

intouch

NEWSLETTER

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



The Rushden alternative fete

By Sandra Sargusingh,
Chair, Rushden Village Hall
Committee

The village fete is always a special day. It takes commitment and hard work to put it on, but every year is great fun and always has a few new stories to tell. This year was no different. We decided to use our website and e mail campaigns to let everyone in the village know what was happening. It certainly has evolved this year and new ideas have sprung up which some of them I think we will keep. One being the scarecrow competition. Instructions and a 'likes' form were on the website to use and suddenly it became a furious competition between neighbours! There really is some incredible creativity around. From witches to divers, horse-riders, fishermen and rock stars – they were all popping up! My favourite of course was the resident Vicar having a break outside the church! Good things can come out of lockdown.



Welcome

Welcome to this week's in touch and I hope you have enjoyed the sunshine this week – nice to relax. With rain and sun our gardens are soon going to be ablaze with colour and I would love to have some photos of your summer gardens for In touch as they are always a pleasure to see. My garden is full of butterflies who are almost fighting each other off to get to the lavender. And it is not just the butterflies who have been busy! Just take a look at how industrious Rushden have been with their scarecrows – such fun and this is just one of the things they have been doing as they celebrated their 'virtual Fete'. Take care out there as you start to meet with families and friends – enjoy the moment but stay safe. *Love and blessings Fiona*

Buttercups – treasure in our countryside

By Kirsty Steele, a retired teacher and active church organist.

Buttercup! What a delicious name! Rumour has it that, as they were frequently to be found in meadows where cows grazed, they were responsible for butter's yellow colouring. So the name was an obvious choice.

However, since buttercups are poisonous and therefore are avoided as far as possible by our four-footed friends, this is somewhat unlikely. But surely, we all remember having a buttercup held under our chin to see whether the reflection proved that we liked butter! The shiny surface of the petals actually has two real purposes. Firstly, to help attract insects and secondly to act as a kind of mirror to aid the temperature regulation of the plant's reproductive organs.

We are fortunate that buttercups do not suffer from the same unpopularity as other poisonous plants, because if eaten, not only do they taste nasty, but the poison will also cause blisters in the mouth of the consumer. Extensive handling can also damage the skin, but

presumably the size of bunch that many of us picked as children did not count as 'extensive'. Fortunately, Health and Safety experts do not yet seem to have forbidden this source of pleasure for little people. Incidentally, the poison is reduced as the plant dries, and hay that includes buttercups is safe for cows and horses to eat.

Buttercups help form the traditional view of the British countryside. Differing varieties range in height from small to quite tall and although at their peak in early summer, the golden blooms can often still be seen in mid-autumn. Jan Struther, who wrote 'Lord of all hopefulness' also wrote a children's hymn entitled 'Treasure'

It starts: Daisies are our silver, buttercups our gold: his is all the treasure we can have or hold.





Diego Velázquez: Kitchen Scene with Christ in the House of Martha and Mary

(c.1618)

Diego Velázquez was 19 years old and living in Seville, the city of his birth and painting apprenticeship, when he created this initially baffling picture. Its main characters are two servants, one preparing a meal she will not share in herself and seemingly close to tears. She is listening to the older woman behind her but continuing to pound solidly with her pestle at the contents of the mortar on the table. What her companion is communicating we are left to guess, but her index finger indicates the scene at the top right hand corner. Her countenance is steadfast but not unsympathetic.

It is there through a hatch, depicted almost as if it were a painting hanging on the kitchen wall, that Christ is seen speaking to the attentive Mary, whilst Martha stands behind her complaining that her sister has left her with all the work to do. Jesus scolds her distracted worrying over

household tasks and says that her sister 'has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her'.

There are deeper levels of meaning to Luke 10.38-42 than a simple contrast between the life of prayer and the life of world-centred cares and woes. But most Christians have read it thus and Velázquez was no exception. Which of us has heard this tale and not felt sympathy for Martha because after all, her concerns typify most of the days of our own lives?

Velázquez' Seville was a city of sharp contrasts, the rich doing well but alongside them a much larger servant class whose options in life were few. For a girl such as this there was in theory a 'Martha or Mary' choice, domestic service or entry into one of Seville's innumerable convents. But the latter would require a dowry she presumably would never find, even if the religious life seemed to her desirable. So

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus
*Keep us, good Lord,
 under the shadow of your mercy.
 Sustain and support the anxious,
 be with those who care for the sick,
 and lift up all who are brought low;
 that we may find comfort
 knowing that nothing can separate us
 from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 Amen.*

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

Thank you.

PCC OF RUSHDEN
 LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845350

SANDON PCC
 BARCLAYS BANK: 20-73-26 A/C 53610802

PCC OF ST MARY'S CHURCH WALLINGTON
 LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845466

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she is trapped in drudgery. Velázquez is on her side, painting everything around her with delicious clarity, the silvery fish, the papery separation of the garlic bulbs, the pale reflectiveness of the eggs. Compare that to the sketchy way in which the scene in the room beyond is painted and you sense Velázquez' questioning unease about how the words of Jesus can apply to the lives of the people he knew. 'That is their world', the older woman seems to be saying, 'but this is ours and we have to make the best of it'. Whatever we make of his reaction the thoughtful dialogue with the Bible in which Velázquez engages is a model for our own.

Focus on St Mary's Wallington



Fig 1 courtesy of Mr James Hawkes

Nestled away on a hilltop above the main village and surrounded by trees lies this welcoming hidden gem. It is well sized church for a small village with a light airy feel being well lit by large clear windows down the east side of the church. The nave is mostly 14th and 15th C with some wonderfully old and venerable pews near the six belled tower. The lady chapel is a nook full of old tombs and a wonderfully

peaceful place to stand. This is the church in which the author George Orwell was first married whilst he lived in the village and there is an interesting and well worth visiting display of his time in Wallington. The church was visited by the BBC's Songs of Praise to look at an unopen suitcase from the Great War that had been kept by the family since its return after the death of the young soldier from the village. From the church there are many walks that take in the spectacular views from this isolate crop of the Chiltern Hills and it is a frequent stopover place for weary walkers who can rest in its cool embracing interior.



Pam Rhodes visits with Songs of Praise. Picture courtesy of Jean Handley

Congratulations



To Gillian and Graham Wheatley of Weston who have just celebrated their 50th Wedding anniversary. The planned holiday in the Seychelles is on hold but the church sent them some lovely flowers and a few friends (suitably distanced) raise a toast to them.