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Challow News

- June 2021 -



Rose
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St. Nicholas Church, East Challow.

OX12 9SH

(Vale Benefice)

Parish Eucharist

Sundays: 11.15am

Family Service

Temporarily Suspended

2nd Sunday 9.30am (Monthly)

Weekday Eucharist

Thursdays 10am



Vicar: Rev John Durant

The Vicarage, Main Street, Grove. OX12 7LQ

01235 766484

Email: vicar@valebenefice.org.uk

Associate Vicar: Rev Alec Gill

07739 563894

Email: vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk

Curate: Rev Chris Ashton

Email: curatechris@valebenefice.org.uk

Licensed Lay Minister: Sue Powditch

Email: llm@valebenefice.org.uk

Benefice Office: Grove Parish Church, Main Street, Grove. OX12 7LQ

Open: Mon - Fri 10.00 - 12.00

Tel: 01235 771479

Email: office@valebenefice.org.uk

Churchwardens

Mrs Ruth Pepler: 01235 762197

Mrs Linda Hopkins: 01235 767121

Pastoral Support

To help our Vicars Revd John Durant and Revd Alec Gill in the pastoral support of the village, Liz Belcher will be acting as the local contact within the village for those who are in need of a home visit, home communion or other support that we as a church may be able to provide.

If we can help, please contact Liz on 01235 763966

Advertise your business in the Challow News

For more details

Contact: nigel.langford@me.com

East Challow Village Hall

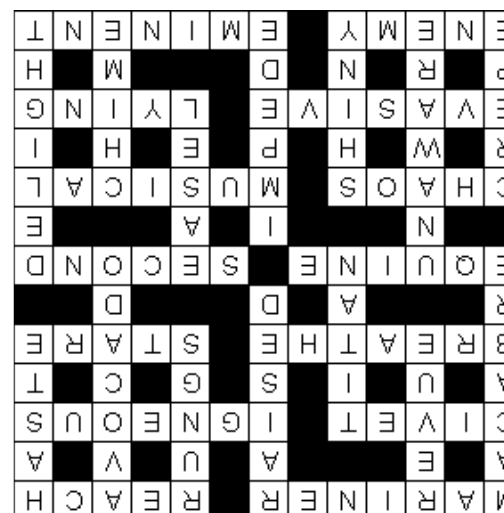
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PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council meeting takes place in the Village Hall at 7.30pm
on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

www.eastchallowpc.co.uk

VILLAGE ROADSIDE PARKING PROBLEMS

It has been brought to our attention that some of the grass verges and corners are being eroded by traffic, especially in Windmill Place and High View. Narrowing of the roads by parked cars is contributing to this problem, please can all residents parking on the roads take special care to leave room for vehicles to get through, especially for the emergency services and school buses. Thoughtless parking also impairs visibility, parking on pavements cause problems for wheelchair users and prams / pushchairs. Parking on grass verges also restricts the ground maintenance contractor from cutting the grass.

SPEEDING

This is a long standing problem and the Parish Council is actively working with Oxfordshire County Council to try and reduce the speed of vehicles through the village / approaching the village.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The next parish council meeting will take place at 7.30 pm on **Thursday 14 July 2021** in the village hall. All villagers are invited to attend parish council meetings as observers and there is a 10 minute public discussion time early in the meeting when you can raise any matter you wish with the council.

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Vanessa Bosley: (Chair) 01235 764068
Frances Webb: (Vice Chair) 01235 765176
Sarah Parker: 01235 762565
Iris Game: 01235 770412

Trevor Hayes: trevorhayes805@btinternet.com
Paul Barrow: Paul.Barrow@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
Wende Blowfield:

Clerk to East Challow Parish Council

Sheryl Sanders: 01235 760394
e-mail: eastchallowpc@gmail.com.

VICAR'S LETTER - A PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Dear Friends

“Never throw anything away!” I half-jokingly tell my children especially when I have used some odd item to make or mend something. Recently from my collection of things I have not thrown away, I used a length of hosepipe and some cord to make a swing which 3 of our grandchildren have been devising lots of games on. I found a mysteriously shaped brass object to replace a missing holding-nut off a garden chair that needed repairing.

The BBC advertises its programme The Repair Shop as a *“heart warming antidote to a throwaway culture”* and it is understandably very popular. It is wonderful when precious possessions are restored to their original beauty.

Unlike those experts I don't claim to have the ability to restore to perfection rather just to make sure something can be used.

Of course, as the designated household binman I do throw things away – though most of it goes in the recycling bin; so I suppose what I should be asking is *“Can this odd piece of equipment be kept for future use?”*

It won't surprise you that I began to wonder whether God is a “restorer” or a “disposer”? In fact I concluded he is both. The lovely hymn by Henry Lyte *“Praise my soul the King of Heaven”* is based on Psalm 103 which reminds us the Lord does want to get rid of the wrongs, sins and wickedness that occur in our world and ourselves but also prefers to restore us and bless.

I rejoice that The Lord Jesus is an expert in restoring and recycling people. As we come out of the restrictions trying to curtail the Covid virus let us celebrate that because of Jesus we are *“ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven”*.

God bless

John

- NEWS FROM THE PEWS -

Well we find ourselves in June half way through the year and we should be feeling pleased as we work toward the 21st June a big date in all our calendars.

This also coincides with more people having had their vaccinations, and many having had both.

Things are starting to feel easier all round and the weather is improving even though it's taking time.

Another date for your diaries is July 4th when we will be holding the APCM in Church after the service this has been delayed because of the restrictions, everyone is welcome to attend.

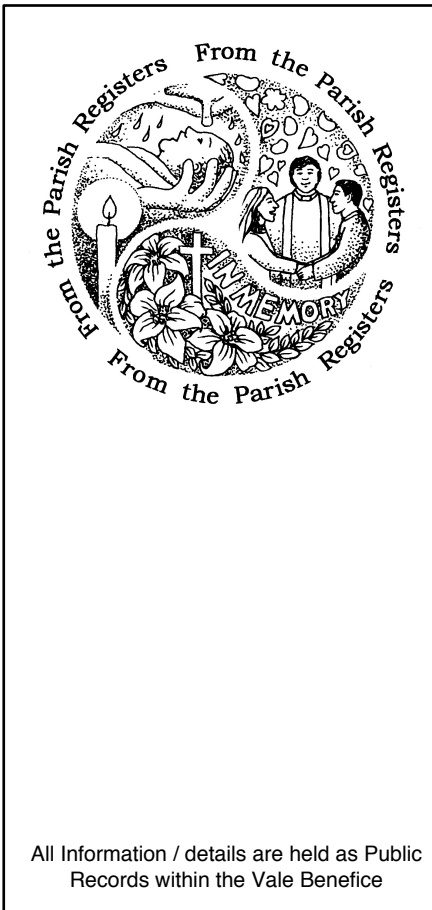
Services are now happening weekly on Thursday mornings and Sundays.

At this point we are looking for volunteers to help with the cleaning as well as other jobs at Church. Anyone who can spare some time or would like to help or be more involved please speak to one of the Churchwardens or any member of the PCC.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either Ruth, myself or the office.

Linda Hopkins

Church Warden



All Information / details are held as Public Records within the Vale Benefice

Wantage Independent Advice Centre to trade with new name, Vale Community Impact, VCI

We are excited to announce that from April 2021, we will be trading as **Vale Community Impact**, or, **VCI**.

The change in name better reflects our core remit that we are “In the Vale for the Vale”, offering many more services than Independent Advice from a Centre in Wantage!

We will continue to deliver our well- established services within our communities with a new name and logo.



For those who don't know us, we offer a free independent advice service. Our volunteer run transport service takes residents all over the area for medical appointments, day centres etc. Our Good Neighbour Service matches residents and volunteers to buddy up and chat or to undertake small household tasks.

We are, as ever, looking for volunteers for any of our services from East and West Challow and surrounding villages.

Our address and phone number will remain the same.

The team at Vale Community Impact

help@vci.org.uk

(this email address will be live from April)



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DATE	READER	READINGS
June 6th 1st Sunday after Trinity	Alan OR Ruth	Genesis 3: 8-15 2 Corinthians 4: 13 - 5:1 Mark 3: 20-35
June 13th 2nd Sunday after Trinity	Peter	Ezekiel 17: 22-24 2 Corinthians 5: 6-10 & 14-17 Mark 4: 26- 34
June 20th 3rd Sunday after Trinity	Jenny or Jeff	Job 38: 1-11 2 Corinthians 6: 1-13 Mark 4: 35 - 41
June 27th <i>No Service at East Challow</i> Patronal Festival at St. Johns, Grove.		2 Samuel 1: 1 & 17-28 2 Corinthians 8: 7-15 Mark 5: 21-43

All Readers must bring their own Bible to read from

Date	Sacristan	Sidesperson	Organist	Cleaning
06-Jun	Philip	Frances & Nigel	Ruth	Liz
13-Jun	Mary	Peter & Val	Ruth	& Linda
20-Jun	Jenny	Jeff & Liz	Graham	Mandy
27-Jun	Nigel	Tricia & Sue	Graham	

Face coverings must be worn or an exemption badge worn & clearly visible

Date	Intercessions	Flowers	Thursday	Sacristan
06-Jun	Philip	Heather	03-Jun	Mary
13-Jun	Mary	Mary	10-Jun	Jenny
20-Jun	Jenny or Jeff	Jenny	17-Jun	Juliet
27-Jun	Juliet	Mandy	24-Jun	Mandy

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Book Swap in the Phone Box

The phone box on the Village Green will be used for a

~ Community Book Swap ~

It will be installed with shelving, cleaned and then it will be available to be filled with books.

The village can then come along and take a look, take a book to read and then return it, and even pop some books in that you have read, and think that others would enjoy reading too.

Reading is a wonderful way to relax and also helps with your wellbeing, and we thought this would be a great idea for the community to get involved in.

Other phone boxes have been used for book swaps and have been a success.

The Defibrillator will remain and shelving will be installed so as not to obstruct the Defibrillator.

The phone box will be checked regularly
and the books refreshed.

If you have some books that you would like to donate to help start it going

Please feel free to contact

Sue Terry on 07780 837993

Village Hall Car Park

The Village Hall is now open for business and all hirers and visitors will need to use the car park, daytime and evenings.

Therefore can everyone who has been parking their vehicle in the car park during Lockdown please ensure that it is now parked in the council car park across the road, otherwise you run the risk of finding your vehicle blocked in.

Thank you for your cooperation

East Challow Village Hall Management Committee



IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO!!!

With the Cricket Season now in full swing, there's something on at the Club nearly every day!

Bar opening times will be as displayed on our website, but are generally

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	4pm – 8pm
Wednesday	4pm – 9pm
Thursday	4pm – 8pm
Friday	4pm – 9pm
Saturday	Noon – 9pm
Sunday	11am – 3pm

and we will of course be adhering to Government guidelines on Covid secure premises

Youth Cricket training takes place on Friday evenings, see our website www.challowcricket.co.uk for more info

Membership is just £20 per person, and gives you all year round access to the Club

www.challowcricket.co.uk
admin@challowcricket.co.uk

01235 763335



St. Nicholas C of E Primary School

East Challow, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 9RY

Life in all its fullness John 10:10

Community Respect Hope Forgiveness Courage Friendship



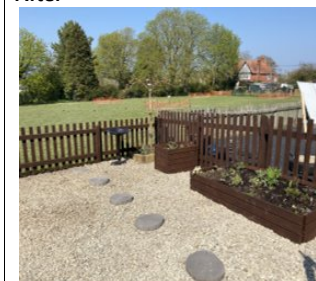
News from St Nicholas CE Primary- June 2021

It's been a few months since I last wrote to you all, but in that time we have achieved so much at school. The amazing Friends of S Nicholas did a leaflet drop around the village and as a result we have received lots of donations for our 'Garden Project.' A huge thank you - whether it's been a packet of seeds, wellies, flower pots or tools they have all been much appreciated and at some point in the coming weeks and months, they'll be getting well used by the children at St Nicks.

Before



After



Our next priority is to fence off the area of the field that we're going to be using for Forest School; the bottom left corner with the trees! This is our next fundraising focus.

It is such an exciting time at St Nicholas CE Primary and the support from the village has been hugely appreciated. With restrictions easing, we are hopeful that we will be able to have our annual summer fete on **9th July**. This is always a great opportunity to support the school and raise much-needed funds for the school. We are currently looking for donations for our raffle for this event. Entry into local attractions, donations of wine, flowers, short breaks and holidays, gift packs and toiletries all make great prizes. Please contact the school office on officesn@stnicholasce.vale-academy.org or on 01235763858 if you can donate a prize.



Friends of St Nicholas will also be running their Scarecrow competition again this year. The theme is 'Movies' and if you would like to enter, please contact Friends of St Nicholas directly on freindsofstnics@outlook.com.

Finally, if you are interested in making a donation towards the development of our school grounds, by sponsoring part of our project, please let me know. We are so lucky to have the outside space we do and maximising the learning opportunities it provides makes a real difference to our school community.

Heather Richards, Headteacher

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All entries for the July & August

Issue of the Challow News

Must be submitted by 15th June 2021

Email: nigel.langford@me.com

St. Nicholas Church 200 Club - Monthly Draw

May Results

£50 - N° 19 - A. Collie

£20 - N° 150 - E. Redford

£10 - N° 149 - O. Keep

We are looking for more members ~ Would you like to join?

Subscriptions to the 200 Club contribute towards the £20,000 which is required annually to keep our village Church open, in good repair and available for all who wish to use it.

The 200 Club is a monthly draw with 3 prizes each month - £50, £20 and £10

There is an additional prize of £100 in December.

The draw takes place on the first Sunday of every month, during coffee after morning service.

The cost is £2 per number per month, which can be paid monthly, 6 monthly or annually, and can be paid for by Cash or Standing Order.

If you would like to join the 200 Club, please contact Tricia Shand

Email: the.shandies@btinternet.com

Telephone: 01235 764222

Prince Philip - Duke of Edinburgh

Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, was born 100 years ago on 10th June 1921, on a dining room table in Corfu, at a villa called Mon Repos.

He was born Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark and always thought of himself as Danish, though he was in line of succession to both thrones. He was the fifth child of Princess Alice of Battenberg and Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark. He left Greece at the age of 18 months, travelling in an orange crate crib, when his father was banished from the country as a result of the Greco-Turkish war.

Philip was brought up as a Greek Orthodox Christian but spoke neither Greek nor Danish, though he was fluent in French and German. He lived part of his childhood years in Paris. His maternal grandfather, Prince Louis of Battenberg, who died shortly after Philip's birth, was a naturalised British subject who changed his name to Mountbatten – a "translation" of Battenberg – because of anti-German sentiment following the war. This was the name Philip eventually took.

Philip's mother was diagnosed with schizophrenia and spent little time with her son, being confined to an asylum. Before his attachment to Princess Elizabeth, Philip was linked with Canadian debutante Osla Benning.

Gardening really is good for you

According to a recent study conducted by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and two universities, people who garden every day have well-being scores 6.6 per cent higher, and stress levels 4.2 per cent lower than those who do not garden at all.

Dr Lauriane Chalmin-Pui, RHS well-being fellow and lead author says, "The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the more frequently you garden, the greater the health benefits.

"In fact, gardening every day has the same positive impact on your well-being as undertaking regular, vigorous exercise like cycling or running.

"Gardening is like effortless exercise: it doesn't feel as strenuous as going to the gym, but we can expend similar amounts of energy."

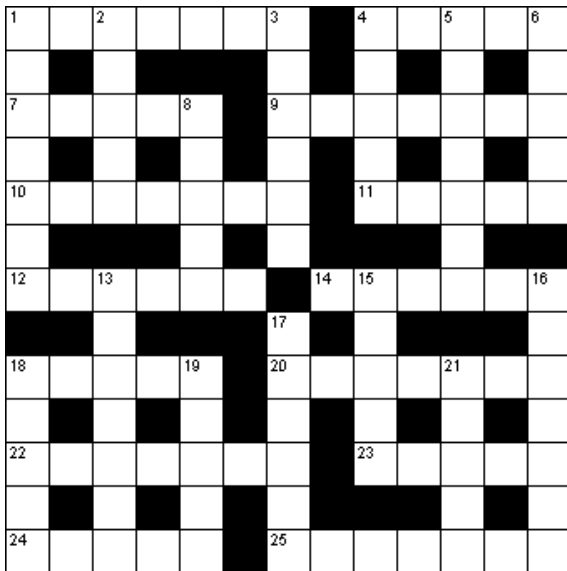
Where are our birds?

British birds are in big trouble. 80 per cent of our most popular species are in severe decline, according to recent data from the RSPB's annual Big Garden Birdwatch.

The world's largest wildlife survey has found that 16 out of the 20 most spotted garden birds have been in decline since 2020. There are now concerns about the greenfinch and chaffinch, which were seen in their lowest ever numbers this year.

The top five birds seen in people's gardens were: house sparrows, blue tits, starlings, blackbirds and wood pigeons. Only robins, blackbirds, carrion crows and the song thrush grew in number in 2020.

Crossword Puzzle



Solutions on Page 22

Across

1. Seafarer (7)
4. Attain (5)
7. Catlike mammal (5)
9. Type of rock (7)
10. Respire (7)
11. Gaze (5)
12. Resembling a horse (6)
14. Unit of time (6)
18. Pandemonium (5)
20. Melodious (7)
22. Elusive (7)
23. Fibbing (5)
24. Foe (5)
25. Distinguished (7)

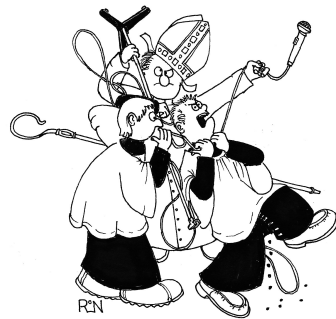
Down

1. Gruesome (7)
2. Variety show (5)
3. Elevated (6)
4. Parts of a ladder (5)
5. Fruit (7)
6. Precipitance (5)
8. Colossus (5)
13. Unwitting (7)
15. Tripod (5)
16. Joy (7)
17. Hinder (6)
18. Pancake (5)
19. Glossy (5)
21. Percussion instrument (5)

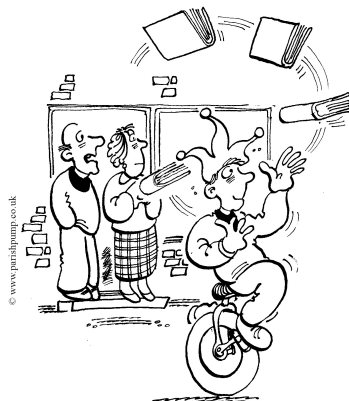
Cartoons



"Looks like no one was available to fill in for the vicar's annual holiday again."



After months of lockdown, the Sunday procession probably needed some practise.



...I think I must have missed that module when I was at theological college!

TOPICAL TALK

"It is like driving on the moon"

Some of our British roads are beginning to resemble "the surface of the moon", according to the RAC. It has recently reported that an average of 52 drivers a day are breaking their cars on potholes and needing to be rescued.

More than 4,000 drivers have needed assistance since January, despite the fact that lockdown has meant many fewer cars on the road.

After years of underfunding and patch-up repair jobs, and despite the fact that councils are currently filling a pothole every 19 seconds, the RAC says that the Government and local councils face an 'enormous task' to get our roads "anything like reasonable" again.

Potholes are nasty to cars. They can break your suspension springs, distort your wheels, and damage your shock absorbers, among other woes.

The beginnings of Boots the Chemist

Jesse Boot, the British pharmacist and philanthropist, died 90 years ago, on 13th June 1931. He turned the Boots Company started by his father John – a former agricultural worker – into a chain of chemists branded 'Chemists to the Nation'.

The 1st Baron Trent, as Jesse became in 1929, sold his controlling interest to American investors in 1920, but Boots continues to be a familiar name to all Britons. Ironically John Boot had offered his close friend and business associate John Harston the opportunity of going into business with him, but Harston had felt it was not a good investment.

Jesse Boot was a great benefactor to the City of Nottingham. He gave land for what is now the University of Nottingham and was presented with the Freedom of the City of Nottingham in 1920.

He met his wife, Florence Rowe, in a Wesleyan Chapel in Jersey while he was recuperating from illness. She was also an astute businesswoman, who helped to develop the Boots business, and her home island of Jersey benefited from the couple's generosity. After her husband's death she commissioned the glass artist René Lalique to refit the Anglican church of St Matthew there as a memorial to him.

Home alone, wanting a gnome

Do you yearn for a garden gnome? You are not the only one.

Since last year's lockdown, garden centres have been reporting a 'massive upswing' in ornament sales, due to people being forced to spend more time in their gardens. Gnomes top the list of most-wanted ornaments, with a near 100 per cent increase in sales over the past two years.

There was even a gnome crisis a while back, when the Suez Canal got jammed, and thousands of gnomes on their way to UK gardens could not get through.



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contact

nigel.langford@me.com

for details of cost etc.

Covid Roadmap Stage 3 (from May 17th) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary>)

Meeting people outside involves the rule of 6 or two households. We all know now that hugging is allowed!

All businesses, with the exception of high-risk sectors, will be allowed to open, thank goodness. Covid-secure guidance remains in place.

Hospitality venues will reopen for indoor catering although customers will order, eat and drink while seated. There will be no curfew. Also open will be cinemas, children's play areas, hotels, hostels and B&Bs, indoor sports and exercise classes. Some indoor event venues will be open (capacity 1000 people or half full, whichever is the lower number) and outdoor venues (4000 or half full), or where crowds can be spread out (<10,000 or quarter full).

Up to 30 people can attend weddings and funerals, receptions and wakes, christenings and bar mitzvahs.

Churches to launch Nature Count within the 'National Park' of Churchyards

Hundreds of churches have signed up to a week-long 'nature count' occurring this month (June), which will encourage people to visit churchyards and record what they see.

Churches Count on Nature, to run between 5th-13th June, is a citizen-science event covering churchyards across England and Wales.

Communities and visitors will be asked to make a note of the animals, birds, insects, or fungi in their local churchyard. Their data will then be collated on the **National Biodiversity Network**.

It is being jointly run by the conservation charities Caring for God's Acre, A Rocha UK, the Church of England, and the Church in Wales.

Church land, often uniquely unploughed and undeveloped, can be a habitat for precious, endangered plants and wildlife. Together, churchyards cover a huge area –estimated to be equivalent to a small national park.

The week is open to anyone with a love of nature, and churches are seeking links with local schools and local wildlife groups.

Various online guidance about getting to know fauna and flora is being shared with the churches who are participating. A similar national event **Love Your Burial Ground Week** will be combined with this project.

Registration for the webinars is on the **Church of England's website** and also at **Churches Count on Nature online**.

Councillor for Ridgeway Ward

Vale of White Horse District Council - Dr. Paul Barrow

Street drains in the village

Some time ago I contacted OCC about the large number of blocked street drains in the village and even highlighted where they were on a map! x = blocked; o = clear.



Well, to be fair, they responded in a couple of weeks and most have been cleared.

A few random drains are still completely blocked and you get the feeling that they don't know where the drains are located but drive up and down locating them by eye!

Cornhill Lane

We went for a walk yesterday, first time for 2 weeks with the elections having taken up a lot of time. Cornhill Lane has been cleared and repaired as the next stage of the management process. With Covid this last winter I didn't expect this to happen until next year so also good!



They did say that they would also see about clearing the drainage ditch running down the east side of the Lane but this hasn't been done. I've asked them about this.

Give a compliment

We all like to receive a compliment from time to time. As Robert Orben, former script writer for President Gerald R. Ford once said, "A compliment is verbal sunshine."

Another American, Leo Buscaglia once observed: "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn someone's life around."

At a funeral service, nice things are usually said of the deceased. While these comments are comforting for the relatives, did the same folks ever bother to say these kind things to the person themselves, when they were alive, to show them how much they were appreciated?

Sadly, not everyone seems able to compliment others. Perhaps they never received compliments when they were young, or perhaps they feel that to compliment someone else is to somehow put themselves down. For whatever reason, such people miss out on a whole lot of pleasure in life.

What does your lawn say about you?

A perfectly mown lawn may look beautiful, but it is also a sign of male control.

So says Monty Don, the *Gardeners' World* presenter. He is wary of what he calls the 'male obsession' to achieve a closely cut lawn which is of pure and perfect grass, without any other plants in it at all. Monty Don calls such an attitude to gardening "controlling rather than embracing," and reckons it is based on a desire to get just one more "aspect of life under control".

Instead, Don urges that at least part of our lawns should be encouraged to become wildflower meadows, which are much better for the environment. He explains: "Cutting grass burns fossil fuel, makes a filthy noise and is about the most injurious thing you can do to wildlife. Whereas, simply letting grass grow ... is probably the single most effective thing you can do in any garden of any size, to encourage, particularly, insect life, but also small mammals, invertebrates and reptiles."

What do you think will happen after Covid?

You can take your choice: a recent survey has found that a third of us think that society may *never* go back to the old ways, a third of us think we will go back to *exactly* as we were before, and a third of us think that we will be *keener than ever* to stay together.

The Together Coalition, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, has been working for the past year on a piece of research to track just what has happened to communities during lockdown.

The new research has found that "people feel a stronger sense of connection to their neighbours and community. ...We found a clear public appetite for a society in which we are more connected to each other, and the community spirit of 2020 is kept alive."

It also found that around 12.4million people have volunteered during the pandemic, 4.6million of them for the first time. And 75 per cent of those volunteers would be happy to do so again.

Feast of SS Peter & Paul, the two most famous apostles

29th June - St Peter, 'The Rock'

The two most famous apostles are remembered this month, for they share a feast day. St Peter (d. c. 64AD), originally called Simon, was a married fisherman from Bethsaida, near the Sea of Galilee. He met Jesus through his brother, Andrew. Jesus gave him the name of Cephas (Peter) which means rock. Peter is always named first in the list of apostles. He was one of the three apostles who were privileged to witness the Transfiguration, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and the Agony in the Garden.

When Peter made his famous confession of faith, that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus recognised it as being the result of a revelation from the Father. He in turn told Peter that he would be the rock on which His Church would be built, that the 'gates of hell' would never prevail against it. Peter and the apostles would have the power of 'binding and loosing', but Peter would be personally given 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven'. Jesus also forewarned Peter of his betrayal and subsequent strengthening of the other apostles. After His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to Peter before the other apostles, and later entrusted him with the mission to feed both the lambs and the sheep of Christ's flock.

Peter played a big part in the early Church, and he is mentioned many times in the Book of Acts, where in the early chapters he organised the choice of Judas' successor, preached with stirring authority at Pentecost; and was the very first apostle to work a miracle. Peter went on to defend the apostles' right to teach at the Sanhedrin, and to condemn Ananias and Sapphira. It was Peter who first realised that Christianity was also for the Gentiles, after his meeting with Cornelius. Later he took a prominent part in the council at Jerusalem and went on to clash with St Paul at Antioch for hesitating about eating with Gentiles.

Early tradition links Peter with an apostolate and martyrdom at Rome. The New Testament does not tell us either way, but Peter being in Rome would make sense, especially as Peter's first epistle refers to 'Babylon', which was usually identified with Rome. Peter's presence in Rome is mentioned by early church fathers such as Clement of Rome and Irenaeus. Tradition also tells us that Peter suffered under Nero and was crucified head-downwards. There is no conclusive proof either way that St Peter's relics are at the Vatican, but it is significant that Rome is the only city that ever claimed to be Peter's place of death.

St Peter was a major influence on Mark when writing his gospel, and the First Epistle of Peter was very probably his. (Many scholars believe that the Second Epistle was written at a later date.)

From very early times Peter was invoked by Christians as a universal saint. He was the heavenly door-keeper, the patron of the Church and the papacy, a saint both powerful and accessible.

In England there were important dedications to Peter from early times: monasteries such as Canterbury, Glastonbury, Malmesbury, Peterborough, Lindisfarne, Whitby, Wearmouth, and especially Westminster. Cathedrals were named after him, too: York, Lichfield, Worcester and Selsey. In all, it has been calculated that 1,129 pre-Reformation churches were dedicated to St Peter, and another 283 to SS Peter and Paul together.

Images of Peter are innumerable, but his portraiture remains curiously the same: a man with a square face, a bald or tonsured head, and a short square, curly beard. Not surprisingly, his chief emblem is a set of keys, sometimes along with a ship or fish.

29th June - St Paul, apostle to the Gentiles

Like Peter, Paul (d. c. 65) also started life with another name: Saul. This great apostle to the Gentiles was a Jew born in Tarsus and brought up by Gamaliel as a Pharisee. So keen was he to defend the god of his fathers that he became a persecutor of Christianity, and even took part in the stoning of Stephen. He hunted Christians down and imprisoned them, and it was while on his way to persecute more Christians in Damascus that he was suddenly given his vision of Christ.

It was the decisive moment of Paul's life – Paul suddenly realised that Jesus was truly the Messiah, and the Son of God, and that He was calling Paul to bring the Christian faith to the Gentiles. Paul was then healed of his temporary blindness, baptised, and retired to Arabia for about three years of prayer and solitude, before returning to Damascus.

From then on Paul seems to have lived a life full of hazard and hardship. He made many Jewish enemies, who stoned him, and wanted to kill him. Nevertheless, Paul made three great missionary journeys, first to Cyprus, then to Asia Minor and eastern Greece, and lastly to Ephesus, where he wrote 1 Corinthians, then to Macedonia and Achaia, where he wrote Romans, before returning to Jerusalem.

After stonings, beatings and imprisonment in Jerusalem he was sent to Rome for trial as a Roman citizen. On the way he was shipwrecked at Malta; when he finally reached Rome he was put under house-arrest for two years, during which time he wrote the four 'captivity' epistles. Later Paul may have revisited Ephesus and even have reached Spain. Tradition tells he was eventually martyred at Rome during the persecution of Nero, being beheaded (as a Roman citizen) at Tre Fontane and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands.

The belief that Peter and Paul died on the same day was caused by their sharing the same feast day.

Paul was not only a tireless missionary, but a great thinker. His epistles played a major part in the later development of Christian theology. Paul's key ideas include that Redemption is only through faith in Christ, who abrogated the old Law and began the era of the Spirit; that Christ is not just the Messiah, but the eternal, pre-existent Son of God, exalted after the Resurrection to God's right-hand; that the Church is the (mystical) body of Christ; that the believers live in Christ and will eventually be transformed by the final resurrection.

It is difficult to overemphasise the influence of Paul on Christian thought and history: he had a major effect on Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin and others. In art, Paul is depicted as small in stature, bald and bandy-legged, with a long face, long nose and eyebrows meeting over deep-set eyes. His usual emblems are a sword and a book. In England he was never as popular as St Peter, and ancient English churches dedicated to him alone number only 43.

The history of the relics of Peter and Paul is not very clear. Tradition says that Peter was buried at the Vatican and Paul on the Ostian Way under his basilica. Certainly, both apostles were venerated from very early times both in the Liturgy and in private prayers, as testified by Greek and Latin graffiti in the catacombs of the early 3rd century.