

# Broughton Outlook

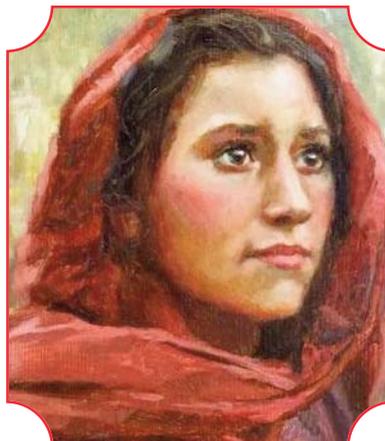
*Jesus said: "I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15.16*

We seek to make Jesus known in our community, through our joyful, loving service and worship.

## The Feast Day of Saint Mary Magdalene



22nd  
July



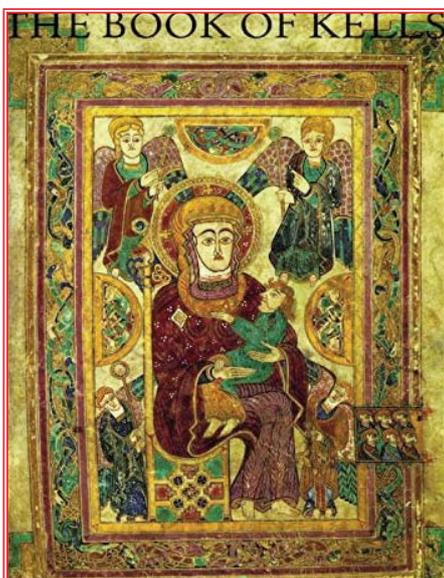
## Reflection Vision

One of my favourite hymns is “Be Thou my vision.”

It is an 8<sup>th</sup> century Irish hymn, “Bí Thusa ‘mo Shúile.” Christianity was brought to Ireland by St. Patrick in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and by the 7<sup>th</sup>, Ireland was renowned for scholarship and Christian mission.

Irish churchman such as Columbanus and Columba went to Gaul, Scotland and Anglo-Saxon England to spread the Gospel and establish monasteries. Works such as the *Book of Kells* (which was produced around 800 AD in the Columban monasteries of Iona and Kells) survive as evidence of their sophistication and skilfulness. The society was Gaelic in culture and language and its monasteries were central to religion, scholarship, politics and the economy.

The first recorded Viking raid in Irish history occurred in 795 AD. It was the beginning of continuous pillaging along coastal settlements. These early Vikings looted the treasures of the monasteries and killed any who got in their way. It was a violent and fearful time. And yet, the monks continued to follow their life of prayer, worship, hymnody and the creation of masterpieces such as the *Book of Kells*.



Thanks to Mary Elizabeth Byrne, M.A. (1880–1931), an Irish linguist and scholar who translated this 8<sup>th</sup> century hymn, we can enter the spirit of those monks as they lived on the edge of our islands and worshiped God.

**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;**  
**Be all else but naught to me, save that thou art,**  
**Be thou my best thought in the day and the night;**  
**Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;**  
**Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord.**

**Be thou my great Father, and I thy true son,**  
**Be thou in me dwelling and I with thee one.**

**Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;**  
**Be thou my inheritance, now and always;**  
**Be thou and thou only the first in my heart,**  
**O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,**  
**O grant me its joys after vict'ry is won,**  
**Great heart of my own heart, whatever befall,**  
**Still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.**

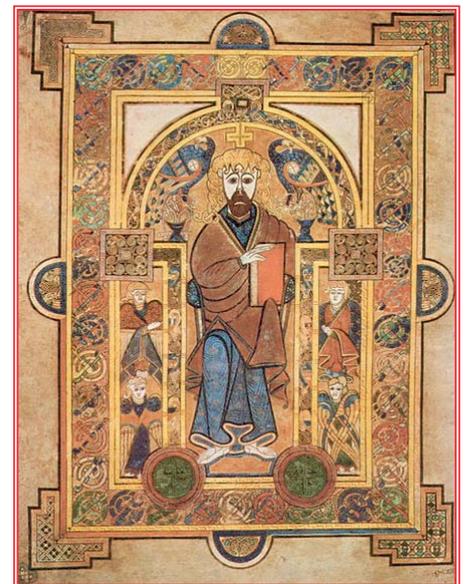
Vision can be an overused word these days. Before the launch of Vision 2026, there was an impression that the Church of England in Lancashire, as in many other parts of the country, was into a period of “managed decline:” fewer stipendiary clergy, amalgamated parishes, shrinking congregations and closed churches.

Vision 2026 to *Make Disciples of Jesus, Be Witnesses to Jesus, and Grow Leaders for Jesus* changed all that. Instead of managed decline, the Diocesan agenda is all about growth.

These are challenging times, made more challenging by the coronavirus pandemic and Brexit. This is exactly when we have to embrace the positive meanings of vision: dream, ideal, imagination, insight, farsightedness, keenness and foresight. Our inspiration emanates from our faith, our desire to share the Good News of the Risen Lord, and serve our congregation and community together.

This is the positivity we require as a parish. We are entering a new era. The recruitment of a new vicar will begin in the autumn. The plans are developing for the new St. Martin's – the space where the parish can live out its vision for worship and service.

These are not the dangerous times of the monks in Iona and Kells – living on the cold coasts of our northern shores, not knowing when the long boats of the Viking raiders would return. Yet it is their words of faith that come to us over the centuries: words that echo Jesus' promise to us that he will be “with us to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20).



### Christ Enthroned

Our courage and support are from God: “Lord of our hearts,” “ever with us,” “our treasure,” and “our vision.”

**Canon Andrea Titterington**

## What the Dickens!

If in a *vox pop*, people were asked to name the two most famous or influential English writers, I guess near or at the top of the list would be Shakespeare and Dickens.

The 9th June this year marked the 150th Anniversary of the death of Charles John Huffam Dickens. In the light of all the recent discussion of child poverty and deprivation exacerbated by the Covid19 pandemic, his life is one that illustrates that even though society should strive to eradicate such poverty, it need not be a barrier to success and achievement

Born on 7 February 1812 at number 1 Mile End Terrace in the Landport district of Portsea Island in Portsmouth, he was the second of the eight children of Elizabeth and John Dickens.

His father, a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, was temporarily stationed there but in January 1815 he was recalled to London and the family moved to Norfolk Street, Fitzrovia. A year later they relocated to Sheerness on the Kent coast, and from there to Chatham, where Dickens spent his formative years until the age of 11. This part of his early life seems to have been idyllic, though he thought himself a "very small and not-over-particularly-taken-care-of boy".

Charles spent much time outdoors, but also read voraciously, particular favourites being *The Arabian Nights* and *Robinson Crusoe*. His father's brief work as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office afforded him a few years of private education, first at a dame school, and then at one run by William Giles in Chatham.

These happy years came to an abrupt end in June 1822, when John Dickens was recalled to Navy Pay Office headquarters at Somerset House in London, and the family (except for Charles, who stayed behind to finish his final term of work) moved to Camden Town.

The family had left Kent with rapidly mounting debts. In 1824 John Dickens was forced by his creditors into the Marshalsea debtors' prison in

Southwark, London. His wife and youngest children joined him there, as was the practice at the time. Charles, then 12 years old, boarded with Elizabeth Roylance, a family friend. Later, he lived in a back-attic in the house of an agent for the Insolvent Court, Archibald Russell, "a fat, good-natured, kind old gentleman... with a quiet old wife" and lame son, in Lant Street in Southwark. They provided the inspiration for the Garlands in *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

On Sundays—with his sister Frances, free from her studies at the Royal Academy of Music—he spent the day at the Marshalsea, used later as a setting in *Little Dorrit*.

To pay for his board and to help his family, Dickens was forced to leave school and work ten-hour days at Warren's Blacking Warehouse, on Hungerford Stairs, near the present Charing Cross station, where he earned six shillings a week pasting labels on pots of boot blacking. He later recalled:

*The blacking-warehouse was a crazy, tumble-down old house, abutting on the river, and literally overrun with rats. Its wainscoted rooms, its rotten floors and staircase, and the old grey rats swarming down in the cellars, with the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise up visibly before me, as if I were there again.*

*My work was to cover the pots of paste-blackening; first with a piece of oil-paper, and then with a piece of blue paper; to tie them round with a string; and then to clip the paper close and neat, all round, until it looked as smart as a pot of ointment from an apothecary's shop. When a certain number of grosses of pots had attained this pitch of perfection, I was to paste on each a printed label, and then go on again with more pots. Two or three other boys were kept at similar duty downstairs on similar wages. One of them came up, in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on the first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and tying the knot. His name was Bob Fagin; and I took the liberty of using his name,*

*long afterwards, in Oliver Twist.*



The strenuous and often harsh working conditions made a lasting impression on Dickens and later influenced his fiction and essays, becoming the foundation of his interest in the reform of socio-economic and labour conditions, the rigours of which he believed were unfairly borne by the poor.

A few months after his imprisonment, John Dickens's mother, Elizabeth, died and bequeathed him £450 and he and his family were able to leave the Marshalsea.

Dickens was eventually sent to the Wellington House Academy in Camden Town, where he remained until March 1827, having spent about two years there. He did not consider it to be a good school: "Much of the haphazard, desultory teaching, poor discipline punctuated by the headmaster's sadistic brutality, the seedy ushers and general run-down atmosphere, are embodied in Mr Creakle's establishment in David Copperfield."

Despite his lack of formal education, he edited a weekly journal for 20 years, wrote 15 novels, five novellas, hundreds of short stories and non-fiction articles, lectured and performed readings extensively, was an indefatigable letter writer, and campaigned vigorously for children's rights, education, and other social reforms. He was a born entertainer, gifted mimic and unrivalled creator of unforgettable characters, who actively sought fame and success, and whose lasting popularity shows that despite the deprivations of his early life, he had the talent, determination and resilience to achieve his ambitions.

BH

# Community, Solitude, and the Presence of God

**Living in community – whether it is a church family, an immediate or extended family, or a group of friends or co-workers – requires that we constantly see the face of God in others.**

The blessing in Numbers 6:22-26 reminds us to see God's blessing on the blessed, to see the face and peace of God reflected on the other person. In times of disagreement – real or imagined, tiny or enormous – we need to see God's face to remind us of the greater calling God has for us. Then we are invited to turn this prayer around;

***“May God help me to bless you; may God help me to be gracious to you; may God help me to turn my face toward you and give you peace”.***

Of course, our blessing is nothing compared to God's! But by praying this prayer and seeking to live this blessing, we invite God's Spirit to generate the graciousness and peace that we are unable to muster up ourselves. Living out this blessing in community requires that we intentionally take time away from that community: in solitude, we may pray this blessing upon our own lives and seek God's peace in the quietness.

When the soul is strong and we operate from a quiet centre, God doesn't need a megaphone to get our attention. We can hear his whispers.

In Proverbs 3:32 it tells us that God is intimate with the upright and takes them into his confidence, offering them friendship. The question is not whether God is speaking to us. He sends us messages all the time – through creation, his word, people, and events. There is no chance thing through which God cannot speak – even the walk from the house to the

garage which you have walked many times before, even the moments when you cannot believe there is a God who speaks at all anywhere.

It is very hard to believe that the Creator of the universe is choosing to speak to us, not just occasionally but most of the time! Sometimes he wants to encourage and comfort us. Sometimes he needs to remind us about the things we have done wrong and remind us to say sorry for them. Sometimes he wants to give us an idea. Sometimes he just wants us to remember that we are treasured.

I shudder to think how many messages we may have missed. Are we always quick to listen? Are we attentive to his promptings? These times away from others remind us that true community is not just ourselves and others, true community includes God, who turns us towards one another and in the process, to God himself. I believe that this could be a positive to come out of this lockdown during the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Scripture Verses:**

## Numbers 6:22-26 - The Priestly Benediction

*22 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 23 Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them, 24 The Lord bless you and keep you; 25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; 26 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.*

## Proverbs 3:32

*32 for the perverse are an abomination to the LORD but the upright are in his confidence.*

May God's blessing be with you and your loved ones now and always.

Love and God bless

**Rev. Pauline**

## Outlook Deadline

Please send any items for August Outlook by **Saturday 11th July**  
All non-editing information rotas, lists, statistics to Chris Couper direct: [chris.j.couper@talk21.com](mailto:chris.j.couper@talk21.com) or by hand.

All other news, articles, pictures, letters to be sent to **Brendan Hurley, Outlook editor,** at [broughtonoutlook@hotmail.com](mailto:broughtonoutlook@hotmail.com)

We are hopefully coming towards the end of the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but sadly during that time a number of Parishioners have lost their lives, either through the virus or from other causes.

Being unable to hold services in church during this time, our thoughts and prayers have been with their families as they mourn their loved ones.

Eventually, it is hoped that Memorial Services can be arranged for the families and friends involved.

## Grandparents

In answer to the question: *What are grandparents?* Reception pupils offered some thoughts:

- \* They can take their teeth and gums out
- \* They wear glasses and funny underwear
- \* It's funny when they bend over - you hear gas leaks and they blame their dog
- \* Usually grandmas are fat but not too fat to tie your shoes
- \* Everybody should try to have grandparents - they know we should have a snack before bed and they say prayers with us and kiss us even when we've acted bad

## La Belle Bretagne

As we move ever closer to July and we are again enjoying some lovely sunny days, my thoughts turn to holidays. Suddenly our present reality hits and I think that maybe this year I'll have to make do with holidays that have already been.

Reading JC's choir news each week has brought to mind our first French tour with the choir in what I think was July 2010. Patrick had not long been in the choir so we hadn't been invited to go originally but, with about 3 weeks to go, a family had unfortunately had to drop out and we were off.



**The ancient and beautiful town of Vannes**

Patrick was delighted as lots of his friends were going; we were a little less sure. We knew lots of choir mums and dads and lots of people to say 'hello' to at church but this was going to be very different! Once we'd had our first meeting, we started receiving lots of advice such as: *don't forget the travel sickness pills; the pillows are rock hard so take your own; there are no toilet seats (take your own?); you'll be up early everyday, there's a lot of travelling and take extra food* - but on top of that everyone said - *you'll have a great time!*

After a smooth journey down from church (with parents, choir men and friends sitting in the front half of the coach and the boys and young men in the back half) and an overnight ferry crossing, we arrived at Lycée Saint Paul, Vannes the following morning.

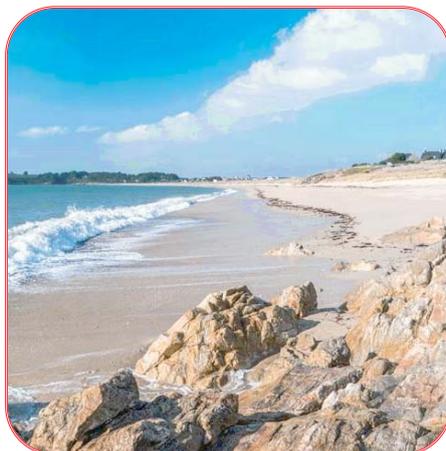


**Lycée Saint Paul - our home for the week**

As with the whole tour, there were great plans of the accommodation lists of allocated rooms and timetables for the week. We owed a special thank you to the Cross family who managed to accommodate us with a newly refurbished room on the ground floor. We were especially lucky with this room as it had a (secret) adjoining shower room and this became a standing joke for the week as we gave others a guided tour of our unique facilities!

With a little time for unpacking, we were soon off to the town and church where that evening's concert was being held. A leisurely look around the French market and time for one of the week's many café stops for coffee, it was back to base for our lunch. As at every meal time, the boys sat with JC and us 'groupies' filled up the tables at the opposite side of the canteen.

After lunch, a quick sort out of beach paraphernalia and back on the coach to the beach. All the beaches we visited were wonderful. The beaches on the Gulf of Morbihan all have names, Kervillen and Kerjouarno (pictured below) for example, but I, like the boys, remember which beach is which by what they were best for.



Every afternoon ran like a well-oiled machine: paddling, swimming, snorkelling, games of cricket and football, collecting shells, sleeping and eating ice creams!

The whole party returned to Vannes for the evening meal before leaving for that evening's concert. After the concerts, with the bar open, courtesy of the Cross and Nicholson bar staff and their helpers, it was another opportunity to foster new friendships and get to know our fellow church groupies! This set the pattern for the week.

My reasons for plucking up courage to put pen to paper have been to add to John's brilliant choir news that he has sustained us with since the beginning of lockdown, but also to remind every one connected with our three worship centres, what a wonderful church community we have.

From the very beginning of our first French tour, we felt part of a wider church family. We embraced being able to socialise with lots of different families we knew from church and get to know them. We felt welcomed and appreciated. The overriding feeling after each concert was one of being proud to be part of such a strong, friendly, cohesive church group. The friendships we developed then have grown over the years too, for all of us.

In these uncertain times, especially when we can't all worship together, it's important that we remember our church family. I'd like to hope that we can regain the cohesive, supportive community Brendan, Patrick and I felt part of throughout our first French tour and every one we have been on since.

**Rosemary Hurley**

# Light up a Life

## June 2020

1 <sup>st</sup>	Colin Foster	In loving memory of June on her birthday
5 <sup>th</sup>	Jack Smith	In memory of Eileen on our wedding anniversary
6 <sup>th</sup>	Daphne Davies and family	In loving memory of Bella Dickson on her birthday
9 <sup>th</sup>	Chris, Marilyn, Alistair & Charlotte	Loving birthday memories of a dear Mum & Nanna
12 <sup>th</sup>	Elizabeth, family and friends	In loving memory of Richard Goodall who died on this day 2013
16 <sup>th</sup>	George & Yvonne Thompson	In loving memory of a much loved wife and loving mother Doreen on her birthday
18 <sup>th</sup>	Edward Kramer	To celebrate Gill's <b>75th</b> birthday
19 <sup>th</sup>	Chris & Marilyn Couper	To celebrate the 10 <sup>th</sup> birthday of their grandson John Couper Dominguez
22 <sup>nd</sup>	The Bond family	To celebrate the 1st Wedding Anniversary of Philip and Hayley
25 <sup>th</sup>	Sandra Sue and family	In loving memory of our parents Fred and May Barker on their Wedding Anniversary
26 <sup>th</sup>	Susan and Ian Cherry	To celebrate our Wedding Anniversary
26 <sup>th</sup>	Enid Hood & family	Remembering Joe with love on the 8th anniversary of our parting

Anyone who would like to have the church flood-lit on a particular occasion to celebrate an anniversary or commemorate a loved one can book it calling Chris Couper on 01772 863782 or e-mail [chris.j.couper@talk21.com](mailto:chris.j.couper@talk21.com)

**The cost per night is £15.** Please send cash, or cheques made payable to "**PCC of Broughton**", to Chris Couper, 78 Greenacres, Fulwood, Preston, PR2 7DB.

**REMINDER — PLEASE REMEMBER TO GIFT AID YOUR DONATION**, the church can claim an extra 25 pence for every pound you give.

## St. Martin's Parish Hall Complex and Guides' Building Asbestos Removal

Following the decision by the Parochial Church Council to contract for the removal of asbestos from the existing buildings at St. Martin's Parish Hall Complex and the Guide Hut, the Land & Buildings / Parish Hall Management Secretary has met with the contractor to compile Method Statements and Risk Assessments.

AIRS Asbestos Removal (2014) Ltd have submitted the documentation to the HSE for approval and the work is planned to commence in early July. It could take approximately 4 to 5 weeks to complete.

For Health and Safety reasons during the period taken to remove the asbestos, access to both buildings and the car park area will not be permitted. The pedestrian access between Broadway and Northway will also be temporarily closed. Signs will be displayed on site.

**Chris Couper. Sec, Land & Buildings / Parish Hall Management Committee**

## An Ordinary Life

Noreen Maria Bridget Holroyd, my mother, was the second child of Frank Holroyd and Nelly Dolan. The 8th of July this year would have been her 100th birthday. She was born at home, 33 Hall Lane, Bradford, in the notorious triangle of slum dwellings known as Broomfields. As her name would suggest, she was a second generation hybrid of immigrant Irish and Yorkshire stock: a curious mixture of the romantic Celt and four foot eleven inches of hard-headed, fiercely independent Yorkshirewoman. The Dolans, the Byrnes and the Sweeney families from which she descended, gave her a love of story telling and a strong sense of her own history and its roots. The Holroyd genes made her a stubborn, resourceful and pragmatic Bradford lass.



Her mother died when Noreen was just eight year old, in what would have been, if the outcome had been different, rather slapstick comedy circumstances.

Just prior to her death, two Dolan cousins from Dublin were staying at the house. They were by all accounts 'two big, grand lasses'. Nelly, her mother, was preparing the dinner and while carrying a large pot of stew to cook on the fire, tripped over their long legs as the girls stretched out in armchairs. She stumbled and fell, hitting her head on the iron knob of the fire-oven door. While the wound was painful and swollen, and gave her frequent headaches over the next few days, she refused to visit the doctor, leaving a cerebral haemorrhage undiagnosed.

The family home was a rented house owned by Hammond's Brewery, a Bradford firm which also owned the 'Imperial Hotel' next door. The house had several strange features. There was only one main bedroom, which the whole family shared but there were

two other upstairs rooms. The smaller one contained a peculiar wooden contraption resembling a shower, but also several pairs of her mother's shoes (size 2). My mother thought these shoes a wonderful find and took every opportunity to wear them, especially if this involved going down the street on an errand. This room also had a more sinister aspect to it: Noreen thought it was where her mother was hiding after she had died. In fact it was after the death of her mother that she found the whole house rather scary, especially when she alone.

The house shared a yard with the 'Imperial Hotel', in the Tap Room of which my mother learned to walk, under the watchful eye of her uncle, Mick Whelan, who along with his wife Mary, then kept the pub. Her father now a widower, was often to be found in there. Since his return from the war, this man, who had been the life and soul of the party before he left for France, was now, after his wartime experiences and the death of his wife, a gentle but taciturn man. If she found him there, few words were exchanged: he would just give her a penny and send her about her business,

To reach the back door of 33 Hall Lane, which was merely a 'sneck' in the wall, one had to pass the Tap Room and climb over a small wooden stile. This 'sneck' door, not obviously one belonging to a house, was often tried by the local policemen on their nighttime beat, and regularly a newcomer to that area patrol, would rattle it, find it suddenly open and tumble into the house at the foot of the bedroom stairs.

The house was not a comfortable one. It had no kitchen, merely a stone sink at the cellar head. To reach this my mother would have to stand on a stool, precariously balanced at the top of the cellar steps. All the floors were stone and there were no carpets. It was of course lit by gas lamps. The incumbent mice, enticed out of hiding by Noreen, would happily skitter along the hearth.

At the age of 9 Noreen contracted scarlet fever and was promptly whisked off to the Fever Hospital. Though she had the bright scarlet rash, she was not really ill and on the first evening man-

aged to break her hospital bed by repeatedly bouncing on it. She also rather startled the nurses when they came into the ward to find all the children kneeling at their bedsides – my mother declared that they had not said their prayers and she was organising them to do so.

At the age of 12 she read in the local paper, that auditions were being held at the Prince's Theatre in Bradford, for young girls to be 'sunbeams' in Francis Laidler's pantomime for Christmas 1932. With no previous singing or dancing experience and unknown to anyone, she took herself off to these auditions.



Pictured centre, perhaps her appearance, size and dimpled smile were more important than her 'talent', but for whatever reason, she was successful and became one of 12 'sunbeams' about to start a 3 month run at Daley's Theatre in London. It was only then that she told anyone what she had done.

Just two weeks after returning from her London experience, Noreen developed two large and painful abscesses at the top of her leg and had to go to the old Bradford Infirmary to have them treated. While waiting outside the doctor's room on a wooden bench, she overheard two children sitting beside her discussing the most appropriate treatment for a sore finger.

**Child 1: Let's look at your finger**  
**Child 2: (proffers finger for examination)**

**Child 1: Oh it'll have to come off**  
**Child 2: No it won't**

**Child 1: Oh it will an' all – I've seen 'em like that before and they allus have to come off.**

(continued on page 8)

## An Ordinary Life

(continued from page 7)

She attended St Ann's RC School until the age of 14, when she left without any qualifications but with beautiful handwriting (the legacy of which lives on through an annual handwriting award presented both at Broughton Primary School and at St Joseph of Cupertino Elementary School in California). She began work, packing piston rings, at the firm of 'Hepworth and Grandage', where her brother Stanley also worked. She arrived there in pale blue coat, bonnet and shoes, and white ankle socks, having to be lifted up to reach the clocking-on machine.

After only a few months at 'Hepworth and Grandage', Noreen suddenly decided to leave one Saturday morning. When she announced at home that she was not going into work, the ultimatum was clear: everyone works in this house – find a new job by teatime! And she did just that by taking a job at 'Denbys', a wire shop – in Wakefield

Later she started work at Priestman's Mill as a winder. After learning the job, she moved onto 'piece rate', which gave her the chance to earn more money but was also very demanding. From 6.30 a.m. when she began work, she constantly asked the lady who weighed the completed cones of wool, how much she had earned that day.

Noreen was now living with Aunt Mary Whelan, her mother's sister, in Ashley Street off Manchester Road. At the age of sixteen, unhappy and I suspect very lonely in the family home, she left with a few possessions and the cat under her arm, to ask Aunt Mary if she could live with her.

She remained at the mill until 1942, when, after twice being exempted on the recommendation of her overlooker, she was conscripted for munitions work at a factory in Steeton near Keighley. She travelled by train each day, working fortnightly shifts of day and night work. It was incidentally, the first job she had ever had at which she could sit down to work.

After the war she didn't want to return to the mill so went to the Labour Exchange to look for a job in the printing trade, the same trade as my father and her husband to be, Frank Hurley. Despite her lack of any relevant experience, she got a job at 'Field's' printers and stayed there until I was born in 1950.

She and my father met and played together as children, attending the same school and playing in the same streets and were I suppose childhood sweethearts. He used to chalk their names on the school wall and my mother was sent out to wash it off, thus setting a trend for the years ahead: my father made the mess and mum cleaned up after him!

Their courtship lasted throughout their teenage years and they were engaged in 1941 before my mother went 'on munitions' and before my father was posted abroad.

After their engagement and a brief embarkation leave in 1942, my mother did not see her fiance again until three years later, at the beginning of October 1945. For Noreen these were long, lonely years of letters with little news and parcels of little luxuries, all instantly forgotten when Frank appeared one day at Field's Printers, to which she had returned at the end of the war. Noreen's overlooker came to her and asked if her 'chap' was in the RAF – if he was, he was waiting in the office for her.

The romantic in me always imagines my dad appearing like Richard Gere in the film *An Officer and a Gentleman* to sweep his bride to be, Debra Winger, off her feet as the song *Love Lifts us Up* swells in the background. I think though that reality was a little more prosaic.

Mum said her legs turned to jelly and she could not find the switch to stop her machine. Her overlooker knew she would do little more work that day and so gave her the rest of the day off. Mum recalled walking back home with Frank, looking at him and thinking of the boy whom she had last seen three years ago and the man whose arm she now held.

They were married on the 17th October, 1945. Their honeymoon was five days spent in Blackpool, though they initially found themselves in Liverpool, having forgotten to change at Manchester. The 'black-out' and the lack of railway station signs was the excuse.



Following their honeymoon, Frank had to return, armed with a large slab of wedding cake, to his RAF unit, which incidentally had left Italy bound for Egypt without him. Frank and Noreen were not reunited until the following Easter of 1946.

After my brother and I were born in 1950 and 1955, she devoted her life to caring for her family and her aging aunt and father, who came to live with us. In the 60s she began work as a school dinner lady at a local primary school. In a largely ethnic minority school, only once did she fall victim to *political correctness*. With characteristic pragmatism, Noreen created two queues of children – one for the 'Asian' food and one for the more traditional fare. As would be expected these divided largely on racial grounds and earned her a rebuke from the headmistress.

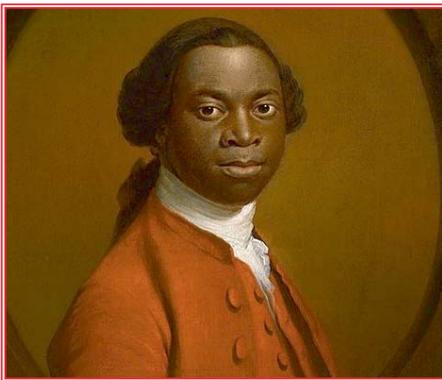
It's sixteen years since my mum Noreen died and I still miss her. My son Patrick's reaction to being told that Grandma had died was immediate, profound and positive in a way that only 5 year olds can be. '*Never mind, she's with Grandad Hurley now.*' She is - and in the end that was all she really wanted - and their being together seems like a good reason for our family to smile on the 8th July.

BH

## A Life Less Ordinary

On the 30th July the Church celebrates the lives and work of three anti-slavery campaigners: William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson and Olaudah Equiano. The first two names may be familiar but Olaudah Equiano less so.

**Olaudah Equiano** (c. 1745 – 31 March 1797), known for most of his life as Gustavus Vassa was a writer and abolitionist from, according to his autobiography, the Eboe region of the Kingdom of Benin (southern Nigeria).



At about the age of eleven, he and his sister were both kidnapped, separated and sold to slave traders.

He tried to escape but this was thwarted. After his owners changed several times, Equiano happened to meet with his sister again, but they were separated once more. He was held by European slave traders for export and eventually transported with 244 other enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to Barbados in the British West Indies.

He and a few other slaves were sent on for sale in the Colony of Virginia, where Equiano was bought by Michael Henry Pascal, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. Pascal renamed the boy "Gustavus Vassa", after the Swedish noble who was elected King of Sweden in 1523. Equiano had already been renamed twice: he was called Michael while onboard the slave ship that brought him to the Americas; and Jacob, by his first owner. He used Vassa for the rest of his life, including on all official records; he only used Equiano in his autobiography.

Pascal took Equiano with him when he returned to England and had him

accompany him as a valet during the Seven Years' War with France (1756–1763). Trained in seamanship, Equiano was expected to assist the ship's crew in times of battle: his duty being to haul gunpowder to the gun decks. Pascal eventually sent Equiano to his sister-in-law in England so that he could attend school and learn to read and write.

He converted to Christianity and was baptised at St Margaret's, Westminster, on 9 February 1759, when he was described in the parish register as *a Black, born in Carolina, 12 years old* (not, you will note in Africa). His godparents were Mary Guerin and her brother, Maynard, cousins of his master, Pascal. They apparently took an interest in him and helped him to learn English.

In December 1762, Pascal sold Equiano to Captain James Doran of the *Charming Sally* at Gravesend, from where he was transported back to the Leeward Islands. There, he was sold to Robert King, an American Quaker merchant who traded in the Caribbean.

King set Equiano to work on his shipping routes and in his stores. In 1765, when Equiano was about 20 years old, King promised that for his purchase price of 40 pounds (equivalent to £5,500) he could buy his freedom. King taught him to read and write more fluently, guided him along the path of religion, and allowed Equiano to engage in trading on his own account, as well as on his owner's behalf.

Equiano sold fruits, glass tumblers and other items between Georgia and the Caribbean islands. The income from which enabled him to buy his freedom in 1766. Though King urged Equiano to stay on as a business partner, he knew it would be dangerous to remain in the British colonies as a freed-man. While loading a ship in Georgia, he had almost been kidnapped and taken back into enslavement.

By about 1768, Equiano had returned to England though he continued to work at sea, travelling sometimes as a deckhand. In 1773 on the Royal Navy

ship *HMS Racehorse*, he travelled to the Arctic in an expedition to find a northeast route to India.

His travels at an end, Equiano eventually arrived at Plymouth, England, on 7 January 1777. As a freed-man in London, Equiano supported the British abolitionist movement. The movement had been particularly strong among Quakers, but the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade* was founded in 1787 as a non-denominational group, with Anglican members, in an attempt to influence Parliament directly.

He was part of the *Sons of Africa*, an abolitionist group composed of Africans living in Britain, and active among leaders of the anti-slave trade movement in the 1780s.

In 1783, after the United States gained independence, Equiano became involved in helping the *Black Poor of London*, (the black community numbered about 20,000) who were mostly those African-American slaves freed during and after the American Revolution by the British. There were also some freed slaves from the Caribbean, and some who had been brought by their owners to England and freed later after the decision that slavery had no basis in common law.

He published his autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, depicting the horrors of slavery, in 1789. It went through nine editions in his lifetime and helped gain passing of the British Slave Trade Act 1807, which abolished the slave trade.

On 7 April 1792, Equiano married Susannah Cullen, a local woman, in St Andrew's Church, Soham, Cambridgeshire.

The couple settled in the area and had two daughters, Anna Maria (1793–1797) and Joanna (1795–1857) who were baptised at Soham church.

Susannah died in February 1796, aged 34, and Equiano died a year after that on 31 March 1797, aged 42.

**BH**