our Annual Parochial Church Meeting, live in the Village Hall. Although it has been a difficult year it was a meeting with some positive reports recording our continual links with the congregation, clergy and local residents, financial progress and planning for future services and events. We are indebted to Tony Davies for his continual commitment.

A team of six worked on churchyard clearance and church cleaning & polishing on May Day. The ivy has been virtually eradicated (revealing, alas, some bulges in the stone wall by the lane) and the candlesticks are gleaming.

Thanks in particular to Hilary King and Tristan Howitt for their hard work in the churchyard. Tristan returned two weeks later to join Jeremy and Tony in a successful repair of a stretch of stone wall on the north side of the churchyard.



Work before and completed

RECENT SERVICES

We entered Lent in lockdown. Almost all of our services since then have been by telephone, except for two Sundays during Lent by Zoom (when we could also welcome the North Stoke congregation). Unprecedentedly, our Easter Sunday service was pre-recorded (once again by Sarah Couchman) and was not Holy Communion. Indeed Holy Communion services in mask-and-sanitiser conditions and without music are really not as uplifting as they might be.

We are grateful to Robert Webb, Roger Clifton and Mark Searle who have led live services for us; and also to Victoria and Jeremy Humphries, who mastered the technology to beam the service in May led by Mark to those watching at home by Zoom. Live services with a Zoom alternative may well become the ‘new normal’ for Langridge.

FUTURE SERVICES

From May 21st onwards (‘Step 3’ on the Government’s Roadmap), it is hoped that at least half of the Sunday services will be live at Langridge Church (with Zoom), the remainder being by telephone. In planning the services one has to respect the wishes of our superb team of visiting clergy, some of whom will prefer not to take live services just yet.

Our Patronal Service on Sunday July 25th will be at 11 am so that the congregation can go straight from the church to the pub for lunch (see below).

FUTURE EVENTS

We are determined to hold Second Saturday on June 12th. At the time of writing it is not clear what event format will be permitted and safe – we may end up praying for fine weather so that we can sit in the layby with our coffee and cakes!

On July 25th Victoria Humphries has arranged for us to have a parish lunch (in tables of 12) at the Hare & Hounds on Lansdown Road following the Patronal Service.

Our dear friend Richard Fenwick has eagerly accepted our invitation to give another organ recital, which will probably take place in September. Richard has an unusually energetic attitude to retirement: he is acting as locum Bishop of St Helena for three months this summer, then two months as a locum Rector in New York State in the autumn, but hopes to fit us in between those two spells of duty.

Re: MEMORY CORNER from March Newsletter

Update on Chris Britton's "FIFTY YEARS – What a Change?"

The last Newsletter reprinted an absolutely fascinating article by Chris Britton, written in 2003, looking back on 50 years of Langridge Church as captured in the official Service Register. Here is an update.

- Chris predicted that the Service Register which commenced in 1948, would last another fifteen years (from 2003). He was almost spot on. In fact it lasted another 13 years, until Palm Sunday 2016.
- From the 1960's to the 1980's, Chris recorded a congregation of between 15 and 25. In the new millennium, the average began at about 16, then fell to about 14, and since 2018 has been around 11 (although during the lockdown months of 2020-21, our telephone services have usually been attended by about 15 people).
- Chris wrote about Christmas Day collections rising from £2 or £3 in the 1950's to £23-9s-9d in 1980, with an attendance of 80. In the final years of this Service Register, collections at Harvest, the Carol Service and on Christmas Day were around £180 to £235.
- Chris reported that after 10 service cancellations in the 1960's, in the 34 years from 1970 to 2003 only one service (in 1981) was cancelled because of snow. However, since 2009 we have had to cancel seven services due to snow or ice.
- When Chris wrote his analysis, Patrick Whitworth had been Rector for 8 years and Chris wrote "Let us hope that he sets a record by remaining for many years yet". He did indeed, leading us for another 13 years until his retirement in 2016.

TD

(Patrick was delighted to read the article and contacted Chris again after many years)

A DIFFERENT YEAR IN THE VALLEY

A year ago when Lockdown had become established Keith Rippin gave an outline of living alongside the wildlife within the Valley. He now gives a resume of how the residents in his wood and stream have adapted.

What we did during lockdown - part 2.

My wife (Judy) is now really infirm but thoroughly enjoys watching the wildlife from our large "picture" window which leads directly onto our patio.

As a result I have been encouraging and feeding the birds and animals, some of which may be considered vermin under other circumstances.

1. We have the usual squirrels which love peanuts and have destroyed the hanging wire bird feeders when raiding for peanuts and fatballs.
2. Magpies and crows (the latter looking very smart) constantly land on the patio table for peanuts (put out for the smaller birds) and the occasional stale cake or slice of bread - the squirrels also love these and look very cute, sitting up holding a full slice of bread between their front paws and nibbling round the edges.
3. As to small birds we have : - Chaffinches, Blue, Great, Coal and Long Tailed Tits - the latter arriving in "gangs", Tree Creepers (often upside down on the tree trunks looking for grubs), Gold Finches - Absolutely beautiful with gorgeous plumage. A Little Owl (although perhaps this should not be classed as a small bird)

4. One "special" pheasant who is very tame and comes into the room if I leave the door open. We call him "Scruffy" as he usually looks a wreck and the last time we saw him he had damaged one leg and was hopping on the other - probably from fighting with Fatty- who is a cock pheasant who usually arrives with one or two hen pheasants. Scruffy is (almost) housetrained in that he comes in to eat, hops out to "do his business" and comes back in again. Sadly I haven't seen him for a few days so I hope he is OK.



5. One white cat with black blotches - very timid so probably feral.
6. One very smart black cat with white tips to its toes and muzzle - again very timid so probably feral.
7. Roe deer and the occasional Muntjac often "lying up" in the wood just on the other side of the stream.
8. For some reason there seems to be a shortage of trout in the stream - perhaps due to heron activity but I have not seen any recently - or maybe due to the building activity taking place near the head of the stream in Upper Langridge. There was an Otter with cubs playing in our waterfall 4 or 5 years ago but I have not seen them since so they are unlikely culprits.
9. The occasional hare (sometimes in pairs) on the flat path the other side of the stream.

It has been interesting watching the "power struggle" between the squirrels and the crows and between the fox and the cats :- When the crow and a squirrel meet, they usually square up to each other but eventually, after a peck or two, the crow flies off and only returns after the squirrel has moved on.

When I first saw the fox arrive at the same time as one of the cats, the cat put its paws on the plate as if to say "this is mine, keep off". The fox was quite timid and just tried to pick up the bits of food which had come off around the plate. After the cat had finished the fox picked up the plate and, holding it precisely horizontal, marched off up the wood with it. It was several days later that I recovered the plate on the opposite of the lane in the hedge where it had been left as the fox could not get it through the sheep wire. I had lost a similar plate a few days before and found that one on the edge of the stream about 80 yards from the house. The fox now seems much more relaxed and will happily feed from one plate while a cat feeds from the other. The only downside (if there is one) to all the above is really the cost - usually 3 tins of dog/cat food every evening not to mention peanuts and fatballs....

KR

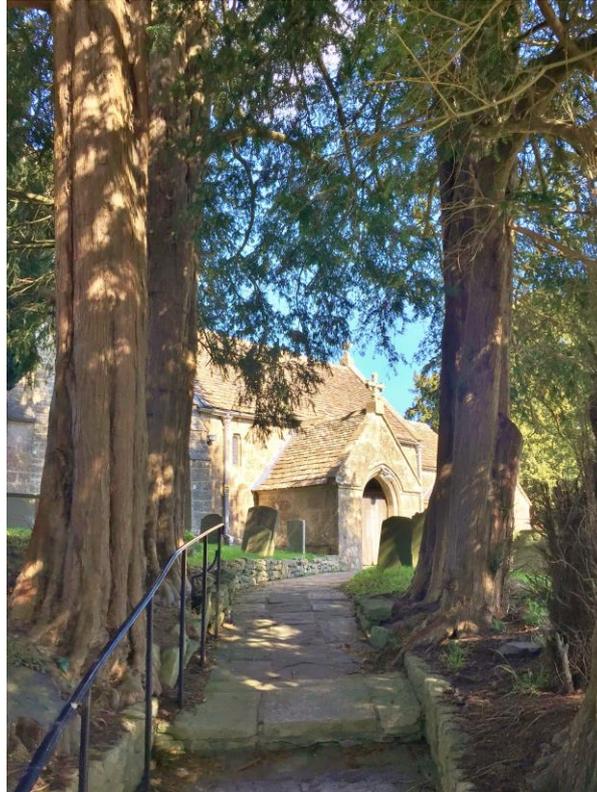
MEMORY CORNER - 1882

'A PILGRIMAGE TO ST. MARY MAGDALENE, LANGRIDGE

'At the invitation of the good Rector last Sunday morning I paid a visit to the picturesque little church of St. Mary Magdalene, Langridge. Alas that it should be in such a deplorable state of decay ! It was an agreeable walk, so far as over head and above ground cares were concerned, for the sun shone with all the warmth and glory of early summer, the air was sweet and comforting, and the atmosphere cloudless and calm; the trees had not lost all their foliage, the hedgerows were in many places still green and vigorous, whilst the decaying leaves, which o'erspread the ground, gave forth a pleasant woody odour acceptable to the senses of one almost continually confined to the noisy town; added to this were the sweet notes of the plaintive robin, the homely chirp of the sparrow, and the sonorous caw of my stately friend the rook, all tending to draw out the finer feelings of man, and to make the breast swell with a special emotion known perhaps only to those who revel in such rustic sweets. But underneath, yes underneath ! were very few delights, for muddy were the lanes, and muddier still the fields — especially one devoted to the growth of turnips, through which I had to pass — a field without a friendly path, with soil most turbulent and unruly, disputing my right to tread it at every inch, so angry indeed and miserably uncouth that it actually fought for the possession of my boots ! Fortunately they fitted pretty closely or in very deed I should have appeared a proper pilgrim at St. Mary's fane, and walked barefoot o'er the holy stones. Need I say how gladdened were my eyes when, on reaching the summit of a hill, I beheld, not very far beneath, the tower with the saddle roof of Langridge church — though how to reach it I really could not tell — there were hills rising in all directions, there was a valley calm below, but in the quiet I could hear a rushing stream, and o'er that stream I had to pass if I would reach the church, or wander back a mile at least to Woolley, and through the turnip field ! Stirred by a mental cry of Excelsior, I passed on, not to the ascent but down, down, down ! and almost ignominiously so, but happily the mud reached no higher than my knees. The brook I forded quickly, and soon with joy I gained my longed for goal. Sweetly nestling among the Lansdown hills is good St. Mary's, gray with age but lovely in its declining years. Shall it decay and totter to the ground as did the sister church at Woolley ? Methinks I hear some loving hearts say no ! To these men do I most earnestly appeal. The *Bath Chronicle* lent yeoman service in the restoration of St. Martin's, North Stoke, my letter in this journal was not in vain, it brought the needed help, it will again. The tower of St. Mary Magdalene shall not fall for want of friends, the rain and winds shall not penetrate its roof whilst Bath is near. The villagers can never save the sacred edifice from ruin, but the generous of the Queen City will, or I am much mistaken. For six long centuries the good old church has borne the shock of time. Generation after generation has worshipped within its sacred walls, and passed away. The church survives, but unless repaired must crumble to the dust. Northstoke had an internal disease, the fabric was sound; Langridge is good or nearly so within, but the giving way of buttress and ugly fissures in the tower warns [*sic*], if not quickly repaired, of speedy and inevitable collapse. We must not let this venerable Norman structure perish thus. Oh, no; it will not be.

W. Jones Hunt'

Evidently unknown to Mr Jones Hunt (and certainly not acknowledged by him) were moves afoot to work on the church. The Rector had commissioned architect John Sedding to undertake a survey with a view to restoration work in 1883.



Steps up to St Mary Magdalene Church

As you will be aware, Bishop Peter the seventy-ninth Bishop of Bath and Wells, who has been so respected in his role, was seriously ill last year and decided to retire. His farewell service at Wells Cathedral took place on Saturday 22 May 2021

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/news/join-us-in-our-farewell-to-bishop-peter.php#>

You can take a look back at the seven inspirational years of Bishop Peter's time in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/news/seven-years-of-serving-bath-wells.php>

During this period with Bath and Wells he has been supported by two Bishops of Taunton, with Bishop Ruth taking on the role in October 2015 (Ruth Worsley and Peter Maurice). He has also been served by six archdeacons (John Reed, Andy Piggott, Nicola Sullivan, Simon Hill, Anne Gell and Adrian Youings), two deans (John Clarke and John Davies).

LANGRIDGE SERVICES
June – August 2021

Date	Time	Church Calendar	Preacher
June 8	9.30	BCP MP 1 st after Trinity	Revd A Claridge
June 13	9.30	CW HC	ASW
June 20	9.30	CW MP	Revd R Webb
June 27	9.30	BCP HC	Revd Canon R Clifton (possibly)
July 4	9.30	BCPMP	Mr C Maggs
July 11	9.30	CW HC	Revd M Searle
July 18	9.30	CW MP	Revd J Harries
July 25	11.00	tbd Patronal Festival	Revd Canon Roger Clifton
August 1 st	9.30	BCP MP	Revd A Claridge or Revd R Webb
August 8	9.30	CW HC	ASW
August 15	9.30	CW MP	Mr C Maggs
August 22	9.30	Reflective ?	Tbd
August 29	9.30	BCP HC	Revd R Hunt

If you have contributions for the next Newsletter - September to November please contact Liz White regarding Church matters or the Friends' news. We would like to hear about all items of interest – comments, events or special occasions by - **16 August 2021.**

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